GIVING VOICE TO THE VOICELESS:
NEGLECTED AND ANONYMOUS WOMEN IN GENESIS 4-11

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For those who are deemed marginalized yet are striving to live their lives to the fullest.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006
COS	*The Context of Scripture*. Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002
EBR	Klauck, Hans-Josef, Dale C. Allison, Volker Leppin, C. L. Seow, Hermann Spieckermann, Barry Walfish, Eric Ziolkowski, Christine Helmer, Steven L. McKenzie, Thomas Römer, and Constance M. Furey, eds. *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 2009.
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999
Jastrow	Jastrow, Marcus. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*. England: Luzac & Co. ; G. P. Putnam̓s Sons, 1903.
Klein	Klein, Ernest. *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English*.; Foreword by Haim Rabin. Edited by Baruch Sarel. New York: Macmillan, 1987.
Levy Ch-W	Levy, Jacob. *Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim: und einen grossen Teil des rabbinischen Schrifttums*. Volumes 1-2. Leipzig: Baumgartner, 1867.
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
Fr.-Tg.	Klein, Michael L., ed. *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch According to Their Extant Sources*. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980.
Neof.	Díez Macho, Alejandro. *Neophyti I, Targum Palestinense MS. de la Biblioteca Vaticana, Tomo I Génesis*. Edición Príncipe, Introducción y Versión Castellana. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1968.

Olmo Lete	Olmo Lete, Gregorio del, Joaquín Sanmartín, and Wilfred G. E. Watson. *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*. Translated and Edited by Wilfred G.E. Watson. Third revised edition. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
Payne Smith	*A Compendious Syriac Dictionary, Founded Upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R.Payne Smith, D. D.* Edited by J. Payne Smith. The Clarendon Press, 1903.
PG	Patrologia Graeca [= *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*: Series Graeca]. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886.
PL	Patrologia Latina [= *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*: Series Latina]. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 217 vols. Paris, 1844–1864.
Sokoloff	Sokoloff, Michael. *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*. 2nd ed. Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002.
Wehr	Wehr, Hans. *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. Edited by J. Milton Cowan. 3rd ed. Ithaca: Spoken Languages Services, 1976.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Issue

Women are ubiquitous in the Primeval History of the Bible.[1] Yet, they are often overlooked and less explored in biblical scholarship. A careful reading of the early chapters in Genesis and corresponding discussions reveals three interlocking challenges to conducting a thorough study of primordial women in the Bible.

Lack of Information in the Primeval History

The first challenge is the lack of information about women in the Primeval History. Other than Eve in Gen 2-3, there are only a handful named women appeared in biblical history. They are Adah, Zillah, and Naamah in Gen 4:19-24. No description about them is given, except for their relationship with Lamech and the duties of their sons. A few women, who are highlighted as wives, are briefly mentioned through their husbands. These include Cain's wife (Gen 4:17), Noah's wife, and the three wives of Noah's sons Shem, Ham and Japhet in the flood narrative (Gen 6:18; 7:6, 13; 8:16, and 18). These wives are mentioned along with animals in different classification: with birds and creeping things in pairs, male and female (Gen 6:19-20, 8:17, 19), with clean and unclean animals (Gen 7:8), and with wild and domestic animals of every kind (Gen 7:14). A large group of women, generically referred to as "daughters" (בנות), have a fleeting presence in the Bible. They are only mentioned in the genealogies of Adam (Gen 5:4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26, and 30), and of Shem

[1] I take the Primeval History to end with the genealogy of Shem (11:10-26). Despite the present chapter divisions, introduced only in the medieval period, the descendants of Terah, namely Abram, Nahor, and Haran culminate in the history of Abram and Sarai in Mesopotamia (Gen 11:28), their childlessness (Gen 11:30), and their departure from Ur for Canaan (Gen 11:31). Hence, Gen 11:27-32 properly belong to the Abrahamic history that follows.

(Gen 11:11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, and 25). A similar description, the "daughters of men" (בנות האדם), are highlighted by their fair appearances and are attracted by the "sons of gods" (בני האלהים) to take them as wives. These daughters bore the sons the Nephilim (נפנים). The LXX translates the two different Hebrew words נפנים "Nephilim" and גברים "heroes" as γίγαντες ("giants" in NRSVUE) in Gen 6:4.[2] The most neglected group of women are the mothers, whose names are completely omitted in the primeval "genealogies" (תולדות). Before Abram enters into the biblical stage (Gen 11:27), four comprehensive genealogies have been highlighted in the Primeval History. They are the genealogies of Adam (Gen 5:1-32), of Noah (Gen 6:9-10), of the three sons of Noah (Gen 10:1-32), and of Shem (Gen 11:10-26). While the male progenitors are consistently, or even repeatedly, presented in biblical genealogies from the early creation history to the dispersion of humankind, their spouses are only inferred from the verbal form "beget" (ילד). This Hebrew verb recurs 77 times from Gen 1:1 to 11:26.[3] Among the references to begetting children, 60 times mention the male parent alone. The names of all mothers are entirely omitted.

The challenge of studying primordial women in Gen 4-11 is reflected in the published materials of the last few decades. Since the rise of feminist biblical scholarship in 1970s, there has been an increasing number of publications studying female characters in the Bible. Some scholars attempted to reach behind the text to recover the lives of women and to gain knowledge about the

[2] See discussion in J. van Ruiten, "Nomadic Angels: Gen 6,1-4 and Reception History" in *A Pillar of Cloud to Guide: Text-critical, Redactional, and Linguistic Perspectives on the Old Testament in Honour of Marc Vervenne*, ed. H. Ausloos, and B. Lemmelijn (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 262; Emmanouela Grypeou and Helen Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters Between Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 149 fn.13.

[3] See also discussion in Thomas Hieke, "Genealogy as a Means of Historical Representation in the Torah and the Role of Women in the Genealogical System," in *Torah*, ed. Irmtraud Fischer et. al. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2011), 170-173.

actual conditions of women in history (e.g. Carol L. Meyers,[4] Jennie Ebeling).[5] Others have incorporated ancient literature and folklores to shed new light on understanding women in the Bible (e.g. Tikva Frymer-Kensky,[6] Susan Niditch).[7] Still others have articulated structural issues such as postcolonialism and ethnicity to recover the presence of women and their voices in the Bible (e.g. Gale Yee,[8] Wilda Gafney).[9] Some named women in the book of Genesis have received more attention than the others. For instance, there are monographs on Eve,[10] Sarah,[11] Hagar,[12] Dinah,[13]

[4] Carol L. Meyers, *Discovering Eve : Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Carol Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[5] Jennie R. Ebeling, *Women's Lives in Biblical Times* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2010).

[6] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

[7] Susan Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

[8] Gale A. Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve : Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

[9] Wilda C. Gafney, *Womanist Midrash: a Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017).

[10] Numerous monographs from various perspectives on Eve have been published in the past few decades. Selected recent publications include Holly Morse, *Encountering Eve's afterlives: A New Reception Critical Approach to Genesis 2-4* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020); Celene Lillie, *The Rape Of Eve: The Transformation Of Roman Ideology In Three Early Christian Retellings Of Genesis* (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2017); Jack M. Greenstein, *The Creation of Eve and Renaissance Naturalism: Visual Theology and Artistic Invention* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); John Flood, *Representations of Eve in Antiquity and the English Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Christfried Böttrich, Beate Ego, and Friedmann Eissler, *Adam und Eva in Judentum, Christentum und Islam* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011); Anne Lapidus Lerner, *Eternally Eve: Images of Eve in the Hebrew Bible, Midrash, and Modern Jewish Poetry* (Waltham, Mass: Brandeis University Press, 2007).

[11] Selected monographs on Sarah include Tammi J. Schneider, *Sarah: Mother of Nations* (New York: Continuum, 2004); Savina J. Teubal, *Sarah the Priestess: the First Matriarch of Genesis* (Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press, 1984), and Joseph McDonald McDonald, *Searching for Sarah in the Second Temple Era: Images in the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, the Genesis Apocryphon, and the Antiquities* (London: T&T Clark, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2020).

[12] Selected monographs on Hagar include Savina J. Teubal, *Ancient Sisterhood: the Lost Traditions of Hagar and Sarah* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1997); Christine Petra Sellin, *Fractured Families and Rebel Maidservants: the Biblical Hagar in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art and Literature* (New York: Continuum, 2006). Nyasha Junior, *Junior, Nyasha. Reimagining Hagar: Blackness and Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[13] Mary Anna Bader, *Tracing the evidence: Dinah in post-Hebrew Bible literature* (New York; Bern: Lang, 2008); Caroline Blyth, "Terrible Silence, Eternal Silence: A Feminist Re-Reading of Dinah's Voicelessness in Genesis 34." *Biblical Interpretation* 17.5 (2009): 483-506.

Tamar,[14] and Potiphar's wife.[15] Moreover, various approaches have been developed to study women in the book of Genesis,[16] in the Pentateuch,[17] in the Hebrew Bible,[18] and in the Bible.[19] Occasionally, Adah, Zillah, and Naamah are highlighted in discussions.[20] The focus of Genesis 4 is mostly related

[14] Esther Marie Menn, *Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38) in Ancient Jewish Exegesis: Studies in Literary Form and Hermeneutics* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

[15] Shalom Goldman, *The Wiles of Women/the Wiles of Men: Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in Ancient Near Eastern, Jewish, and Islamic Folklore* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

[16] For instance, Sharon P. Jeansonne paid close attention to the literary features of the text, and depicted Sarah, the daughters of Lot, Hagar, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, Dinah, Tamar, and Potiphar's wife as integral persons who shaped Israel's destiny, revealed perspectives on God's involvement in the course of history, and portrayed human failure, freedom, and strength. Sharon Pace Jeansonne, *The Women of Genesis From Sarah to Potiphar's Wife* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). See also Athalya Brenner-Idan ed., *A Feminist Companion to Genesis 1998* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1998); Marion A. Taylor and Heather Weir eds., *Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth-Century Women Writing on Women in Genesis* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006); David J. Zucker and Moshe Reiss*, The Matriarchs of Genesis: Seven Women, Five Views* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2015), and Tammi J. Schneider, *Mothers of Promise: Women in the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2008).

[17] Sarah Shectman systematically brought both literary source criticism and feminist biblical interpretation in tracing the portrayal of women in the Pentateuch. Sarah Shectman, *Women in the Pentateuch A Feminist and Source-critical Analysis* (Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009).

[18] Norma Rosen, *Biblical Women Unbound: Counter-Tales* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2001). Susanne Scholz, *Introducing the Women's Hebrew Bible Feminism, Gender Justice, and the Study of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017). This book introduces to the reader the diverse field of feminist studies on the Hebrew Bible.

[19] For instance in Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H Ringe, and Jacqueline E Lapsley, eds., *Women's Bible Commentary, Third Edition: Revised and Updated* (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 2012); Alice Ogden Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007); Carol L. Meyers, Toni Craven, and Ross Shepard Kraemer, eds., *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000); Phyllis Trible and Letty M. Russell, eds., H*agar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

[20] Umberto Cassuto offers a detailed discussion on the meaning of the names of Adah, Zillah and Naamah Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1961), 234-238; Nahum M. Sarna discusses various meanings of Adah and Zillah in Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis: the Traditional Hebrew Text with New JPS Translation* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 37-38; Meyers, *Women in Scripture*, 169; Schneider dedicated a section on Adah and Zillah and identified them as mothers who predated the promise. See Schneider, *Mothers of Promise* (2008), 175-178; Shectman discussed Cain's nameless wife, Lamech's wives and daughters, and "daughters of men" in the section about other women in the non-P's Primeval History. See Shectman, *Women in the Pentateuch*, 97-99. Gafney focused on the relationship between Adah, Zillah, Naamah and Lamech in discussing the issue of polygamy in Gen 4:17-24. See Wilda C. Gafney, *Womanist Midrash*, 27-29.

to the grand literary framework of the Cainite genealogy (Gen 4:1-24),[21] or of its relations to other ancient literature.[22] Other women between Genesis 5 and 11 are usually omitted. The missing of women's appearances in biblical scholarship is not without a cause. Various scholars have pointed out that the primary role of women in the Bible is being mothers, and the concern about them is their capability to bear a child to continue a progeny.[23] Since the majority of women are hidden behind the genealogies between Genesis 5 and 11, their function is deduced to their motherhood. As Hens-Piazza (2010) highlighted, references to the person are expeditiously converted into abstractions of utility in the narrative caste system.[24] Their foreseeable roles and functions in the Bible effectively efface any manifestations of human qualities and eventually make these most hidden women in the Bible the least appealing than other named biblical women.[25]

Scattered and Inconsistent Information

Another challenge to conduct a thorough research of primordial women in Genesis is scattered and often inconsistent information about the function of a biblical woman offered by various religious interpretations. Sometimes contrasting images have been assigned to the same female character within the same religious tradition. Unlike other nameless primordial women,

[21] See for instance Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: a Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 110-111; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-Creation, Re-Creation: A Discursive Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2011), 83; Kathleen M. O'Connor, *Genesis 1-25A* (Macon, GA.: Smyth & Helwys, 2018), 85-87.

[22] E. A. Speiser, *Genesis. Introduction, Translation, and Notes by E.A. Speiser* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 35; Claus Westermann, *Genesis: A Practical Commentary*, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1987), 37.

[23] For instance, Susan Niditch, "Genesis" in *Women's Bible Commentary*, 32.

[24] Hens-Piazza, "Supporting Cast or Supporting Caste: Reading on Behalf of the Multitude. Reading on Behalf of the Multitude," *Landas* 24.1 (2010): 36.

[25] See also discussion in Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2010), 26-30.

Noah's wife received much more attention than other female characters. In 1921, just two years after the Nineteenth Amendment ratified nationwide in the United States, Robert M. Gay, professor of English at Simmons College, published an article titled, "Noah's Wife: Or, What's in a Name?" [26] Teaching in an institution advocating higher education for women since the late nineteenth century, Gay's awareness of his female readers is reflected in his writings.[27] In the article, Gay observed the contrasting depictions of Noah's wife in Genesis. She has been called Naamah in the rabbinic traditions, a pious wife of the flood hero,[28] but Waleha in the Islamic traditions, who is deemed a deceiving figure.[29] Gay's sympathetic view to Noah's wife has been extended to Lot's wife, too. To Gay, the wife of Noah in the Hebrew Bible has been constantly associated with the wife of Lot. Both of them suffered from various forms of accusations. [30] Gay argued that both Noah's wife and Lot's wife were freethinkers and they were curious about others.[31] The punishment of their wrongdoing was more severe than they deserved.

Inspired by Gay's popular article, the folklorist and medievalist Frances L. Utley conducted a thorough research into the identity of Noah's wife. This nameless character came to Utley's attention when he was writing his doctoral thesis. [32] Utley went through more than two thousand

[26] Robert M. Gay, "Noah's Wife: Or, What's in a Name?" *Atlantic Monthly* 130 (1922): 41-44. On Robert M. Gay's background, see "Summer Session 1924 (July 7 to August 16)," *Boston University Bulletin* XIII. no. 11. (Boston, MA.: Boston University Press, 1924): 7.

[27] See also Robert M. Gay, preface to *Another Look at Women's Education and Other Essays and Addresses*, by Bancraft Beatley (Boston: Simmons College, 1955), v-vi.

[28] Gay, "Noah's Wife," 44.

[29] Gay, "Noah's Wife," 43.

[30] Gay, "Noah's Wife," 42-43.

[31] Gay, "Noah's Wife," 43.

[32] On Utley's dissertation, see Francis Lee Utley, "Satire on women in Greek, Latin, and Middle English" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1936).

volumes and traveled through European museums to acquire records of Noah's wife.[33] In 1941, he published an article entitled "The One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife—the study of the unknown women in the Primeval History."[34] His comprehensive research into her identity encompassed from the earliest evidence in the fourth century to literature about her as late as the early twentieth century. The most valuable contribution of this research was Utley's detailed documentation of sources and evaluation of each name. In addition to the 103 names of Noah's wife, he listed 30 names of Shem's wife, 29 names of Ham's wife, and 35 names of Japhet's wife that are found in various medieval sources.[35] Utley's research laid a very important foundation for subsequent research into her identity. The very same year, he published another article, "Noah's Ham and Jansen Enikel."[36] The purpose of this article was to present two unorthodox accounts of Ham's adventures on the ark. Utley further analyzed the relationship between these accounts and other folkloric crosscurrents that created them. Utley's interest in biblical folklore is reflected in another article, "the Bible of the Folk." This article examined folktales that contradicted biblical narratives and how later folktales developed from them. Utley based this article on Gunkel's four types of folktale, which he outlined in his seminal work *Commentary on Genesis* (1901). Utley argued that studying biblical legends, such as the Babylonian Gilgamesh and non-biblical writings like the *Book of Enoch*, and the *Book of Jubilees* can help us understand the Bible better.[37] These extra-biblical writings can help us trace the development of biblical narratives, from their possible origins in other cultures to their later adaptations in other writings..[38] Later, in 1960, Utley published

[33] An interview of Utley, "Know Name of Noah's Wife? University Professor Found 103 in Hunt Through 2000 volumes" in *The Highland Recorder*, Monterey, VA. 62:16 (April 19, 1940): 1.

[34] Francis Lee Utley, "The One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife," *Speculum* 16.4 (1941): 426-452.

[35] Utley, "The One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife," 438-443.

[36] Francis L. Utley, "Noah's Ham and Jansen Enikel," *Germanic Review* (1941): 241-249.

[37] Francis L. Utley, "The Bible of the Folk," *California Folklore Quarterly* 4.1 (1945): 15.

[38] Utley, "The Bible of the Folk," 15-17.

"Noah, His Wife and the Devil".[39] In this study, Utley investigated how early writings about Noah's family developed into "orthodox" biblical knowledge in later generations.[40] In particular, he examined the transmission of the image of Noah's wife as a devil figure from an early gnostic folktale to the *Queen Mary Psalter* in the fourteenth century in Europe.

In biblical studies, Jack P. Lewis (1968) investigated the interpretations of the biblical figure Noah and the flood in early Jewish and Christian literature. This included apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works, Hellenistic-Jewish writings, the flood in Greek and Aramaic versions, and early Christian and rabbinic interpretations.[41] While Lewis' study focused on Noah and the flood narrative, on several occasions, Lewis mentioned three names of Noah's wife, Noria (the *Book of Noria*),[42] Haikal (the *Book of Adam and Eve*,[43] also called the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*, a Christian composition written in Geʿez),[44] and Naamah (*Sefer Ha-Yashar*).[45] In addition, Lewis noticed that Noah's wife was identified Waliya, an unredeemable figure in Islamic traditions.[46] Rainer Stichel (1979) focused on extra-canonical and gnostic literature and art. Stichel investigated

[39] Francis L. Utley, "Noah, His Wife and the Devil," in *Studies in Biblical and Jewish Folklore*, ed. Raphael Patai, Francis Lee Utley and Dov Noy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), 59-91.

[40] Francis L. Utley, "Noah, His Wife and the Devil," 59.

[41] Jack P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1968).

[42] Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood*, 10.

[43] Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood*, 35; also S. C. Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve: also called The Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan: A book of the early Eastern Church, translated from the Ethiopic, with notes from the Kufale, Talmud, Midrashim, and other Eastern works* (London: Williams and Norgate), 143 (Book III Ch. 1).

[44] This work is arguably the older manuscript of another late antique and early medieval Syriac text the *Cave of Treasures*, in which Noah's wife is called Haykal (Discussion in chapter 5). On the historical development of the manuscript, see E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures Translated from the Syriac* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1927), 7-9.

[45] Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood*, 124.

[46] Jack P. Lewis, "Noah and the Flood: in Jewish Christian and Muslim Tradition," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 47.4 (1984), 236.

the onomastic development of the two names assigned to Noah's wife: Naamah, the beautiful and gentle portrayal of her in the rabbinic traditions, and Noria, the wicked image of her in the gnostic writings.[47] In Islamic studies, Barbara Freyer Stowasser (1994) discussed how female characters or groups of female characters in the Qurʾan are traditionally constructed through their hagiographically named persona.[48] Stowasser also investigated some unnamed biblical characters in Islamic sources, such as Waligha, or Wa'ila as Noah's wife, Zulaykha as the wife of Joseph, and Bilqis as Queen of Sheba, and discussed the portrayals of them in later Islamic writings. In *Recovering the Female Voice in Islamic Scripture: Women and Silence*, Georgina L. Jardim highlighted that the classical Islamic view of a woman's status derived from a selection of female icons within the Islamic traditions. The ideals of women in the Qurʾan are contrasted with less desirable or avoidable characteristics associated with antithetical female characters, such as the wife of the pharaoh's nobleman who tried to seduced Joseph, or the rebellious wives of Noah and Lot in Q66.[49] In the Qurʾan, these characters are punished with hell for their acts of betrayal, and also serve as eternal and valid lessons for disobedience. In contrast to their righteous husbands who saved themselves and their righteous communities, these women suffered violent death.[50] Lesleigh Cushing (2000), on the other hand, reviewed the controversial images of Noah's wife.[51] Cushing traced the identity change of Noah's wife from the early writings to modern interpretations of her,

[47] Rainer Stichel, *Die Namen Noes, seines Bruders und seiner Frau. Ein Beitrag zum Nachleben jüdischer Überlieferungen in der außerkanonischen und gnostischen Literatur und in Denkmälern der Kunst* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 55-82.

[48] Barbara Freyer Stowasser*, Women in the Qurʾan, Traditions and Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[49] Georgina L. Jardim, *Recovering the Female Voice in Islamic Scripture: Women and Silence* (Burlington, VT.: Ashgate Pub. Company, 2014), 38.

[50] Georgina L. Jardim, *Recovering the Female Voice in Islamic Scripture*, 38-39.

[51] Lesleigh Cushing, "The Missing Missus," in *Sacred Text, Sacred Time: the Hebrew Bible in the Modern World*, ed. Leonard J. Greenspoon, Bryan F. LeBeau, and Leonard J. Greenspoon (Omaha, Neb.: Creighton University Press, 2000), 103-133.

and reasserted the importance of this female character in biblical reception history. Cushing noticed that Noah's wife has gradually become important over time. Ephraim Nissan (2014) revisited the list of names of Noah's wife proposed by Utley.[52] Nissan paid attention on a few names of her such as Pyrrah as the wife of Deucalion, Phiarphara, Aretia, and the anthroponomastics of her as Naamah in Darren Aronofsky's film Noah. Nicole L. Tilford (2021) examined three modern interpretations of Noah's wife to see how contemporary writings attempted to expand female characters beyond biblical descriptions.[53]

While abundant information regarding Noah's wife has greatly enriched our understanding on later interpretations of her, the contrasting images of the same character in Abrahamic religious traditions have troubled modern readers. In addition, the wealth of names assigned to Noah's wife and the three wives of Noah's sons suggests that many narratives had been circulating since antiquity. This has led to new questions about the formation of Gen 1-11, while some old questions have to be reconsidered. First, did the Genesis authors know any of the narratives about primordial women during the long compilation process of the book of Genesis?[54] If they had known of such narratives, it would suggest that the Genesis authors deliberately toned down or even eliminated most of the female characters, either during the composition or canonization process, perhaps for greater theological purposes. If they had not known about any of these narratives, it would suggest that the extant early Jewish and Christian sources about the primordial women were entirely created by later

[52] Ephraim Nissan, "Revisiting 103 names of Noah wife," in *Unconventional Anthroponyms: Formation Patterns and Discursive Function*, ed. Oliviu Felecan, and Daiana Felecan (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 449-465.

[53] Nicole L. Tilford's "The Women of Noah in Early Twentieth-Century Science Fiction," *Journal for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies* 3.1 (2021): 74-94.

[54] "Genesis authors" refer to all who had involved in writing, editing, and the final shaping of the book of Genesis.

writers after the canonization of the book of Genesis. Their portrayals of primordial women, which have been retained and passed down to us through millennia, shaped our understanding of the earliest women in biblical history. We, as modern readers, intentionally or unintentionally absorb early writers' created narratives of these women. Second, why were early Jewish and Christian writers so interested in the identity of primordial women, even though the authors of Genesis did not mentioned them in the canonical scripture? What was their major concern behind their either positive or negative illustration? Third, how did the geographic transmission and cultural distribution of the early writings contribute to the contrasting images of Noah's wife found in the Hebrew Bible and in the Qurʾan? After Christianity and Islam formed as new religions and divorced from their earlier Jewish roots, how would Christian theologies and Islamic teachings shape the later perceptions of these nameless spouses? More complicated still, since similar flood narratives have been found in other ancient literature before the Bible, would these ancient myths also have contributed to the earliest understanding of the flood hero's spouse?

Methodological Issues of the Primeval History

The third challenge to studying primordial women in Genesis lies in the highly complex methodological issues in biblical scholarship. In the opening essay of *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Interpretation and Reception*, a comprehensive survey provided by leading scholars of different facets in contemporary study of Genesis, Jean-louis Ska aptly summarized three series of methodological issues:

> First, there is the question as to whether we find in Genesis a combination of different sources, or of original fragments put together at a later stage, or of an

> original kernel to which several supplements were added at different moments, or—possibly—a combination of these models. Second, there is an ongoing discussion on the possible presence, in Genesis, of several redactions and traces of different editions, or the hand of real "authors." Third, from the point of view of methodology, there is a debate about the respective value of synchronic and/or diachronic exegesis.[55]

In the past two centuries, historical criticism, an umbrella term that includes source, form, redaction, and tradition criticism, has been the predominant literary approach to the study of Genesis and the Pentateuch. The primary goal of historical criticism is to recover the text's original meaning and to reconstruct the historical situations of the author(s) and recipients of the text. While biblical scholars were struggling to recover the original meaning of the primeval narratives and to reconstruct the historical context behind the author(s) of Genesis, the rise of Near Eastern studies further complicated the study of the Primeval History. Since the decipherment of the Mesopotamian flood account by George Smith in 1872, literary parallels between the Near Eastern literature and the biblical narrative became another lively concern in biblical scholarship.[56] Through the decipherment of various Semitic languages and a better understanding of ancient Near Eastern literature, biblical scholars had more references to understand some biblical terms and phrases that were previously unclear to them.[57] However, this comparative approach has called the creation history as *the* source

[55] Jean-Louis Ska, "The Study of the Book of Genesis: The Beginning of Critical Reading," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Joel N. Lohr, David L. Petersen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 4.

[56] The complexity of Gen 6-9 is well captured in the monography on Gen 6-9. See Alan Dundes, ed., *The Flood Myth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

[57] *BDB* suggests 1480 *hapax legomena* in the Hebrew out of a total of 8,679 distinct words used.

of human history into question.[58] More seriously, integrating Near Eastern materials in biblical studies undermines the validity of the Bible as this comparative approach directly challenges the biblical authority. This ongoing issue will continue to challenge biblical scholars in the study of the Primeval History of the Bible. Nowadays, biblical scholars generally agree that Genesis 1-11 is a highly sophisticated composite work, with a coherent unity on the one hand, and diverse genres, namely narrative, genealogy, and lyric poetry, on the other. Well-balanced chiastic structures, recurrent accounts, and inherently contradictory information are elegantly interwoven in the narrative. Any study that proposes to investigate issues within the Primordial History cannot proceed without a substantial discussion of its highly complex literary form and definition of its sources based on previous scholarship. Given the innumerable volumes that have been written either on its mixed literary forms or sources, yet nothing has been said about the women behind these biblical narratives highlighted by various scholars, the question must be asked whether something has been overlooked in biblical scholarship.

[58] The schools of religious history, created at the end of the nineteenth century, devoted their efforts to study the religions in West Asia and their influence on the Bible. Their work was halted by the two World Wars in the twentieth century. New interests in the elements shared between the Bible and ancient West Asia only reappeared in the 1960s. Silvia Schroer, "Ancient Near Eastern Pictures as Keys to Biblical Texts," in *Torah*, ed. Irmtraud Fischer et al. (Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 31.

Current Scholarly Approaches

Gender Perspectives of Identity and Anonymity

Scholars have long used onomastics, the study of names, to learn about the identity of biblical characters.[59] Biblical naming is usually found in a formulaic expression in which etiological information is provided through etymological explanation of a proper name.[60] In the study of naming in the book of Genesis, the etymological explanation of a biblical proper name is usually related to the immediate experience of a character, either in the form of instruction or in the character's speech or action.[61] Sometimes it involves word play expressing the essence of the event, which echoes some features of the name. The central belief is that the name given in accordance with a specific historical occasion is unique in its origin and meaning.[62] The book of Genesis often explains how the name came about. For instance, Eve (חוה) was named because she was the mother of all "living" (הי) in Gen 3:20; after Seth (שת) was born, Eve said, "God has 'provided' (שת) for me another offspring in place of Abel, for Cain had killed him" (Gen 4:25). The Hebrew word šāt (שָׁת) "to provide, or set, place" resembled the name of Seth šēt (שֵׁת). Babel (בבל) was named as God "confused" (בלל) the

[59] Early studies of biblical naming, see Gray, G. Buchanan, *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896); Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1928). Summary of its historical development, see Herbert Marks, "Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology," *JBL* 114 (1995): 21-24 (fn. 1); also Jeffrey L. Cooley, "Judean Onomastic Hermeneutics in Context," *HTR* 11.2 (2019), 184-208, and Soren Lorenzen, *Spoken into Being: Self and Names in the Hebrew Bible* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 11-13.

[60] Fichtner, Johannes. "Die Etymologische Ätiologie in Den Namengebungen Der Geschichtlichen Bücher Des Alten Testaments." *Vetus Testamentum* 6, no. 1 (1956): 372–96; See also discussion in Shectman, *Women in the Pentateuch,* 66-68; Herbert Marks, "Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology," JBL 114.1 (1995): 21-42.

[61] Shectman, *Women in the Pentateuch,* 66.

[62] Jože Krašovec, *The Transformation of Biblical Proper Names* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2010), 4-6; Karla G. Bohmbach, "Names and Naming in the Biblical World," in *Women in Scripture*. Edited by Carol Meyers et. al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000), 33.

language in Gen 11:9. Jacob (יעקב) was named because he was a "heel-holder" (עקב) in Gen 25:26. Isaac (יצחק) was named in Gen 21:5 because his mother Sarah "laughed" (צחק in Gen 18:12) at God's unimaginable birth promise at her old age and later "laughed" (צחק in Gen 21:6) for joy after witnessing the fulfillment of God's promise. Sometimes, a person was given a new name because of a new circumstance. For instance, God changed the name of Abram (אברם "father was exalted") to Abraham (אברהם "chief of multitude") in Gen 17:5. After Jacob (עקב "to follow at the heel" in Gen 25:26) wrestled with the messenger of God in the wilderness to demand a blessing, he was named Israel (ישראל) for he was "the one who strived with God" (שרית עם אלהים) in Gen 32: 28.

Earlier biblical onomasts sought explanations of personal names by means of etymology, believing that the Bible was historically accurate and that the names of biblical characters were real given names. [63] However, the Bible was not composed for later sages. It was written for the contemporary of the narrators, and to be read aloud to them for didactic purposes.[64] Yehuda T. Radday (1990) argued that biblical narrators sometimes adopted personal names to dramatize main protagonists, so that readers might infer what the narrators thought of them.[65] This literary device is reflected in the main protagonists of the Primeval History. According to Radday, Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, and Noah are fictitious names that serve purely literary purposes.[66] None of their names were given by their parents.[67] Personal names in the early chapters of Genesis do not report factual events

[63] The inventory of more than 1500 biblical personal names and of about 650 place names has been diligently studied in its entirety. See reference sources in Yehuda T. Radday, "Humor in Names." in *On Humour and the Comic in the Hebrew Bible*, eds. Yehuda T. Radday, and Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990), 61 fn.2.

[64] Radday, "Humor in Names," 61.

[65] Radday, "Humor in Names," 74.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Radday, "Humor in Names," 75.

but instead illustrate the narrators' didactic, fictitious, and vastly humorous fables.[68] In light of Radday's argument, Richard S. Hess (1993) conducted a thorough study of personal names in Genesis 1-11. He first studied the etymology of each personal names, followed by their association with other names in the near Eastern literature.[69] Hess argued that wordplay is reflected in the names of Lamech's three sons, Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain, and in the names of the three women related to Lamech, Adah, Zillah and Naamah.[70]According to Hess, the etymology and wordplay of personal names in the Primeval History serve both to carry the narrative forward and to provide important clues to its theme and direction.[71]

Among the total of 1426 names found in the Hebrew Bible, only 111 names are women, which accounts for only 9 percent of the total.[72] Tal Ilan (1989) collected Jewish women's names in Palestine in all extant literature found between the Second Temple and Mishnaic periods (330 BCE-200CE).[73] These names are found from the work of *Josephus* (the*Wars*, the *Life* and the last nine volumes of *Antiquities*), the New Testament, rabbinic literature (Mishnah, Tosefta, and Baraitot in the Talmud), funerary Inscriptions from the Second Temple period, papyri and ostraca from the Judaean Desert, and sources such as *Maccabees I* and *II*, the *Wisdom of Sirach*, Eusebius' *History of the Church*, and other apocryphal writings. Ilan collected 247 female names in comparison to

[68] Discussion of other primordial patriarchs in Genesis 4 and 5, see Radday, "Humor in Names," 76-78.

[69] Richard S. Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1-11* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verl., 1993), 4-5.

[70] Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1-11*, 128. Detailed discussion of the etymologies of the three named women, see chapter 4 and 5.

[71] Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1-11*, 157-162, esp. 161.

[72] See Bohmbach, "Names and Naming in the Biblical World," 33-34; Carol Meyers, "Everyday Life Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible," in *Women's Bible Commentary* 1998, 251-252.

[73] Tal Ilan, "Notes on the Distribution of Jewish Women's Names in Palestine in the Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 40.2 (1989): 186-200.

2040 male names in these writings. Female names constitute ca. 10% of the entire sample. Of the 247 names, nearly 60% are Hebrew (145), the rests are Greek (45), Aramaic (42), Latin (10), Persian (4), and Nabatean (1). Approximately 50% of all female names found in these writings are called Mariamme and Salome. The constant repetition of female names suggests that women were grossly discriminated against in this period.[74]

Various scholars (Carol Meyers, Phyllis A. Bird, J. Cheryl Exum, Esther Fuchs and more) showed that the Bible as a whole is an androcentric product. Both male authors and their patriarchal perspectives are reflected in the number of personal names in early Jewish writings. Phyllis Trible (1984) argued that anonymity is not only a symbol of unimportance but also of a "lack of power and personhood."[75] Mieke Bal (1987) highlighted that naming is man's prerogative.[76] To Bal, naming is an embarrassing aspect to a biblical character. While a proper name determines the meaning and function of a character in the narrative, which brings familiarity to the reader and stability to the narrative development, it limits the possibility to understand that character, as their role and destiny in a narrative have already been assigned by the biblical writer.[77] In other words, the study of a biblical character through naming greatly confines the understanding of a biblical character provided by the biblical writers. Richard A. Freund (1990) examined hundreds of citations from rabbinic literature and concluded that anonymous or unnamed women, wives, daughters, widows are often employed for negative connotations (sexual, legal issues) in Hellenistic and rabbinic writings.[78]

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[74] Tal Ilan, "Notes on the Distribution of Jewish Women's Names," 192.

[75] Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 80-81.

[76] Mieke Bal, *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 130.

[77] See Bal, *Lethal Love*, 106-108, also 129-130.

[78] Richard A. Freund, *Understanding Jewish Ethics* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 194.

Later Freund (1992) compared the use of nameless women in the Pentateuch (Genesis-Numbers) based on their sources.[79] J pericopes employed more anonymous female characters, while P pericope represented more significant detail, names and facts about named women and their accomplishments than J.[80] Those who appeared to be anonymous in J often depicted as enemies and sometimes involved sexual issues.[81] Athalya Brenner (1998) refined the namelessness issue of female characters in the book of Judges as below:

> Out of the nineteen female figures or collective figures, only four are named and others are nameless. Such namelessness can be variously interpreted but ultimately, hardly seems to indicate complementary centrality. The women are mostly defined by their M[Male/Masculine] relational status: this is a complementary status. They are often presented as social others or outsiders…. Violence against women is routinely considered or committed, probably as an extended hyperbole symbolic of the disintegrating social order.[82]

In her book *Why ask my name? Anonymity and Identity in Biblical Narrative*, Adele Reinhartz succinctly summarized Brenner's articulation in Judges 19, "the absence of proper name not only effaces narrative identity but also symbolizes the suppression of women in Israelite society."[83] Reinhartz is the first scholar to offer a systematic literary study of unnamed characters in

[79] Richard A. Freund, "Naming Names: Some Observations on 'Nameless Women' Traditions in the MT, LXX, and Hellenistic Literature," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 6:2 (1992): 213-232.

[80] Freund, "Naming Names," 232.

[81] Freund, "Naming Names," 223.

[82] Athalya Brenner, *Feminist Companion to Judges* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 13.

[83] Adele Reinhartz, *Why Ask my name? Anonymity and Identity in Biblical Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11.

the Bible. In this work, Reinhartz introduced various types of anonymous biblical characters to the reader, and she explored the interplay between anonymity and identity.[84] According to Reinhartz, the general assumption by literary critics is that anonymity means the character is unimportant. Feminist scholars often see this as a deliberate way to suppress a woman's identity. The suppression of her voice symbolizes her lack of power and personhood within the narrative context.[85] Reinhartz summarizes her findings by the use of a proper name in biblical texts:

> The proper name therefore defines biblical character. In doing so, it ascribes unity and a full identity to the character and gives the reader a convenient way of referring to the figure and distinguishing it from others. The name may also carry symbolic meaning, which provides insight into the nature, appearance, or significance of the character in the larger story of the Israelite people.[86]

Anonymous persons are usually referred to either by what they do or say or some other identity marker. With no name, they are frequently given a quasi-title such as Pharaoh's daughter (Exod 2:5-10), Jephthah's daughter (Judg 11:30-39), or two harlot mothers (1 Kgs 3:16-28).[87] While modern scholars have developed various approaches to help biblical women gain more attention, many of these research approaches focus on named characters, or significant unnamed characters whose actions and speeches are being highlighted in the grand narrative (e.g. Jephthah's daughter,

[84] Adele Reinhartz, *Why ask my name? Anonymity and Identity in Biblical Narrative*, *4-5.*

[85] Reinhartz, *Why ask my name? Anonymity and Identity in Biblical Narrative*, 6.

[86] Reinhartz, *Why ask my name? Anonymity and Identity in Biblical Narrative*, 8.

[87] The term used in the *Biblegateway* webpage: https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/all-women-bible/Two-Harlot-Mothers (accessed on Jun 17, 2023). Gina Hens-Piazza named them "the two cannibal mothers before a king" in *Nameless, Blameless, and Without Shame* (Interfaces, 2003).

Queen of Sheba). Primordial female characters who made their fleeting appearances in the Bible or whose existence can only be inferred their spouses remain largely underexplored. According to Reinhartz, these women are "shadows,"[88] the term used to indicate those who are only implied in the male-dominated genealogies. They have never had a chance to come to the biblical stage. Other than being described as "shadows," various terms have been adopted to name these mostly neglected women in the Bible: fragmented women,[89] non-human,[90] silenced women,[91] hidden women, [92] expelled women,[93] marginalized women, maligned women, miraculous women,[94] subordinated women,[95] least-known women,[96] and silent and unheard voices of women.[97] Thomas Hieke (2014) paid particular attention to the lack of female names in the primeval genealogies and argued,

> although the names in the genealogies are virtually all masculine, this does not mean that the women were invisible or insignificant. Indeed, the genealogical

[88] Reinhartz, *Why Ask My Name? Anonymity and Identity in Biblical Narrative*, 9.

[89] J. Cheryl Exum, *Fragmented Women Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

[90] Theresa M. Kenney, Simon Gedik, and Arcangela Tarabotti, *"Women Are Not Human": An Anonymous Treatise and Responses*, trans. Theresa M. Kenney (New York: Crossroad Pub., 1998).

[91] Zenobia C. Y. Chan, *Silenced Women* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Incorporated, 2009).

[92] Kathy Coffey, *Hidden Women of the Gospels* (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 1996).

[93] Hens-Piazza, "Supporting Cast or Supporting Caste," 36.

[94] See Deborah Spink Winters, *Marginalized, Maligned, and Miraculous Women in Scripture* (Judson Press, 2019); Sandra Glahn, *Vindicating the Vixens Revisiting Sexualized, Vilified, and Marginalized Women of the Bible* (Kregel Academic, 2017).

[95] L. Juliana M., Claassens, *Transgression And Transformation : Feminist, Postcolonial And Queer Biblical Interpretation As Creative Interventions* (T&T Clark, Bloomsbury, 2021)

[96] Robin Gallaher Branch, *Jeroboam's Wife: the Enduring Contributions of the Old Testament's Least-Known Women* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009).

[97] David T. Adamo, "A Silent Unheard Voice in the Old Testament : the Cushite Woman Whom Moses Married in Numbers 12:1–10," *In die Skriflig Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging* 52.1 (2018): 1–8.

> system in Genesis manifests the eminently important role of the women—even if, or precisely because, the system has a patrilineal structure.[98]

To Hieke, women bore the hope for masculine progeny.[99] They appeared in places that required differentiation to indicate cultural progress of humanity.[100] In other words, women in Gen 4:17-24 were mothers of cultural achievements. Michael Bauks (2019), on the other hand, suggested that the sons and daughters are mentioned only nameless as an emphasis of high fertility rate.[101] In a recent study of names in the Hebrew Bible, Søren Lorenzen (2022) investigated how proper names relate to selfhood in the Hebrew Bible. To clarify the person's semantic essence within the language, Lorenzen nuanced the unique linguistic essence between "proper name," which emerges in the lexical meaning,[102] and שם (name), which constitutes selfhood in the Hebrew Bible. The latter correlates a referent in a discourse outside the language system. It stresses a temporal aspect of the entity, in particular the entity's actions and sufferings through time.[103] Lorenzen showed how anonymity challenges the meaningful encounter with a person because the demarcation of a proper name is lacking:

> Without the boundaries of the symbol, the person's linguistic barriers are breached and individuality flows into a generic muddle. Perhaps this is one reason why texts from the Second Temple period show a heightened interest in naming the unnamed

[98] Hieke, "Genealogy as a Means of Historical Representation," 175.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Hieke, "Genealogy as a Means of Historical Representation," 178.

[101] Michael Bauks, "Intratextual Exegesis in the Primeval History: The Literary Function of the Genealogies in View of the Formation of Gen 1-11," *ZAW* 131:2 (2019):180.

[102] Søren Lorenzen, *Spoken into Being: Self and Names in the Hebrew Bible* (S.I: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 11-13.

[103] Lorenzen, *Spoken into Being*, 14.

> characters in the biblical texts (e.g. Jubilees)…. Without the proper name, the *who* of the person disappears, while the semantics of action leaves an answer to *what* the person is. Furthermore, the semantics of action are closely tied to a specific context, which means a permanence across time and space is difficult to achieve without a proper name.[104]

The vulnerability of countless nameless women in Genesis 4-11 is reflected in a recent onomastic study of women of the Hebrew Bible. Alison Jones Tsukada (2022) provided a thorough linguistic analysis of each name's components, including etymology, morphology, syntax, meaning, and its literary significance.[105] Like other studies on the identities of biblical women, Tsukada's study focused on four named women in the Primeval History. However, this study, like others, does not consider the women who were given no names. This example shows the limitations of using onomastics to identify biblical characters. It also explains why Adah, Zillah, and Naamah received some attention in biblical scholarship. While various scholars have articulated issues on other shadowy characters in the Bible, studying biblical characters through naming practice is not enough to reveal the identities of anonymous female characters in Genesis 4-11.

Gender Perspectives of Folklore Studies of the Bible

Folklore studies of the Bible, derived from Scandinavian folklorists in the mid-nineteenth centuries,[106] were highly refined by Gunkel at the dawn of the twentieth century. Gunkel's

[104] Lorenzen, *Spoken into Being*, 127.

[105] Alison Jones Tsukada, "Onomastic Studies for the Women of the Hebrew Bible" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2022).

[106] Douglas A. Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2006), 169-171; see also Robert C. Culley, "Oral Tradition and Biblical Studies," *Oral Tradition* 1:1 (1986): 30-65, esp. 36-38.

groundbreaking work, *Commentary on Genesis* (1901), shifted the concentration of Genesis studies from investigating its written sources since Julius Wellhausen to tradition history. According to Gunkel, Genesis, as a collection of sagas (*Sagen*),[107] came to its present form from a wide variety of oral folk traditions.[108] Genesis 1-11:9 contain no pure myths (*Mythen*); they are all primal sagas with allusions to the myths (e.g. Gen 6:1-4). [109] Unlike Genesis 12-50, which focuses on the ancestors of particular persons in ancient Israel, the early chapters of Genesis concern the origin of the world and the human race as a whole.[110] The function of the etiological accounts is to respond to the questions about natural events or human civilizations.[111] In his discussion of primordial female characters, Gunkel, followed by subsequent scholars, highlighted the functions of the Cainite and Sethite genealogies, the etymologies of the sons' names, and the ancient traditions behind the song of Lamech, without paying much attention to the women in the Cainite genealogy. [112] Gunkel's inattention to female characters in the Cainite genealogies is no surprise, but precisely the result of his examination of the structure and recurring patterns in biblical scriptures to make suggestions about life settings. The assumption of a close association between a genre and the "setting in life" (*Sitz-im-Leben*) is part of the criticism of Gunkel's form-critical approach by later scholars. This is

[107] This German word has also been translated as "legends" in W.H. Carruth (1980) and in Mark E. Biddle (1997), as "folktale" in Utley, "The Bible of the Folk," *California Folklore Quarterly* 4: 1 (1945), 2, and as "saga" in Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*, 63 and in Thomas B. Dozeman "Form and Tradition Criticism" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Pentateuch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 191.

[108] Hermann Gunkel, *Die Sagen der Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1901), 2-3.

[109] Gunkel identified the difference between myths and sagas. The former referred to narratives about gods, while the latter concerning human beings. See discussion in Gunkel, *Die Sagen der Genesis*, 7-8; also an excellent summary about Gunkel's methodology in Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*, 58-66.

[110] Gunkel, *Die Sagen der Genesis*, 6.

[111] Gunkel, *Die Sagen der Genesis*, 8.

[112] Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis. Übersetzt und Erklärt von Hermann Gunkel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1902), 49-55.

because the Bible, as a biblical literature, has flexible applicability and settings.[113] Nevertheless, Gunkel's was one of the first to show that oral traditions prior to the written form are a possible and indeed a necessary subject for investigation. His attention to the pre-literary stage of oral formation, composition, and transmission stimulated subsequent research in exploring the oral stages of all parts of biblical literature.[114]

Since Gunkel, the study of oral transmission in biblical studies has continued to evolve in various directions. Gunkel's treatment of Genesis narratives later developed into form-criticism.[115] One goal of which was to recover the oral stage development that immediately preceded the written Bible in order to gain insight into the "setting of life" in ancient Israel.[116] Some scholars continued to explore the oral traditions behind the Bible by studying ancient myths in West Asia. Biblical scholars such as Brevard S. Childs (1960), Frank M. Cross (1973),[117] and John W. Rogerson (1974)[118] explored the mythic motifs throughout the biblical anthology between 1960s and 1970s. The growing importance of this approach has been reflected in two edited volumes: *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (1969),[119] and *Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions, Monumental Inscriptions and Archival Documents from the Biblical World* , 4

[113] See discussion in Susan Niditch, "Folklore and the Hebrew Bible: Interdisciplinary Engagement and New Directions," *Humanities* 7: 6 (2018): 2-3.

[114] Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*, 64.

[115] See discussion in Gene M. Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 1-9.

[116] Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament*, 9.

[117] Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[118] John Rogerson, *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation* (New York: de Gruyter, 1974).

[119] James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

vol.(1997-2003, 2018).[120] Subsequent scholars such as John Day (1985),[121] Robert A. Oden (1987),[122] Mark S. Smith (1990),[123] Nick Wyatt (1996),[124] Simon B. Parker (1997),[125] and Alan Dundes (1999)[126] continued to explore various ancient motifs in order to enhance the appreciation of biblical literature as a continuation of ancient culture.[127] These motifs also broaden the understanding of the Bible within its cultural contexts. In the study of the book of Genesis, Gerhard von Rad (1956; English ed. 1961),[128] U. Cassuto (1949; English ed. 1961),[129] E. A. Speiser (1964),[130] and Claus Westermann (1974; English ed. 1984)[131] incorporated ancient sources from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece in their Genesis commentaries to illuminate various theological and exegetical issues.[132] Early comparative studies focused more on investigating patterns and parallels between ancient folklore and biblical narratives, both in content and structure. The

[120] William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger ed.. *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions, Monumental Inscriptions, and Archival Documents from the Biblical World* (New York: Brill, 1997-2003).

[121] John Day, God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[122] Robert A. Oden's discussion in "Interpreting Biblical Myths." Robert A. Oden, *Bible Without Theology: the Theological Tradition and Alternatives to It* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 40–91.

[123] Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990).

[124] Nick Wyatt, Myths of Power: A Study of Royal Myth and Ideology in Ugaritic and Biblical Tradition (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996).

[125] Simon B. Parker, *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions: Comparative Studies on Narratives in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions and the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[126] Alan Dundes, *Holy Writ as Oral Lit: The Bible as Folklore* (Washington D.C.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

[127] In a recent study on myth and biblical tradition, Debra S. Ballentine identified various conflicting topos and investigated how authors utilized the conflicting topos for ideological purposes, for saying things about, responding to, portraying, and shaping socio-political realities in various historical contexts over the span of several millennia, from the second millennium BCE into the middle ages of the Common Era. Debra Scoggins Ballentine, *The Conflict Myth and the Biblical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[128] Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: a Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks (London: SCM Press, 1961).

[129] Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1961).

[130] E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*. Introduction, Translation, and Notes (N.Y: Doubleday, 1964).

[131] Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1984).

[132] See discussion in Susan Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 33-47.

development of "tradition history" (*Überlieferungsgeschichte*) in the following decades was not without criticism. Nevertheless, one contribution that is central to the present study is the general acceptance that the Hebrew Bible is the result of centuries-long, intricate process of development that involved many individuals or groups. The process of literary transmission thus become a legitimate focus of this research.

At the same time, folklore study of the Bible continued to grow and evolve since Gunkel.[133] As discussed above, folklorist Utley performed a major task in the study of unnamed female characters by collecting the extant folklore related to Noah's wife, and the three wives of Noah's sons. Early folklore studies focused on collecting and cataloging folktales from various centuries, so that a good sampling of folklore became available for comparative literary purposes. Susan Niditch (2018) argued that cataloguing folktales in folklore studies is comparable to form-criticism in biblical scholarship, because both fields are interested in recurring motifs.[134] Biblical form critics delineate the content and structure of recurring biblical genres and suggest the "setting in life" based on these communicative forms.[135] Since the mid-1970s, gender issues have burgeoned in folklore studies.[136] Some folklorists argued that women's experiences, values, and meanings had been

[133] Discussion on Bible in folklore, see the introductory chapter of Eric Ziolkowski ed., *The Bible in Folklore Worldwide: a Handbook of Biblical Reception in Jewish, European Christian, and Islamic folklores* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 1-42.

[134] Niditch, "Folklore and the Hebrew Bible: Interdisciplinary Engagement," 1.

[135] Niditch, "Folklore and the Hebrew Bible: Interdisciplinary Engagement," 5-6.

[136] Summary of historical development of feminist studies the field of folklore studies, see M. Jane Young and Kay Turner, "Challenging the Canon: Folklore Theory Reconsidered from Feminist Perspectives," in *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore*, ed. Susan Tower Hollis et al. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 9-22; Margaret Mills, "Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore: A Twenty-Year Trajectory toward Theory," *Western Folklore* 52 (Apr., 1993): 173-192; also M. Jane Young, "Feminist Perspectives on Folklore Scholarship," in *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music, and Art*, ed. Charlie T. McCormick, Kim Kennedy White (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 485-493.

excluded from any society's experiences, meanings and values.[137] The omission of gender issues from early oeuvre is not a slight oversight, but a central concern of the discipline. These gender-conscious folklorists promoted new ways of thinking and innovative approaches to challenge traditional folklore approaches that are filled with gender bias and suppression. The newly employed feminist theories and methodologies radically changed the disciplinary outlook. Among the various feminist approaches that have been adopted in folklore studies, two streams are particularly relevant to our present study. One stream of feminist folklorists rectified various levels of gender imbalance by questioning: How cultural categories were reproduced? In particular, under what conditions women were complicit in or resistant to the reproduction of conventions?[138] These questions pushed the gender study to the initial production of folklore and its subsequent reproduction, the creation and/or recreation of particular forms of folklore in different periods of time. For instance, Amy Shuman (1993) argued that genres are not neutral classification, but are gendered and culturally constructed.[139] By calling attention to the gender issues embedded in the genre classifications, feminist folklorists between the 1970s and 1980s reexamined the ethnic genre classifications to show how particular genres dominated the "worldview" or holistic systems of meaning because of their privileged social status over the others.[140] The discrepancies in social status between genres lead one to question: Who benefits from maintaining such systems? Gender-conscious readings remind us that all interpretations are hierarchical. The reexamination of genre classifications invites us to investigate the relationship between forms, and to see how genre classifications utilize the distribution of power, knowledge, and authority.[141] With the growing concerns of gender boundaries

[137] Young and Turner, "Challenging the Canon," 12.

[138] See Amy Shuman, "Gender and Genre," in *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore* (1993), 71.

[139] Shuman, "Gender and Genre," 71, 74.

[140] Shuman, "Gender and Genre," 75-76.

[141] Shuman, "Gender and Genre," 77.

embedded in cultural writings, another stream of feminist folklorists recorded and documented women's folklore to validate women's traditions.[142] Early folklore collectors, whether men or women, preferred to gather narratives from men, unless those stories concerned home, children, or cooking, which was believed the province of women.[143] With the availability and increasing funding for women's issues in the United States, there was a sudden explosion of literature about women, their folklore, their roles, and their self-perceptions. In the late 1980s, folklorist's attention shifted to the effects of earlier developed theories such as colonialism, feminism, and performance of texts. As gender consciousness grew, folklore studies branched out into three areas: women's folklore,[144] folklore *about* women, and meta-folklore—folklore about folklore.[145] In particular, women's folklore supplied new data in which women exerted power as a means of appropriating genres that were normally reserved for men. By providing a cross-cultural spectrum of traditional texts that address gender difference, women's folklore significantly enriched the examination of sexual difference in hierarchy, power dynamics, and political differentials.

The increasing number of studies on gender issues in ancient literature has also shed new light on our understanding of women in ancient worlds. For instance, Tivka Frymer-Kensky (1977) investigated Sumerian flood motifs in the Atrahasis epic and their relevance to the cosmological

[142] See Lisa Gilman, "Folklore and Folklife of Women, Men, and Other Gendered Identities," in *The Oxford Handbook of American Folklore and Folklife Studies*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 917-936; Clair R. Farrer, "Women's Folklore," in *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music, Art*, vol. 1, ed. Charlie T. McCormick et al., second edition (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 1252-6; see also "Part three: Feminist Lenses and Female Folklore" in *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore* (1993), 277-410.

[143] Farrer, "Women's Folklore," 1253.

[144] See, for instance, Rosan A. Jordan and Susan J. Kalčik ed., *Women's Folklore, Women's Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); Joan Newlon Radner ed., *Feminist Messages : Coding in Women's Folk Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Liz Locke, Theresa A. Vaughan, and Pauline Greenhill ed., *Encyclopedia of Women's Folklore and Folklife* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2008).

[145] Farrer, "Women's Folklore," 1255.

cycle of Genesis 1-9.[146] In her later book, the *Wake of the Goddesses* (1992), Frymer-Kensky showed that goddesses in Near Eastern religions embodied a wide variety of roles, such as wives, mothers, advisers, champions of domestic arts, lovers, warriors, and guardians of the essential arts of civilization.[147] However, female deities were not necessarily representative of female self-perceptions in ancient world, because goddesses had to make sense to male readers and teachers of the text. Goddesses played the role of women in the divine realm, and in fact, they were cultural projections of a society and reflected what the culture believed that women were and should have been. In other words, the portrayals of goddesses reinforced cultural stereotypes of women and made these gender-specific stereotypes sacred.[148] The gradual marginalization of female deities' roles led to an increasing restriction of social and cultural roles of women. One result of this transformation was the appropriation of the roles and domains of female deities by male deities in monotheistic Israel. Hence, the monotheistic God eliminated multiple deities and became the only God who exercised all roles and controlled all facets of natural order, including all the roles of goddesses. This merging led to a fundamental and radical transformation of natural order in the human world. From that point on, all essential needs of a human being were met by one god.

In *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*, Susan Niditch argued that the Hebrew Bible, as traditional literature, is characterized by repetition of patterns on various levels (themes, forms, stories). These patterns imply a certain "setting of life" and conventions through expressions and imagery.[149] Cross-

[146] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Atrahasis Epic and Its Significance for Our Understanding of Genesis 1-9," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 40:4 (1977): 147-155.

[147] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 14.

[148] Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses,* 25.

[149] Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*, 11-12.

cultural comparison plays an important part in the study of folklore. More importantly, Niditch highlighted that folklore is not just an add-on approach to biblical studies, but rather raises issues that are critical for understanding the nature of biblical text.[150] Feminist studies provide new and valuable perspectives on folklore, both to the field of folklore study and to the materials that had been selected. One focus is to see how female characters' attitudes are portrayed in folklore and the Bible. More specifically, how does a person's gender in a particular social setting affect the narration, motif, and image drawn within a convention?[151] Moreover, the portrayal of women's attitudes in folklore has to do with dominant cultural attitudes towards women.[152] These cultural attitudes may be reflected by a person's status in the narrative. Another concern focuses on the psychoanalytical aspects of men's attitudes towards sexuality, their spouses, parents, or children. Since biblical materials had been edited and reformulated, the reformulators then became creators, artists, and composers. The participants' attitudes became a part of traditions that we cannot ignore.[153] In the study of biblical women in rabbinic literature, Judith R. Baskin (1995) highlighted that rabbinic literature expressed a diverse range of attitudes towards women. Women were universally regarded as "separate people" (B. Shabbat 62a). They were different from men in innate qualities and social and legal status.[154] Nevertheless, rabbinic literature also preserved the minority view of an androgynous being, who was created in the divine image and split by God into separate male and

[150] Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*, 12.

[151] Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*, 29-30.

[152] Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*, 30.

[153] Niditch, *Folklore and the Hebrew Bible*, 31.

[154] Judith R. Baskin, "Rabbinic Judaism and the Creation of Woman," *Shofar* 14:1 (1995): 66-71 (67). Baskin (2002) further expanded the argument that women are regarded as secondary beings, inferior to men in every way. For Baskin, rabbinic literature shows an awareness of women's disadvantages and even sympathizes with them, but ultimately the rabbis seek to justify the secondary status of women by linking this right back to their creation after man in Gen 2. See Baskin, *Midrashic Women: Formations of the Feminine in Rabbinic Literature* (Hannover: Brandeis University Press, 2002), 44-87.

female entities.[155] In a recent work on women in rabbinic literature, Tal Ilan, Lorena Miralles-Maciá, and Ronit Nikolsky (2022) highlighted the core issue related to biblical women and gender in rabbinic literature:

> Rabbinic literature is male conceived and male expressed. When the rabbis directed their attention to women, they did so in order to regulate how and to what extent women, the "other" with whom they were obliged to live, affected the lives of men. The rabbis considered the biblical text, describing their past, as a mirror in which to reflect on their ideals. In this past they put biblical women in their places, under their control, according to the rabbinic perception of the world…. As instructive models, the roles of biblical were revised and, to a greater or lesser extent, rewritten from a rabbinic perspective: these women exemplified behaviors or demeanor worthy of imitation or disapproval, and were accepted, or not, into the fold. As in all patriarchal societies, the rabbis placed biblical women in the category of the other. For them, biblical women, thought considered part of the same society, represented otherness not only as against male biblical figures, but also as against ideal Jewish men, embodied by the rabbis themselves.[156]

[155] Baskin, "Rabbinic Judaism and the Creation," 71.

[156] Tal Ilan, Ronit Nikolsky, Lorena Miralles Maciá, eds., *Rabbinic Literature* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2022), 1-2.

Call for Gender Justice in Biblical Reception History

Biblical reception history, an elder sibling of history of interpretation (or history of exegesis), has gained more attention in recent decades.[157] In general, reception history is the study of how biblical texts have changed over a course of time in various cultures and communities, through transmission, translation, or rereading, retelling, and reworking. In short, biblical reception history examines the different ways in which people have received, appropriated, and used biblical texts throughout history. Gradually evolving in biblical scholarship as a multidimensional field, reception history combines various insights and methods drawn from theological hermeneutics and certain literary-influenced trends in historiography and philosophy of history. The contemporary study of biblical reception history laid its foundation on two philosophical works by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960) and Hans Robert Jauss (1982).[158] Traditional historical-critical study focused on extracting meaning from the biblical texts by examining their language, historical context, and relationship to other ancient literature and material culture. This allowed scholars to reconstruct the original biblical texts, their contexts, audiences, and authorial intentions. These two German theorists articulated the impact of culture and historical events to the reception of a text by readers in different periods. Some scholars continued to apply various philosophical theories (e.g. Jürgen Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, Mikhail Bakhtin) to biblical hermeneutics.[159] Other scholars began to organize and trace various streams of traditions, interpretations, influences, and reuses, that were fostered by dialogical events

[157] See Brennan Breed, "What is Reception History" in SBL Bible Odyssey: https://www.bibleodyssey.org/bible-basics/what-is-reception-history/ (accessed on Jun 17, 2023).

[158] See Robert Evans, *Reception History, Tradition and Biblical Interpretation Gadamer and Jauss in Current Practice* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014).

[159] See Part III in Bradley H. McLean, *Biblical interpretation and philosophical hermeneutics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

of meanings between biblical text and reader.[160] Reception history hence gradually developed as a practice of broader studies of cultural appropriations. It includes, but not limited to, artistic renditions,[161] literary retellings, musical, dramatic, and cinematic adaptations of biblical texts,[162] the Bible's role in advertising, politics, scientific discourse, historiography, hagiography, or anything in between.[163] The comprehensive coverage of the change in biblical interpretation from the earliest Jewish writings to modern cultures can be found in two encyclopedic volumes of biblical reception history.[164] Since the rise of reception history in biblical studies, more focuses have been paid to female characters of the Bible, in particular those who were silenced and unnamed in the Bible.[165] The very rich reception history of neglected female figures often contrasts sharply with their fleeting portrayals in Abrahamic religious traditions.[166] Discussion usually begins with early Jewish and Christian interpretations from the Second Temple period onwards. The depiction of these female characters, whether they are named or unnamed, usually shows a similar pattern: from a mixed and

[160] Jonathan Roberts, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*, eds. Michael Lieb, Emma Mason, Jonathan Roberts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1-8.

[161] See Martin O'Kane, "Interpreting The Bible Through the Visual Arts," *HeBAI* 1 (2012), 388-409.

[162] See Rhonda Burnette-Bletsch, ed., *The Bible in Motion: A Handbook of the Bible and Its Reception in Film* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016).

[163] See Breed, "What is Reception History," in SBL Bible Odyssey, and Breed, "Biblical Reception History: A Dangerous Supplement," in The Bible and Its Interpretation: https://bibleinterp.arizona.edu/articles/2014/10/bre388022 (accessed on Jun 17, 2023).

[164] "EBR pursues comprehensively recording – and, indeed, advancing – the current knowledge of the origins and development of the Bible in its Jewish and Christian canonical forms." See Hans-Josef Klauck et al., *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, eds. Hans-Josef Klauck and others (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), ix; In the introduction of *Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*, Jonathan Roberts highlights, "The reception of the Bible comprises every single act or word of interpretation of that book (or books) over the course of three millennia… No one and nothing is excluded." Jonathan Roberts, "Introduction" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*, eds. Michael Lieb, Emma Mason (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1.

[165] See for instance Agnethe Siquans ed., *Biblical Women in Patristic Reception/Biblische Frauen in Patristischer Rezeption* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Gmbh & Co, 2017); Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, ed., *Biblical Women and the Arts* (London: T&T Clark, 2018).

[166] See for instance Stephen R. Burge, Rhonda Burnette-Bletsch, and Katherine Low, "Job's Wife" in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, eds. Constance M. Furey et al. (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 393-404.

often negative portrayals of female characters in early Jewish, Christian, and Islamic interpretations to more sympathetic and even positive images of them in modern interpretations. Two issues are worth highlighting here: First, gender issues in early writings that have been highlighted by various scholars are not reflected in reception history interpretations. Rearticulating early patriarchal interpretations of women without evaluating the embedded gender bias thus reinforces patriarchal readings of these female characters. These patriarchal reading of women lead to the second and a more serious issue: the more affirmative and constructive portrayals of biblical female characters that have been developed in modern biblical scholarship remain extraneous and trivial in the biblical interpretation traditions.

In *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History*, Breed scrutinized the theoretical foundation and methodological implications of reception history in biblical studies. He argued that the notions of "original text" and of "original context" in textual criticism and biblical studies were both modern scholarly constructions, neither of which actually existed:

> The biblical literature is itself a changing process. It was built up over a lengthy span of time and continued to develop and transform until well after any supposedly "original" period. In the form of translations, critical editions, and innovative readings, it continues to change still.[167]

[167] Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic Text : a Theory of Biblical Reception History* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2014), 12.

In a recent edited volume *Reading Other Peoples' Texts: Social Identity and the Reception of Authoritative Traditions*, Ken S. Brown and Breed further illustrated the notion of "original" texts through the identity constructions of Us and Other. Drawing on the work of postcolonial and feminist thinkers Johannes Fabien and Gayatri Spivak, Brown and Breed articulated the notion of Other as follows:

> "[Other is] not merely the difference from Us; it is a subjectively imposed image to which its object is subsumed or domesticated as a counterpoint to Our own identity."[168]

In other words, the self-identity of Us is built upon identifying who is the lower, barbarian "Other." In addition, Brown and Breed provided a helpful framework for exploring the interplay between anonymity and identity in reading the Bible through this binary construction of identity and otherness:

> The text is read *as if* it were addressed directly to each of these [religious] groups, not merely to some "other" people who lived long before them. In each case, perceptions of individual and corporate identity have been simultaneously driven by and justified through particular reading of "other peoples' texts," which are in turn interpreted based on that claimed identity.[169]

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[168] Ken S, Brown and Brennan Breed, "Solid Identity and Scriptural Interpretation," in *Reading Other Peoples' Texts: Social Identity and the Reception of Authoritative Traditions, vol. 20*, ed. Ken S, Brown, Joseph, Alison L, and Brennan Breed (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2020), 9.

[169] Brown and Breed, "Solid Identity and Scriptural Interpretation," 26.

In "Perspectives on a Pluriform Classic" from the same edited volume, Choon-Leong Seow argues that the Book of Job, as a classic in world literature, is like other world classics in that it has no decisive beginning. This is because a true classic can only be composed as the culmination of a long succession of cultural products.[170] In other words, a classic is another cultural product that is rewritten from other already well-known stories or reshaped by other traditions. Therefore, there is neither a common text nor a single point of origin for a classic. A classic exhibits only in its pluriform, through its multifaceted iterations. It has no end.[171] Likewise, the classical narratives in the Primeval History, namely the creation, sibling rivalry, the deluge, and the survival of human beings after the flood, have long traditions of production, reproduction, and adaptation from earlier sources. These traditions were passed down through millennia until they come into their present form. Various scholars have noted the similarity and differences between ancient Near Eastern literature and the Bible, as discussed above. It is not entirely clear whether these earlier iterations are direct predecessors or alternatives to the Hebrew version of the Primeval History. However, it is clear that the Hebrew composition is a consequence of earlier traditions. It was formed and transformed by narratives that have been passed down through millennia. Historical critical scholars have also raised various issues regarding the compositional history of the book of Genesis, its traditional sources, and the processes of transmission and redaction. Hence, there is no question that the current biblical version of the Primeval History had been shaped by various Israelite traditions and passed down to others from earlier ones.

[170] C.L. Seow, "Perspectives on a Pluriform Classic" in *Reading Other Peoples' Texts*, *171.*

[171] Seow, "Perspectives on a Pluriform Classic," 194-5.

In the early 2000s, a group of female scholars from the United States and Europe, members of the European Society of Women in Theological Research (ESWTR), decided to undertake a reception-historical research project on women to empower those who had been silenced or marginalized by the malestream history of exegesis.[172] The Bible and Women Encyclopedic Project focuses on gender-relevant biblical themes, women in the text, and the women throughout history who have read, appropriated, and interpreted the Bible in text and image. This project aims to synthesize gender consciousness in reception history. In 2011, Irmtraud Fischer, Jorunn Økland, Mercedes Navarro Puerto, and Adriana Valerio discussed the term "reception history" and the relationship between text and tradition.[173] They raised a range of theoretical and methodological questions, and called for challenges and investigations. All larger-scale reception-historical encyclopedias, series, and projects have failed to include gender among the basic structuring categories of the project.[174] The failure to include gender in reception history is partly due to the fact that early sources were predominately transmitted and interpreted by male writers.[175] The elimination of female voices may have represented an inevitable androcentric focus. In the book *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2014) highlighted:

[172] Irmtraud Fischer, Jorunn Økland, Mercedes Navarro Puerto, Adriana Valerio, "Introduction—Women, Bible, and Reception History: An International Project in Theology and Gender Research," in *Torah*, ed. Irmtraud Fischer, Mercedes Navarro Puerto, Adriana Valerio (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 1-2, 5.

[173] Irmtraud Fischer et.al., "Introduction," 28.

[174] See for instance, Jonathan Morgan, "Visitors, Gatekeepers and Receptionists: Reflections on the Shape of Biblical Studies and the Role of Reception History," in *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice*, ed. Emma England and William John Lyons (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2015), 61-76; also Timothy Beal, "Reception History and Beyond: Toward the Cultural History of Scriptures," *Biblical Interpretation* 19 (2011) 357-72.

[175] Irmtraud Fischer et.al. , "Introduction," 29.

> "A feminist reception history that traces the interactions between wo/men and the Bible, therefore, cannot be solely interested in how the text has been understood by wo/men and applied throughout history. **It also must analyze the powers that have excluded wo/men from the authoritative traditions of interpretation.**"[176] Moreover, "the malestream biblical interpretations in the past two millennia have not only theorized and served interests of domination, but it has also silenced wo/men as recognized subjects of interpretation by excluding them from professional biblical studies."[177]

The many names assigned to a primordial woman in reception history indicate the significance of giving meaning to these hidden characters through their names. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire articulated, "How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation? Only as they discover themselves to be "hosts" of the oppressor can they contribute to the midwifery of their liberating pedagogy."[178] One approach to humanizing those whose humanity has been stolen is through the action of naming:[179]

> "Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words.... To exist, humanly, is to *name* the world,[180] to change it. Once named, the world in its

[176] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Between Movement and Academy: Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century" in *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 3.

[177] Fiorenza, "Between Movement and Academy," 4.

[178] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, with an introduction by Donald Macedo, thirtieth anniversary edition (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 48.

[179] On humanization and dehumanization, see Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 43-44.

[180] According to Freire, "the world" is preoccupation with *what* and *how* people are "being." See Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 43 fn.1.

> turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new *naming*. Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection."[181]

While women in the Bible cannot speak for themselves, those who are aware of gender and power dynamics of the oppressed characters in the narrative can speak for them. Early interpretations focused on tracing the identities of neglected primordial women for moral and ethical teachings, without paying attention to the gender issues embedded behind these interpretations. In *Gender Justice in Muslim-Christian Readings*,[182] Anne Hege Grung discussed the notion of "gender justice":

> The term "justice" can be interpreted both subjectively and objectively, and the interplay between the subjective and objective provides space for individuality and difference while at the same time including the political aim of equality. The use of the notion "gender justice" instead of "gender equality," however, makes it more apparent that the premises for the evaluation of equality are not fixed in advance. This means that the power of definition is not settled automatically in a hegemonic discourse but is open for negotiation.[183]

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[181] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 88.

[182] Anne Hege Grung analyzed how Christian and Muslim women in Norway relate to and interpret texts from their canonical scriptures (the Bible, the Koran, and the Hadith) when reading the texts together. In particular, this study focused on two passages: One is Hagar/Hajar narratives in Gen 16:1-16 and the Hadith, another is the reading of 1 Tim 2:8-15 and Q 4:34 on the submission of women. As Grung highlighted in the beginning of the study, this qualitative research project aimed at interpreting readers and communicative processes, not texts. Grung explored discourses on gender, gender justice and its relation to Muslim-Christian encounters and canonical scriptures. While highlighting the distinct interpretative reading strategies of their respective religious traditions, Grung looked for shared strategies of interpretation and meaning-making across religious boundaries and for shared agency for achieving gender justice among Muslim and Christian women. Anne Hege Grung, *Gender Justice in Muslim-Christian Readings: Christian and Muslim Women in Norway. Making Meaning of Texts from the Bible, the Koran, and the Hadith* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 3-5.

[183] Grung, *Gender Justice in Muslim-Christian Readings*, 5.

While Grung's study focused on analyzing different hermeneutical strategies that have been adopted by the Norwegian Muslim and Christian feminist readers, Grung also addressed the importance of gender-conscious readers who hold different beliefs to read canonical scriptures together,[184] and engage in dialogue in order to gain knowledge about the other.[185] Similarly, Freire underlined that dialogue is an existential necessity and the foundation of naming the world.[186] True dialogue, as the encounter of those addressed to the common task of learning and acting, can only take place with love, humility, faith in people, and critical thinking.[187] Yet, it is important to remember that the shaping of a discourse and social practice is dynamic and in constant movement. This is just as true for people's standpoints, references, and positions, which change geographically, socially, and culturally.[188] According to Grung, one possible result of this dialogical process is double blindness between religious traditions and their theologies, on the one hand, and gender research on cultural encounters and multiculturalism, on the other.[189] The former often neglects gender research, and the latter often excludes religious identity and belonging, and sometimes religion as a category, in their research.[190] One way to transform this double blindness into a double consciousness is to analyze gendered power structures to view gender and women issues, cultural and religious identity, and practices behind canonical scriptures.[191]

[184] According to Grung, the Bible and the Qur'an are canonical scriptures in Christianity and Islam and by the general public in contemporary Norway. The Hadith is also considered an authoritative source of revelation among most Muslims. Grung, *Gender Justice in Muslim-Christian Readings*, 3.

[185] Grung, *Gender Justice in Muslim-Christian Readings*, 466.

[186] See discussion in Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 88-89.

[187] See discussion in Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 90-93.

[188] Grung, *Gender Justice in Muslim-Christian Readings*, 438.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Grung, *Gender Justice in Muslim-Christian Readings*, 438-439.

[191] Grung, *Gender Justice in Muslim-Christian Readings*, 439.

Dissertation Purpose and Methodology

The silence of primordial women in Genesis 4-11, in contrast to the many names and roles assigned to them in Abrahamic religious interpretations and biblical folklores, urges me to adopt a more systematic approach to giving voice to the most hidden and neglected figures of the Bible. Women's voices are often erased from sacred texts and are negatively interpreted in early interpretations without registering exegetical prejudices through centuries wherein women were culturally othered. I argue that studying a female character in biblical reception history without evaluating the gender bias embedded in its early sources is reinscribing, even reaffirming, biblical conceptions of patriarchy. Building upon contributions from previous studies on primordial women and Grung's research on gender justice, this dissertation incorporates gender discussions on early sources with reception history approach to call attention to gender justice for selected primordial women in biblical interpretation history. In particular, I investigate the many iterations of three characters: Cain's wife (Gen 4:17), Adah and Zillah, the two wives of Lamech (Gen 4:19-22), and Noah's wife (Gen 6-8) from their prequels to their consequences in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. The contrasting portrayals of each primordial female character represent the epitome of countless women's life experiences. Grung's study shows us that gender injustice is not only embedded in male-dominated biblical genealogies, but also in hegemonic discourse in early Christian and rabbinic interpretations. Instilling gender perspectives into the evaluation of early writings on primordial women in biblical reception history can reveal sexual bias embedded in biblical narratives and in early interpretations. It can also subvert expected norms in various cultures that uphold certain views of women. More importantly, this approach enables gender-aware biblical interpretations to play a more balanced role than patriarchal interpretations, which were dominated by early church fathers and rabbis for millennia.

Chapter Division

This chapter has set out to realign the focus of this research by addressing three interlocking challenges that have previously blocked our motivation to study primordial women in Genesis 4-11. It then articulated major contributions in biblical and feminist scholarship, folklore studies, and biblical reception history to study these neglected women's identities. Paulo Freire's focus on the pedagogy of the oppressed and Anne Grung's study on gender justice in Muslim and Christian readings of canonical scriptures remind us the importance of modern readers' active roles in participating in biblical interpretations. All of these components became the skeletal structure of the current project. This introductory material is followed by an overview of early writings that have assigned names and roles to primordial women. Chapter 2 highlights early sources that provide names and identities of primordial women. Where applicable, I will include gender discussions from previous scholarship to evaluate these writings. This will help us broaden our understanding of gender issues in these texts. Chapters 3 to 5 focus on the changing identities and roles of selected primordial women. Chapter 3 focuses on the wife of Cain. It begins with cultural references of Cain's narratives found in the Near Eastern and ancient Egyptian literature. These narratives have been discussed by various scholars for their similarities. Chapter 4 focuses on Adah and Zillah, whose existence, according to the biblical writer, is purely based on their relationship with Lamech. Rabbinic interpretations of the two wives and their relationships with Lamech shaped the very negative portrayals of them in late medieval Christian interpretations. Chapter 5 focuses on the wife of Noah. Among the 103 names of her, this chapter focuses on the exemplary names of her that have significant influences on cultivating the contrasting images of her in subsequent centuries. Chapter 6, the concluding chapter, evaluates the changing interpretations of selected primordial women discussed in previous chapters. I propose that the contrasting identities of these silenced women in

the Primeval History call the audience to envision biblical interpretations that dispense divine justice for **all** human beings and give them voices.

CHAPTER 2: EARLY SOURCES ON PRIMORDIAL WOMEN

This chapter is set to provide an overview of early sources that provide comprehensive lists of names and information of primordial women. Jewish traditions are represented by the *Book of Jubilees* and the *Book of Biblical Antiquitie*s, also known as *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*. Christian traditions include a number of early church writings and Byzantine chronographers found in two publication series: *Patrologiae Cursus Completes* and *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*, and the Arabic *Book of the Roles*. Islamic tradition is represented by Ṭabarī's *Annals.* These early writings provide the identity of primordial women and/or familial relationships with their spouses. Other early writings that focus on a specific primordial woman will be highlighted in subsequent chapters.

Jewish Traditions

Book of Jubilees

The earliest source to provide identities of primordial women is the *Book of Jubilees*.[192] This work consists of fifty chapters that generally follows the order of biblical narratives from Genesis 1 through Exodus 19. Dated sometime between the second century BCE and the first century CE, *Jubilees* is probably the most important book to provide names and relationships of unnamed female

[192] R.H. Charles proposed that the book entitled "Names of the Wives of the Patriarchs according to the Hebrew Book called Jubilees" based on a Syriac fragment in British Museum MS., Add. 12,154, fol.180. R.H. Charles, *The Ethiopic Version of the Hebrew Book of Jubilees* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1895), 183. James L. Kugel (2012) showed the earliest reference is found in the *Damascus Document* (col.16:3-4) in Qumran as "The Book of the Divisions of Times according to Their Jubilees and Their Weeks." See James L. Kugel, *A Walk Through Jubilees* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 2, and "Jubilees" in *Outside the Bible*, 3 vols. (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 1:273-4.

characters in the Primeval History. Since fragments of *Jubilees* are found in the Dead Sea scrolls in 1940s,[193] it is now confirmed that the manuscript was originally written in Hebrew,[194] probably translated into Greek and then from Greek into Latin and Geʿez (ancient Ethiopic).[195] No direct Greek textual evidence is known today, only quotations were preserved by early Christian writers.[196] The Latin translation, which contained approximately one-fourth of the original composition, was partially preserved in one manuscript.[197] The entire book, however, was preserved in Geʿez in multiple manuscripts, yet dated to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The present translation is based on four Geʿez manuscripts of *Jubilees* provided by R.H. Charles (1895) who referenced his contemporary extant sources wherever clarification is needed.[198] Both O. S. Wintermute (1985)[199] and James L. Kugel (2013)[200] followed Charles's translation with minor editions. Wintermute included the Qumran fragments in his critical apparatus, while Kugel added rabbinic and biblical

[193] Fifteen fragmentary Hebrew manuscripts have been preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls; the oldest of them, 4Q216, is dated paleographically to about 125-100 B.C.E. This high number of copies indicates the special status of the book with the Qumran community.

[194] R.H. Charles *The Ethiopic Version of the Hebrew Book of Jubilees*, ix-x.

[195] R.H. Charles *The Ethiopic Version of the Hebrew Book of Jubilees*, x; Further discussion in James L. Kugel, *A Walk Through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of Its Creation* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1:4-5.

[196] See Paul A. Lagarde, *Genesis Graece* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1868). The names of the primordial women and most of their family relationship with the patriarchs are found in the margins next to the names of the patriarchs in the text. Other than the wives of Shem, Arpachshad, and Terah, the wives of other patriarchs listed the Jubilees are recorded properly.

[197] The Latin text was first published by Antonio M. Ceriani (1828-1907), Monumenta Sacra et Profana, Tom. Ii. Fasc. I in 1861 and re-edited by H. Rönsch, "Das Buch der Jubiläen unter Beifügung des revidirten Textes der … lateinischen Fragmente" (1874) and later by R.H. Charles (1895); See Nikelsburg 1984, "The Bible Rewritten and Expanded" in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. M.E. Stone, Assen: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress, 89-156.

[198] Detail discussion on the sources, see R.H. Charles *The Ethiopic Version of the Hebrew Book of Jubilees*, ix-xxvii (xii-xiv).

[199] O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees (Second Century B.C.) A New Translation and Introduction" in James H. Charlesworth ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (NY: Dobleday & Company Inc.: 1985), 2:42.

[200] Kugel, "Jubilees" in *Outside the Bible*, 1:282.

references in his commentary.[201] Vanderkam's two-volume commentary on *Jubilees* (2018) provided the most comprehensive discussion and comparison of sources with latest references.[202] The names and relationships of primordial women with their spouses found between *Jubilees* 4 and 11 are highlighted below:

Cain married ʾAwan (his sister in 4:9);

Seth married ʾAzūra (his sister in 4:11);

Enosh married Noam (his sister in 4:13);

Kenān married Muʾaleleth (his sister in 4:13);

Mahalalel married Dinah (daughter of Barakiʾel, his father's brother in 4:15);

Jared married Baraka (daughter of Rasuyal, his father's brother in 4:16);

Enoch married ʿEdni (daughter of Danʾel, his father's brother in 4:20);

Methuselah married ʿEdna (daughter of ʿAzriʾal, his father's brother in 4:27);

Lamech married Betenos (daughter of Baraki'il, daughter of his father's brother in 4:28);

Noah married ʾEmzara (daughter of his father's brother in 4:33);

Ham married Naʾeltama'uk (Ham built a city and named it after his wife in 7:14);

Japheth married ʿAdataneses (Japheth built a city and named it after his wife in 7:15);

Shem married Sedeqetelebab (Shem built a city and named it after his wife in 7:16);

Arpachshad/Rasuʾeya (daughter of Susan & Elam in 8:1);

Cainan married Melka (daughter of Madai and Japheth in 8:5);

[201] van Ruiten (2000), on the other hand, attempted to reconstruct the Genesis narratives by comparing Gen 1:1-11:19 and Jub 2:1-10:36 through synoptic perspectives. For the reconstruction of the primordial genealogies, see chapter 3 "From the Garden to the Flood" in J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, *Primeval History Interpreted: The Rewriting of Gen 1-11 in the book of Jubilees* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 113-180, in particular 128-130.

[202] James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees: the Hermeneia Translation*. 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2020).

Shelah married Muʾak (daughter of Kesed, his father's brother in 8:6);

ʿEber married ʿAzurad (daughter of Nebrod in 8:7);

Peleg married Lomna (daughter of Sina'ar in 10:18);

Reu and ʿOra (daughter of Ur, son of Kesed in 11:1);

Seroh "Serug" married Melka (daughter of Kaber, his father's brother in 11:7);

Nahor married ʿIyaska (daughter of Nestag of the Chaldees in 11:9);

Terah married ʿEdna (daughter of ʿAbram, his father's sister in 11:14).

The *Jubilees'* genealogy list provides modern readers a deeper understanding of the primordial family structures. It also enriches our understanding of the name of every primordial woman and her relationship with her spouse. However, for early church fathers and medieval Christian Byzantine historians, this list was crucial to vindicating the legitimate identity of Jesus, the Christian messiah, as the direct descendant of Abraham's genealogy through Seth from Adam. An eleventh-century Armenian Christian manuscript was discovered in the library of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. This manuscript listed the names of biblical patriarchs from Adam through Jacob and the names of their wives. The names of the wives correspond to Jub.3:34-11:14. More importantly, this manuscript concluded with four women who bore descendants of Abraham mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in Matt 1:1-17. They are Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba (Matt 1:3, 5-6).[203] While the Hebrew text of *Jubilees* was no longer copied and preserved by rabbinic Jews, W. L. Lipscomb (1978) showed that the interest in the names displayed by the Armenian text is widely attested in early Christian literature. Jerome, Origen, and numerous other Christian writers compiled lists of biblical names and the names of the wives to explain their

[203] See W.L. Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," *JJS* 29 (1978): 149-151.

Hebrew derivations.[204] Since the tradition concerning the names of patriarchs' wives were widely circulated and transmitted into a number of languages, Lipscomb compared the list of primordial women's names in the extant *Jubilees'* manuscripts in Geʿez, Armenian, Syriac, Greek, and three late Hebrew translations[205] to show their textual variants in a way that highlighted the significance of the traditions.[206] For instance, in the discussion of Bitenos (*bt ʾntš*) as Lamech's wife,[207] Lipscomb showed a disparate source that in *Sefer Ha-Yashar* (Bereshit 6b), Lamech married *ʾšmwʿ* after Adah (*ʿdh*) and Zillah (*ṣlh*) died.[208] Another tradition appeared to show the name of Lamech's wife as Kifar in the Arabic *Cave of Treasure*, and Kîpâ in Syriac *Cave of Treasure*.[209] According to Lipscomb, the etymologies and forms of these women's names in this comparative study further supported the arguments proposed by R.H. Charles (1902),[210] and J. T. Milik (1959)[211] that the *Jubilees* was originally composed in Hebrew.[212] In addition, Lipscomb proposed that the three late Hebrew texts preserved the earlier Jewish traditions of *Jubilees.*[213]

Building upon the research of women's name lists provided by Lipscomb, Tal Ilan (1993) included other early writings that followed the *Jubilees* tradition to show that the influence of

[204] Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," 151.

[205] See Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," 161.

[206] Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," 149, 156-163.

[207] It is important to note that some traditions assigned Betenos as the wife of Lamech in Gen 5:28-31, the father of Noah, instead of the Lamech from the Cainite genealogy in Gen 4:19-14. See, for instance, the discussion in Pieter W. van der Horst, "Bitenosh's Orgasm (1QapGen 2:9-15)," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 43 (2012), 613-628; also the Aramaic transcription with English translation and notes of col.2 in Daniel A. Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon. A New Text and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13-17* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 35-37.

[208] Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," 158, fn31.

[209] Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," 159.

[210] R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902) xxx-xxxiii.

[211] J. T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea* (London: SCM, 1959),32.

[212] Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," 154-56.

[213] Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," 154-5.

Jubilees and its circle dealing with the names of biblical wives had a far-reaching effect on both Jewish, Christian, and even Islamic literature, far beyond that of the *Book of Jubilees* itself.[214] Ilan collected various apocryphal writings and identified six traditions that displayed distinctive features on biblical women's names and their significant influence on later literature.[215] In addition, this study showed that some nameless biblical women drew more attention than the others.[216] These women were the wives of Cain, Abel, and Seth, Noah's wife and the three wives of Noah's sons, Abraham's mother, Lot's wife and daughters, Job's wife, Ishmael's wives, the wife of Potiphar, Pharoah's daughter, and the Queen of Sheba. Ilan's findings also showed that 29 names were assigned to Cain's wife, 5 names to Abel's wife, 32 names to Seth's wife, 27 names to Noah's wife, 11 names to Shem's wife, 10 names to Ham's wife, and 8 names to Japheth's wife.[217] These primordial women's names were found in different languages, geographical locations, and traditions. Some of these residual materials found in early literature were reshaped by later writers to form a sacred historiography for their own traditions. While *Jubilees* carried only a relative authority among the Jewish tradents, the list of women's names and its variants preserved in other apocryphal writings indicated that the *Jubilees* traditions had been in circulation as late as the sixteenth century.

Among various interpretive issues discussed about *Jubilees*, Betsy Halpern-Amaru (1999) adopted the author's unusual interest in female biblical characters as a lens to explore the ideology

[214] Tal Ilan, "Biblical Women's Names in the Apocryphal Traditions" *JPS* 11 (1993), 5-10 and Table 1 in 43.
[215] Ilan, "Biblical Women's Names," 5-23, 48-64.
[216] Ilan, "Biblical Women's Names," 32.
[217] Ilan, "Biblical Women's Name," 61-2, 64.

behind this revision of the Bible.[218] In *The Empowerment of Women in the Book of Jubilees*,[219] Halpern-Amaru argued that the inclusion of the first mothers in biblical genealogy is to affirm the purity of antediluvian genealogies.[220] Similar to the biblical arrangement, the list of primordial women's names was presented through the generations of the patriarchs' progeny.[221] The author of *Jubilees* did not identify the origin of every primordial woman, nor did he explain how she became the wife of a primordial patriarch. In addition, some biblical matriarchs in *Jubilees* were far more developed (e.g. Sarai in Jub. 14:21-24). The author of *Jubilees* seemed to apply standards of priestly purity to exclude foreign descent from the community of Israel.[222] In other words, genealogical credentials could only be attained through Jewish endogamy.[223] To underline the importance of endogamy, *Jubilees* presented the angelic watchers as a striking negative paradigm. The sin of the watchers was not that they descended to earth from heaven (cf. 1 Enoch 6-16), but that they married "whomever they chose" (Jub 7:21).[224] The violence of their progeny thus functioned as an ominous warning against the dangers of intermarriage. After investigating various female representations, including antediluvian wives, matriarchs, mothers of covenant, and other women, Halpern-Amaru highlighted a number of observations concerning the *Jubilees*' unconventional interest in women. These observations are particularly relevant to our present

[218] On this issue see also Christine Hayes, "Intermarriage and Impurity in Ancient Jewish Sources," *HTR* 92 (1999) 15–25, who writes independently of Halpern-Amaru.

[219] See also her earlier article, "The First Woman, Wives, and Mothers in Jubilees", *JBL* 113/4 (1994), 609-626

[220] Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women in the Book of Jubilees* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 18.

[221] It is also worth noting that both antediluvian wives and matriarchs the author presents the same type of information—the name and lineage credentials that identify the new wife as inside or outside the line. Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women*, 5, 28.

[222] Women whose names appear in the lists of generations from Adam to Abram provide important significance of maternal lineage for each new line. Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women*, 28, 155.

[223] On Jubilees views of intermarriage with foreign women, see Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women*, 153-155.

[224] Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women*, 28.

research: First, unlike the biblical presentation, *Jubilees*' author emphasized the importance of matrilineal moral quality. The choice of a wife is decisive in determining the moral quality of each generation.[225] Women can be corrective partners who nurture the family and the lineage, or corruptive companions who mate their consorts and sons to immortality and destruction. Second, until the time of Noah, marriages were typically between first cousins. The head of the line would marry the daughter of his father's brother.[226] The unions between patriarchs and matriarchs imitated the wholeness of Adam and Eve's marriage. Marriages in consanguinity closely resembled those of the best of other antediluvian ancestors.[227] Third, *Jubilees*' author showed an overwhelming concern with ethnic purity. *Jubilees* determined purity based on a single standard: descent from a woman with the appropriate genealogical credentials.[228] The fifteen Qumran fragmentary copies of *Jubilees* further confirmed the priestly concern with pure descent.[229] Last, the genealogical credentials carried by each matriarch were expressed not only in the closeness of the bond with her husband, but also in the influence she had on the progress of the covenant history.[230] Halpern-Amaru revealed to us that the *Jubilees'* author believed that the presumption of both genetic and ethnic purity through women was crucial to sustaining a family's genealogy in order to keep the holy seed of Israel. James C. Vanderkam (2018) argued that *Jubilees* did not advance feminist agenda by enhancing the roles played by a number of women in the book, because the author consigned most women who are outside the chosen line to the domain of

[225] Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women*, 147.

[226] Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women*, 148.

[227] Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women*, 149.

[228] Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women*, 155; William Loader (2007) basically follows Halpern-Amaru's discussions regarding the women in antediluvian genealogy. See William Loader, *Enoch, Levi, and Jubilees on Sexuality : Attitudes Towards Sexuality in the Early Enoch Literature, the Aramaic Levi Document, and the Book of Jubilees* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2007), 188-89.

[229] Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women*, 156-8.

[230] Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women*, 158-9.

impurity and emphatically highlighted it in the case of Canaanite ladies. Women who were within the correct family were more prominent figures in *Jubilees* than they did in Genesis.[231]

Book of Biblical Antiquities (Bib. Ant.)

Popularly known as *Pseudo-Philo*, *Bib. Ant.* is a first century rewritten biblical narratives from Genesis to the books of Samuel. This book begins with genealogy from Adam to Noah (*Bib. Ant.* 1), and continues with narratives of Cain (*Bib. Ant.* 2) , Noah and the Flood (*Bib. Ant.* 3), the genealogy of Noah (*Bib. Ant.* 4), the sons of Noah (*Bib. Ant.* 5), and the tower of Babel (*Bib. Ant.* 6). The remaining chapters of Gen 12-50 are quickly summarized in the narrative of Abram (*Bib. Ant.* 7), and from Abram to Joseph (*Bib. Ant.* 8). Large sections of Genesis materials are either omitted or skimmed briefly. The disproportionate distribution of the book of Genesis suggests that the author of *Bib. Ant.* had a great concern for early genealogical development in the Primeval History. The extant Latin text preserved only in approximately twenty medieval manuscripts dated to the eleventh centuries.[232] Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that *Bib. Ant.* was originally composed in Hebrew after the destruction of the Temple in Palestine sometime between the first and the first half of second century CE and translated into Greek.[233] The Latin text thus experienced at least two stages of recensions from the original. As a whole, *Bib. Ant.* is regarded

[231] See discussion in James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees: a Commentary on the Book of Jubilees*. Edited by Sidnie White Crawford (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 61-62.

[232] Howard Jacobson, "Pseudo-Philo, Book of Biblical Antiquities" in *Outside the Bible*, 3 vols (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2013) 1:470.

[233] Palestinian Adaptions.: 239; Detailed discussion on dating and characteristics of *Bib. Ant.* in comparison with other early Jewish texts including *Jubilees*, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities*, see Rhonda J. Burnette-Bletsch, "The Reception of Genesis in Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum, 448-463, especially 450-453; Jacobson, "Pseudo-Philo, Book of Biblical Antiquities" in *Outside the Bible*, 1:470.

as a valuable resource for understanding the first century Jews who retold their sacred stories and expounded Jewish thoughts from the late Second Temple period.[234]

Unlike *Jubilees* focusing on the identities of primordial wives, *Bib. Ant.* gives a detailed account on the number and identities of sons and daughters of each generation. Only three names of primordial wives are found in *Bib. Ant.* 2: Themech, Ada, and Sella. The first mother Eve is completely omitted in this writing. Similar to the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11, the descendants are introduced in recurrent formulae: "after he begot …, …lived … years and begot …sons and … daughters." (*Et vixit* [name of the father] *postquam genuit* [name of the son] *annos* [age of the father], *et genuit filios* [number of sons] *et filias* [number of daughters]). Unlike biblical genealogies assigning a generic term בנות "daughters" to include all women hidden behind these genealogies (Gen 5:4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26, 30; 11:11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, and 25), *Bib. Ant.* provides names of every son and daughter of each generation: "These are the names of the sons" (*Et hec sunt nomina virorum*) followed by "the names of his daughters" (*Et he filie eius*). For the purpose of present study, I list the number of children to show the gender distribution but highlight only the names of the daughters in *Bib. Ant.* 1, and the names of the wives and daughters in *Bib. Ant.* 2-3. Noaba was the first daughter of Adam's genealogy other than his three sons Cain, Abel and Seth. (1:1) After Seth, the first couple had another twelve sons and seven daughters. The names of the daughters are Fua, Iectas, Arebica, Sifa, Tetia, Saba, and Asin (1:3). Seth had three sons and two daughters (1:4). The daughters' names are Malida and Thila (1:5). Enosh had two sons and a

[234] Frederick J. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo. Rewriting the Bible* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1993), 3; Daniel J. Harrington, a New Testament scholar who produced critical Latin text of *Bib. Ant.* with English translation in *sources Crétiennes* 229, argues that *Bib. Ant.* is a literary writing to clarify and actualize the biblical story. SC 229, 60-386.

daughter, the daughter is named Catennath (1:7). Cainan[235] had three sons and two daughters. The names of the two daughters are Ana and Leva (1:9). Mahalalel had seven sons and five daughters. The daughters are Ada, Noa, Iebal, Mada and Sella (1:10). Jared had four sons and two daughters after begetting Enoch. The daughters are Tetzeco and Lesse (1:13). Enoch had five sons and three daughters after he begot Methuselah. The names of his daughters are Theis, Lefith, and Leath (1:16). Methusaleh had two sons and two daughters after he begot Lamech, the daughters are Aluma and Amuga. (1:18).

Then the author of *Bib. Ant.* introduces the name of Cain's wife as Themech (2:1-2). No background and relationship about her and Cain had been highlighted. After Cain begot Enoch, Cain had three sons and two daughters. The daughters are Citha and Maac (2:4) The next verse highlights the merging of genealogies between Cain and Seth. Enoch took one of the daughters from Seth as wife (2:5), who became the forebear of Lamech in Gen 4:19-23. The introduction of the two wives of Lamech, Ada and Sella (2:6, 7, 9, and 10), follows the biblical tradition. After introducing the first wife Ada in 2:7, the author of *Bib. Ant.* highlighted the evil deeds of human beings on earth, and justifies the reason why Lamech involved in killing through his speech to Ada and Sella (2:10). The beginning of *Bib. Ant.* 3 follows Gen 6:1-4 highlighting human beings began to multiply on earth and the sons of God saw the daughters of men very beautiful and took for themselves wives (3:1). The remaining of this chapter summarized Noah and the flood narrative in Genesis 6-8. Sharing the same fate as Eve, Noah's wife is completely omitted in *Bib. Ant.*. The wives of Noah's three sons are briefly mentioned when the water subsided, the sons' wives followed their husbands to go out of the ark (3:8). While the names of Noah's three sons are

[235] cf. Kenan in Gen 5:9-10.

properly introduced in 4:1, no names of their wives are given. The genealogies in *Bib. Ant.* 4 begin with Japheth (4:1-4), Ham (4:6-8), and Shem (4:9-17). Unlike the recurrent formulaic found in earlier chapters, the author only listed the names of the sons in genealogies of Japheth and Ham. As for the genealogy of Shem, the identities of the wives and the names of the daughters only mentioned beginning with Peleg's generation in *Bib. Ant.* 10-11:

> The sons of **Peleg took wives from the daughters of Joktan** (brother of Peleg in 4:9) and produced sons and daughters. Then **Reu took his wife Melcha the daughter of Ruth**, and she bore to him Serug. When the day of delivery came, she said, "From this one there will be born in the fourth generation one who will set his dwelling on high and will be called perfect and blameless; and he will be the father of nations, and his covenant will not be broken, and his seed will be multiplied forever.

Howard Jacobson (2013) proposed that the birth prophecies given by Melcha are commonly found in Midrash and pseudepigrapha (cf. *Sefer Ha-Yashar* 24). The twofold modifier "perfect" and "blameless (*Bib. Ant.* 4:11) is comparable to Gen 17:1, which indicates Abraham's "perfectness" (תמים) to suggest both moral and physical perfection.[236] After Reu begot Serug, he had another seven sons and five daughters. The name of the daughters are Cedema, Derisa, Seifa, Ferita, and Theima (4:13). Later after Serug begot Nahor, Serug had another four sons and three daughters. The daughters are Tefila, Ode and Selifa (4:13). After Nahor begot Terah, Nahor had another eight sons and five daughters. The daughters are Esca, Thifa, Bruna, Cene, and Etha (4:14).

[236] Jacobson, "Pseudo-Philo, Book of Biblical Antiquities" in *Outside the Bible*, 1:481.

The next chapter focuses on the census of Noah's descendants. The descendants of the three sons came together and decided to review and count the people who were kin to them (5:2). No women's names are mentioned in this chapter. In addition, the census of each genealogy ends with a phrase "apart from/besides women and children," (*preter/extra mulieres et pueros* in 5:4-5; 5:7) indicating the great number of genealogical development through Noah's three sons.

Summary of the daughters' names in *Bib. Ant.*'s primeval genealogies:

Adam's daughters:	Noaba (1:1)
	Fua, Iectas, Arebica, Sifa, Tetia, Saba, and Asin (1:3)
Seth's daughters:	Malida and Thila (1:5)
Enosh's daughter:	Catennath (1:7)
Cainan's daughters:	Ana and Leva (1:9)
Mahalalel's daughters:	Ada, Noa, Iebal, Mada and Sella (1:10)
Jared's daughters:	Tetzeco and Lesse (1:13)
Enoch's daughters:	Theis, Lefith, and Leath (1:16)
Methuselah's daughters:	Aluma and Amuga. (1:18)
Cain's wife:	Themech (2:1-2)
Cain's daughters:	Citha and Maac (2:4)
Lamech's wives:	Ada and Sella (2:6, 7, 9, and 10)
Serug's wife:	Melcha (4:11)
Serug's daughters:	Cedema, Derisa, Seifa, Ferita, and Theima (4:13)
Nahor's daughters:	Tefila, Ode and Selifa (4:13)
	Esca, Thifa, Bruna, Cene, and Etha (4:14)

By comparing *Bib. Ant.* and the book of Genesis, Rhonda J. Burnette-Bletsch (2012) proposed that the reverse order of Genesis 4 and 5 in *Bib. Ant.* is to heighten the contrast between Seth's and Cain's families.[237] This rewritten narrative made Lamech's speech a moral statement in contrast to Noah's righteous family in their unrighteous contemporaries.[238] Both Noah and Abram are linked linguistically by an adjective "blameless" (*inmaculatus*). This blamelessness distinguished righteous lineages from the rest of sinful humanity.[239] In addition, Burnette-Bletsch highlighted that a number of embarrassing incidents in Genesis are missing.[240] By collapsing Genesis 12-50 in a single chapter, these omissions present Israel's ancestors in the most positive light.[241] In the discussion of biblical women portrayed in *Bib. Ant.*, Pieter W. van der Horst (1989) was among the first scholar to draw readers' attention to the positive attitudes towards biblical women in *Bib. Ant*. Inspired by contemporary feminist studies in religious studies of his time, van der Horst noticed that the author of *Bib. Ant.* showed positive appraisals to biblical women. One of the most striking appellations was an honorable title "our mother Tamar."[242] Neither the Bible nor early Jewish literature has such an honorable title for Tamar. The only appellation that comes close is calling Deborah "mother" of Israel in the people's lamentation in *Bib. Ant.* 33:7. Halpern-Amaru (1991), on the other hand, argued that the interest in "naming" the non-firstborn male and

[237] Rhonda J. Burnette-Bletsch, "The Reception of Genesis in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*" in The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception and Interpretation. Edited by Craig A. Evans et.al. (Brill 2012), 458-459.

[238] Burnette-Bletsch, "The Reception of Genesis in Pseudo-Philo", 459.

[239] Burnette-Bletsch, "The Reception of Genesis in Pseudo-Philo", 460-461.

[240] Embarrassing incidents include the drunkenness of Noah, the Melchizedek tradition, the Sarah/Hagar rivalry, the expulsion of Hagar, Lot's incestuous relationship with his daughters, Jacob's trickery, the Rachel/Leah rivalry, Joseph's imprisonment in Egypt, and Joseph's manipulation of his brothers. See discussion in Burnette-Bletsch, "The Reception of Genesis in Pseudo-Philo," 460, 462.

[241] Burnette-Bletsch, "The Reception of Genesis in Pseudo-Philo," 462.

[242] Pieter W. van der Horst, "Portraits of Biblical Women in Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 3.5 (1989): 31.

female children in *Bib. Ant.* was to supplement children's identities not only for Genesis, but also for *Jubilees*, [243] as the latter focused only naming the wives of the primordial patriarchs. Nevertheless, Halpern-Amaru also noted that on a number of occasions, *Bib. Ant.* provided an alternative tradition in comparing with *Jubilees*.[244] Matriarchs in *Bib. Ant.* were significant of serving the roles as facilitators, or the agents of God, in the wonderous births of Israelite heroes.[245] The maternal functions of Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel were clearly associated with the birth of their children.[246] In the case of Tamar, Halpern-Amaru proposed that her maternal role was expressed through her thoughts and dilemma in her direct speech albeit through Amram.[247] More importantly, Tamar was given the role of patriarch and was responsible for the nature of seed. Loader (2011) followed discussion of Halpern-Amaru that *Bib. Ant.* supplemented not only Genesis, but also the *Jubilees*, as it provided alternative data to the latter. Cain's wife was not a sibling marriage, and a different wife for Reu, Melcha.[248] Despite the omissions of a number of narratives related to sexual sins,[249] the remaining part of *Bib. Ant.* indicated that sexual relations were normal part of human life,[250] sexual relations regularly featured among human beings within the context of relations.

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[243] Betsy Halpern-Amaru, "Portraits of Women in Pseudo-Philo's Biblical Antiquities," in *"Women like This": New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine; SBLEJL 1 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1991), 84-85.

[244] On the discussion of different names given to Cain's wife by the authors of Jubilees and *Bib. Ant.*, see Chapter 3.

[245] Betsy Halpern-Amaru, "Portraits of Women in Pseudo-Philo," 93-94.

[246] Detailed discussion in Halpern-Amaru, "Portraits of Women in Pseudo-Philo," 88-91.

[247] Betsy Halpern-Amaru, "Portraits of Women in Pseudo-Philo," 92.

[248] William Loader, The *Pseudepigrapha on Sexuality: Attitudes Towards Sexuality in Apocalypses, Testaments, Legends, Wisdom, and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2011), 259-60.

[249] Loader, *The Pseudepigrapha on Sexuality*, 292.

[250] Loader, *The Pseudepigrapha on Sexuality*, 293.

Christian Traditions

The interest in primordial women is widely attested in early Christian writings. Origen, Jerome, and numerous other Christian writers sought to explain the Hebrew derivations of biblical names.[251] Other historical compendia of Christian Byzantine chronographers, such as the fourth century *Chronicles* of Eusebius and the seventh century *Chronicon Paschale*, frequently incorporated name lists of kings, patriarchs, prophets, and martyrs. Names of their spouses, however, are not commonly found in these lists. Nevertheless, individual names of primordial women occasionally appeared in the discussion. In Jacques-Paul Migne's (1800–1875) most celebrated publication series,[252] the *Patrologiae Cursus Completes* "*Complete Course of the Teachings of the Church Fathers*" recorded some primordial women's names in the writings of church fathers and chronographers.[253]

The earliest literature discussing primordial wives is the *Adversus Octogina Haereses* "Against Eighty Heresies" written by Epiphanius of Salamis (ca. 310-403) in Migne's 1863 edition of *Patrologia Graeca* (*PG* 41). It is a Latin translation of his original Greek heresiographical

[251] See some of the onomastic lists in Franz Wutz, *Onomastica Sacra: Untersuchungen zum Liber interpretationis nominum hebraicorum des hl. Hieronymus* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1915).

[252] Migne was a French Roman Catholic priest who later became the most successful religious publisher of the nineteenth century. With a goal of providing more affordable series of religious works for the education of the Catholic priesthood, Migne found a publishing house to publish early Greek and Latin religious works including such as scriptural studies, theological writing, religious periodicals, and encyclopedias.

[253] This enormous series consisted of 85 vol*umes of Patrologia Latina (PL)* "*Collection of the Latin Fathers*" (1844–55), and 162 volumes of *Patrologia Graeca* "*Collection of the Greek Fathers*" (1857–66). The *Patrologiae* is invaluable because it contained many older and newer Greek and Latin works of the Church Fathers that are nonexistent in other editions. The printing plant was unfortunately destroyed completely by a devastating fire in 1868. Nevertheless, Migne's earlier printed editions placed many original texts for the first time into the hands of the priesthood. Though scholars have often criticized Migne's hastily edited, inexpensive texts, the scope of the *Patrologia* series still makes it unique and indispensable, as it is a far more complete collection of patristic and later church literature than anything that has appeared subsequently.

treatise the *Panarion.*[254] Epiphanius was considered the Church Father by both the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church. He gained reputation as a strong defender of orthodoxy in his teaching and writing. After he became bishop of Salamis on Cyprus, Epiphanius began to compose a treatise on heresies. *Panarion* treated 80 religious sects, either organized groups or philosophies, from the time of Adam to the latter part of the fourth century, detailing their histories, and rebutting their beliefs. Throughout his discussion, Epiphanius cited quotations that were only survived in fragments of suppressed texts of his own time. A few names of primordial wives are found in his discussions. They are Saveh as the wife of Cain (672), Azoura as the wife of Seth (672) and Barthenos as the wife of Noah (332). Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* (*PG* 111) reported a few names of primordial wives in the tenth century *Annals* of Eutychius of Alexandria (877-940).[255] Eutychii *Annales* was the Latin translation of his Arabic historiographical treatise *Ketāb al-tārīḵ al-majmūʿ ʿalā'l-taḥqīq wa'l-taṣdīq* or *Naẓm al-jawhar.*[256] In this Latin translation, the names of primordial wives reported by Eutychius are Azrun as the wife of Caian, Owain/Lephura as the wife of Seth, (110) Haical as Noah's wife (915), Salit as Shem's wife, Arsisah as Ham's wife; Mahalat as Japheth's wife, and Yoana/Tohwait as Terah's wife (922). In Migne's *Patrologia Latina* (*PL* 198), there found a medieval work *Historia Scholastica* written by Petrus Comestor

[254] Three Latin translations of the original Greek *Panarion*. See introduction in Frank Williams, The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, *Book I (Sects 1–46)*, second, revised edition (Leiden: Brill, 2009), esp. xx-xxviii.

[255] also called Saʿīd ibn Baṭrīq, Eutychius is known for being one of the first Christian Egyptian writers who used the Arabic language. Eutychius was a Christian physician, historian, and later elected the Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt in 933. Eutychius survived as many as thirty manuscripts which indicates its wide popularity and dissemination during the medieval period.

[256] His *Annales* of retold the history from the time of Adam to the years of the Islamic period. It is a rich repository of much otherwise unobtainable information about the history of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, especially in the periods of Persian occupation in the seventh century and in Islamic times up to the early tenth century. This historical work was circulating in the Arabic-speaking world of his day, and survived in two recensions: the Alexandrian recension, which is in all probability Eutychius' own work, and the Antiochian recension, which is a considerably expanded work, composed by now unknown Melkite chroniclers and apologists between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries.

(1100-1178), a French theological writer and university teacher. Comestor's *Historia* was sometimes called the medieval popular bible. It drew on the Bible and other sources, which included the work of classical scholars and church fathers to present a universal history, namely a history from medieval European's perspectives. This medieval Latin biblical paraphrase became a required reading in the core curriculum at the university of Paris, Oxford and other universities as soon as its completion in the twelfth century. It also became the main reference source of biblical knowledge through the fifteenth century and one of the earliest printed works in France and Germany. It is worth noting that incorporating historical writings and cultural memories to understand the Bible and human history was not considered heretical in his time. Sources outside the Bible were considered supporting evidence to reveal biblical knowledge and universal history. Comestor's *Historia* mentioned a few names of primordial women. For the wives of Cain and Seth, Comestor found that Chalamna as Cain's wife, and Debora as Abel's wife in col.1075. Later in col.1084, he mentioned Noah's wife as Phuarphara, Shem's wife as Pharia, Ham's wife as Chataflua, and Japhet's wife as Fliva. Ilan (1993) proposed that the former column was an adaptation from the eastern Christian traditions, while the latter column came from the *Jubilees* tradition.[257]

Another prominent series that provides the names of primordial women is the fifty-volume *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, written by Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776-1831) and published in Bonn between 1828 and 1897. This monumental volume was a series of chronicles that was written during the Byzantine period (c. 330–1453). Sometimes referred to as the "Bonn Corpus," each volume in this series contained a critical edition of a Byzantine Greek historical text,

[257] See discussion in Ilan, "Biblical Women,"19, 28-29.

accompanied by a parallel Latin translation. Six writings in this series mentioned a few names of primordial women. They were written by various Byzantine chroniclers between the sixth century and the thirteenth century chroniclers, which included John Malalas,[258] George Syncellus,[259] George Kedrenos,[260] Michael Glykas,[261] and the twelfth century Byzantine historian Ioelis' *Chronographi Compendiaria*. These Byzantine chroniclers basically followed the *Jubilees'* tradition,[262] but recorded only the names of Cain's wife and Seth's wife.[263] Some assigned the name of Cain's wife as Seth's.[264] In addition, a number of early eastern Christian writings incorporated names of primordial wives in their biblical genealogies. For instance, Ilan (1993) argued that the *Book of Adam and Eve*, and their later recensions the *Book of the Rolls*, and the

[258] John Malalas, Ioannis Malalae (c.490 – 578), a Byzantine chronicler from Antioch, wrote a *Chronographia* in 18 books, covering the world history from the Creation to the era of Justinian I. The first fourteen books is demonstrated by its constant citing of sources by name. The last three books derive more from oral sources and the author's personal experiences. Malalas's work is important as it is the first Byzantine universal Chronicle and the first surviving example of a written chronicle not for the learned but for the instruction of the monks and the common people.

[259] George Syncellus (Georgios Synkellos), a ninth century Byzantine chronicler and ecclesiastic, lived many years in Palestine as a monk before he moved to Constantinople and was appointed synkellos, a pre-eminent position served as the closest advisor to the patriarch of Constantinople. Syncellus wrote a chronicle of world history after he retired to a monastery. His chronicle adopted chronological synchronic structures of Sextus Julius Africanus and Eusebius of Caesarea.

[260] George Kedrenos (or Georgius Cedrenus) was an eleventh century Byzantine historian who compiled a concise history of the world. This work encompasses history to his own day. His chronicle begins with the creation of the world which follows the Genesis account of creation. The section dealing with early history interweave biblical and Near Eastern history with statements historicizing classical mythology, to the history of his time based on the contemporary scholarly works.

[261] Michael Glykas was a twelfth century Byzantine historian, theologian, mathematician, astronomer and poet. He served as imperial secretary under Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (r. 1143–1180). Glycas' chief work is his annals (βίβλος χρονική, Biblos chronike) of events from the creation of the world to the death of Emperor Alexius I Komnenos in 1118. Over half the work is dedicated to the narrative of the creation and early Jewish history.

[262] See Ilan's discussion in "Biblical Women," 8-9, and Table 1 The Jubilees Tradition, 48.

[263] In John Malalas's *Chronographia* (*SHB* 13), Cain's wife was Asuam, and Seth's wife was Azouran (3); the same names are found in Ioelis *Chronographi Compendiaria* (*SHB* 27): Cain's wife was Asuam; Seth's wife was Azouran (1). Georgius Syncellus's *Chronographia* records (*SHB* 49) Cain's wife as Azouran (17) only; Georgius Cedrenus's *Historiarum Compendium* (*SHB* 32) has Cain's wife as Asuam (16).

[264] Michaelis Glycas's *Annales* (*SHB* 25) records Cain's wife as Azouran , while Seth's wife as Asouam as (221).

Cave of Treasures were all related to a common tradition concerning the genealogy of the Virgin Mary.[265] Since a number of variants of these names are also found in these books, these name lists should be studied independently.

Cave of Treasures (Cav. Tr.)

The *Cav. Tr.* is a Christian composition in Syriac language written in northern Mesopotamia during the Sasanian Empire. Sergey Minov (2020) highlighted the importance of genealogies in this Christian manuscript:

> The claim of being first and foremost a genealogical work makes the *Cave of Treasures* a *sui generis* composition, as it has no immediate analogues among Syriac or other Christian literary traditions of antiquity.[266]

While ascribed to the fourth century theologian Ephrem the Syrian (306-373), the writing was produced much later, probably between the second half of the sixth century and beginning of the seventh century.[267] This composition traced the descent of Jesus back to Adam, providing the Christian view of salvation history from the creation to the birth of Jesus. The *Cav. Tr.* encompassed five thousand and five hundred years dividing in six major periods, from the creation to Jared, from Jared to Noah, from the flood to Reu, followed by the rule of Ehud, from Jabin of Canaan to the Persian King Cyrus. The concluding section covers five hundred years from Cyrus

[265] Ilan, "Biblical Women," 12-13.

[266] Sergey Minov, *Memory and Identity in the Syriac Cave of Treasures: Rewriting the Bible in Sasanian Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 20.

[267] See Sergey Minov, "Date and Provenance of the Syriac Cave of Treasures: A Reappraisal," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 20:1 (2016): 129-229, especially 204-209.

to the birth of Jesus, his crucifixion and resurrection. The author of the *Cav. Tr*. contributed considerable length to two genealogies (*Cav. Tr*. 43-44) in order to justify the legitimacy of the Jewish identities of Mary and Jesus. *Cav. Tr*. 43 follows the Israelites return from the Babylonian captivity under Ezra's leadership. The author concluded by stating that the scribes had lost the genealogies of the later Israelites, but he himself possessed the correct genealogy and presented a list of the succession of families from Zerubbabel to Christ (43:13-25).[268] This genealogical digression is found in *Cav. Tr*. 44. In the sixty-three generations from Adam to Mary, nineteen of them dealt with the primeval genealogy (*Cav. Tr*. 44:21-32):

> Adam begot Seth.
>
> Seth married Kalimath, Abel's twin sister (5:21), and she bore Enosh;
>
> Enosh married Hanna, the daughter of Yubal, daughter of Huh, daughter of Huh Seth, and she bore Kenan;
>
> Kenan took for himself as wife Perit, the daughter of Kutim, daughter of Yarbel, and begot together with her Mahalalel;
>
> Mahalalel married Zahtepar, the daughter of Enosh, and begot together with her Jared;
>
> Jared married Zebida, the daughter of Kuhlon daughter of Kenan, and begot together with her Enoch;
>
> Enoch married Zadqin, the daughter of Tupih, daughter of Mahalalel, and begot together with her Methuselah;
>
> Methuselah married Sakot, the daughter of Sukin, and begot together with her Lamech;

[268] E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures Translated from the Syriac* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1927), 196-197.

> Lamech married Kipar, the daughter of Tutab, and begot together with her Noah;
>
> Noah married Haykal, the daughter of Namos, and begot together with her Shem, Ham and Japheth; Shem begot Arphaxad, Arphaxad begot Shelah, Shelah begot Eber, Eber begot Peleg, Peleg begot Reu, Reu begot Serug.
>
> Serug married Kehal, the daughter of Peleg, and begot Nahor;
>
> Nahor married Naposh, the daughter of Reu, and begot Terah;
>
> Terah took two wives, Yona and Selmut. Together with Yona he begot Abraham; and together with Selmut Sara.

Cav. Tr. 44 focuses on Seth's genealogy. Nevertheless, Cain's marriage is mentioned in earlier passages. Cain married Lebhudha, his twin sister and she bore Enoch (5:21, 32).[269] According to Minov, the entire work served as an apology for the Syriac-speaking Christian community in Persia who repudiated the Jewish accusations on the legitimacy of Mary's descent:[270]

> On account of their urging the children of the Church to search the genealogies of their ancestors' tribes and show them the truth they call Mary an adulteress. Thus will be shut the mouth of the Jews and they shall believe that Mary is from the seed of the house of David and Abraham. (*Cav. Tr*. 44:2-4)

[269] Budge, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures*, 69-70.

[270] See discussion in Sergey Minov, *Memory and identity in the Syriac Cave of Treasures: Rewriting the Bible in Sasanian Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 60-69.

By retelling the biblical history under the name of Ephrem, the author aimed to provide an authoritative version of sacred history, including an accurate genealogy of Mary. This retelling also stood against Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and the surrounding Persian cultural appropriations by forming a new Syriac-speaking Christian identity.

Book of the Rolls

Another biblical genealogy that included primordial women's names is found in a Christian apocryphal manuscript titled the *Book of the Rolls* (*Kitāb al-Mājāll*). This manuscript is later regarded as the beginning part of a larger manuscript titled "Apocalypse of Peter."[271] Originally written in Arabic, the *Rolls* was preserved in the Saint Catherine monastery library on Mount Sinai. Margaret Dunlop Gibson (1843-1920), a Semitic linguist and a prolific biblical scholar, made three expeditions to Mount Sinai between 1893 and 1897 with her twin sister, Agnes Smith Lewis (1843-1926), to take clear copies of original documents in photographs.[272] Gibson then transcribed, translated, and published the manuscript in 1901. The codex consists of 156 leaves, and is mostly written on paper but five on vellum. While the original manuscript was undated, Gibson traced the handwriting of its front pages, compared the manuscript with other documents and dated its writing to the mid-nineth century. The *Rolls* focused its large part on biblical history and genealogies. This book begins with an introduction of an author named Saint Clement (1), the first Apostolic Father

[271] On the comparison between *Apocalypse of Peter* and the *Book of the Rolls*, see Emmanouela Grypeou, "The Re-Written Bible In Arabic: The Paradise Story And Its Exegesis In The Arabic Apocalypse Of Peter" in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*. Edited by David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 113-129; also Barbara Roggema, "Biblical exegesis and interreligious polemics in the Arabic Apocalypse of Peter - the Book of the Rolls" in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*. Edited by David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 131-150.

[272] About the life of the Gibson and Lewis, see *Janet Martin Soskice, Sisters of Sinai: How Two Lady Adventurers Discovered the Lost Gospels* (London: Chatto and New York: Knopf, 2009); also Rebecca J . W . Jefferson, "Sisters of Semitics: A Fresh Appreciation of the Scholarship of Agnes Smith Lewis and Margaret Dunlop Gibson," in Medieval Feminist Forum: Journal for the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship vol. 45 (2009), 23-49.

of the Church in Rome and a disciple of Saint Peter. The purpose of the *Rolls* was to respond the questions of the Jews about the genealogy of Mary (2). More than half of this writing elaborates on biblical narratives from the first eleven chapters of the book of *Genesis* (3-39). Then it skimmed through the lives of Abraham (39-41) and Isaac (41-43), and Jacob linking the rest of books to the Babylonian captivity (43-53). The author then incorporated two lengthy biblical genealogies. The first genealogy traces Mary's lineage to the Israelites in exile (53-55). The second genealogy traces Jesus's lineage back to Seth and Adam (56-58). Cain's genealogy is not found in this book. The names of primordial women and their familial relationships are found in the second genealogy:

> Adam begat Seth;
>
> Seth married Aclima (sister of Abel);
>
> Enos married Hita (daughter of Mahmouma of the sons of Har son of Seth);
>
> Cainan married Karith (daughter of Kersham son of Maheâl);
>
> Mahlaleel married Teshabfatir (daughter of Enos);
>
> Jared married Zebeeda (daughter of Kargilan son of Cainan);
>
> Enoch married Jardakin (daughter of Terbah son of Mahlaleel);
>
> Methuselah married Rahoub (daughter of Serkeen son of Enoch);
>
> Lamech married Kifar (daughter of Jutab son of Methuselah);
>
> Noah married Haikal (daughter of Mashamos son of Enoch);
>
> Sem married Leah (daughter of Nasih);
>
> Arphaxad married Fardou (daughter of Salweh son of Japhet);
>
> Salah married Muldath (daughter of Kahin son of Sem);
>
> Obed (Eber) married Rasdah (sister of Melchisedek, daughter of Malih son of Arphaxad);

Peleg married Hadeeb (daughter of Hamlâh);

Jareu (Reu) married Tanaa'b (daughter of Obed or Eber);

Serug married Feel, and Feel bore Nahor;

Nahor married A'âkris (daughter of Reu);

Tarah married two wives, one of them Juta, and the other Salmat, by Juta he begat Abraham and by Salmat Sarah.[273]

Later studies of the *Rolls* showed that this composition served as a background for more esoteric teachings related to the *Apocalypse of Peter*, another Arabic Christian manuscript.[274] In addition, the *Rolls* drew upon several earlier works from a Syriac milieu, and new materials were added onto the original writing across the centuries. Hence, the *Rolls* was more or less a translation and expansion of the *Cav. Tr.*, while the *Apocalypse of Peter* was a more original composition, presenting a variety of new motifs and ideas.[275] The genealogies in the *Rolls* largely followed the details of the *Cav. Tr.*, with minor variations, including the names of primordial women.

[273] Margaret Dunlop Gibson ed. and trans., "Kitāb al-magāll or The Book of the Rolls. One of the Books of Clement," in *Apocrypha Arabia*. Studia Sinaitica VIII (London: Cambridge University Press, 1901), 56.

[274] Emmanouela Grypeou, *The Rewritten Bible in Arabic*, 114.

[275] Emmanouela Grypeou, *The Rewritten Bible in Arabic*, 114 fn.4 and 116.

Islamic Traditions

Ṭabarī's Annales

The History of the Prophets and Kings (*Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk*), more commonly known as the *Annales* (*Tarikh al-Ṭabarī*), is an Arabic-language historical chronicle completed by the Persian historian Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Ṭabarī (839-923). Unlike other Muslim scholars of his time, Ṭabarī made a distinct contribution to consolidate Sunni thoughts during the nineth century. He synthesized the vast knowledge of exegesis and history from previous generations of Muslim scholars, laying the groundwork for both qurʾanic and historical studies. The *Annales* begins with the creation history, followed by accounts of the patriarchs, prophets, and rulers of antiquity. It also combines myths and legends from the Hebrew Bible, Muslim, and Middle Eastern history, up the Abbasid era. The names of primordial women are mostly found in the first volume, from the creation to the flood,[276] and in the third volume, on the children of Israel:[277]

> Cain (Qābīl) married Ashūth (Adam's daughter); I:146, 167 /317, 337 (cf. Gen 4:17)
>
> Seth married Ḥazūrah (Seth's twin sister); I:335. (cf. Gen 5:4)
>
> Enosh (Yānish) married Naʿmah; I:336 (cf. Gen 5:6)
>
> Kenan married Dīnah; I:336 (cf. Gen 5:10)
>
> Mahalalel married Simʿam (his maternal aunt, the daughter of Barākīl b.Mehujael b. Enoch b.Cain b. Adam) According to Ibn Ḥumayd-Salamah-Ibn Isḥāq, ; I:166 (337).

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[276] Franz Rosenthal, *The History of al- Ṭabarī. Vol. 1: General introduction, and, From the Creation to the Flood*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988),, 338f.

[277] Ṭabarī, *The History of Al-Tabari. Vol. 3: the Children of Israel*. Translated and Annotated by William M. Brinner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 30

Jered (Yarid or al-Yārid) married Baraknah; I:336 [Simʿam was mentioned in I:172 () as sister of Dinah. In Jubilees, it was Dīnah who was married to Mahalalel.]

Enoch married Adanah;

Methuselah married Adna;

Lemech married Qinush;

Noah married Amzurah;

Shem married Salib;

Ham married Nahlab;

Japhet married Arbasisah.

According to Ilan, al-Ṭabarī relied on the *Jubilees* tradition for most of the names, but supplemented it with unknown sources for the names of Noah's grandsons' wives, Cush, Put and Canaan. These wives were Qarnabil, Bakht, Ansal, and Shakbah, respectively. [278]

[278] Ilan, "Biblical Women", 20.

CHAPTER 3: THE WIFE OF CAIN

וַיֵּדַע קַיִן אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת־חֲנוֹךְ

And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch (Gen 4:17)

Gen 4:17 marks the beginning of the second unit of this chapter (Gen 4:17-24). It adopts the same birth formula found in Gen 4:1, 17, and 25: a man "knew" (ידע) "his wife" (אשתו) who then "bore" (ילד) a son.[279] After Cain killed his brother Abel and was exiled to the land of Nod (Gen 4:1-16), he married and had a son Enoch. He then built a city and named it after his son (4:17). The text then reported Cain's lineage, which included Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methushael and Lamech (Gen 4:17-18).[280] Unlike the extensive Sethite genealogy in Gen 5, only seven generations are found in Cain's lineage. The unexpectedly short and awkward placement of the Cainite genealogy in the Bible has led a wide range of interpretative issues in biblical scholarship.[281] Among the extensive studies on the Cainite genealogy in the book of Genesis,

[279] More discussion about the genealogical setting of Gen 4:17-22, see Timothy D. Finlay, *The Birth Report Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 54-55; Daniel D. Lowery, *Toward a Poetics of Genesis 1-11. Reading Genesis 4:17-22 in Its Near Eastern Context* (Eisenbrauns, 2013), 74.

[280] Historical-critical study usually assigned Gen 4:17-26 to the non-Priestly tradition. Gertz Jan Christian, "The Formation Of The Primeval History" in *The Book of Genesis; Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, David L. Petersen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 113.

[281] Johannes Bartholdy Glenthoj (1977) studied the exegetical traditions of the Cain and Abel narrative in Syriac and Greek writers between the fourth and the sixth centuries. Glenthoj selected a number of themes from the two traditions in discussion: commentaries and homilies; Greek as opposed to Syriac exegesis, the use of speeches, in particular fictive speeches in the dramatized homilies, the character of Cain, and the interrelationship of sources. See Johannes Bartholdy Glenthoj, *Cain and Abel in Syriac and Greek Writers (4th-6th Centuries)* (Lovanii: E. Peeters, 1997); Ruth Mellinkoff showed how Naamah as Cain's monstrous progeny received diverse interpretations in reception history, see Ruth Mellinkoff, "Cain's Monstrous Progeny in 'Beowulf': Part II," *Anglo-Saxon England* 9 (1981): 190-192; Byron (2011) traced the interpretative history of the Cain and Abel narrative of Genesis 4 in Jewish and Christian textual traditions by summarizing the interpretative answers to the textual questions. Among the themes are Cain's origin (4:1-2), God's unexplained rejection of Cain's offering (4:3-7), fratricide (4:8), judgment of Cain in Gen 4, the righteousness of Abel as sufferer, and Cain as the embodiment of

Nissim Amzallag (2018) reexamined scholarly discussions and concluded with three explanations for the function of the Cainite genealogy: first, this genealogy depicts Cain's progeny as civilizing heroes; second, this genealogy sets itself up as an antithesis of the Sethite genealogy; and third, this genealogy highlights Cain (קין in Gen 4:1) as an eponymous ancestor of all his descendants, including the descendants of Canaan (כנען in Gen 9:18), the Canaanites (כנעני in Gen 10:15-18), and the Kenites (קיני in Gen 15:19-21).[282] These groups were not connected to the Sethite genealogy, which traced the linear succession of generations from Adam to the sons of Jacob. The separation of the Cainite genealogy from the Sethite, and the unremittingly negative references of Cain in the New Testament (Heb 11: 4, 1 John 3: 12, and Jude 11) made Cain a destined adversary.[283] This governed all later interpretations of him, including the destiny of his nameless wife and his progeny.

The wife of Cain is one of the few women mentioned in the Primeval History. Like many other women of the Bible, the biblical narrator highlights her main role as childbearing.[284] Childbearing was a crucial contribution for women in ancient society not only because it carried forth the divine command (cf. Gen. 1:28), but also because it ensured the survival and flourishing

evils. See John Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition: Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Sibling Rivalry* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

[282] Nissam Amzallag, "Why is the Cain Genealogy (Gen 4:17-24) Integrated into the Book of Genesis?" *ANES* 55 (2018), 25-26.

[283] The negative reference to Cain in Hebrew 11:4 described Cain as an example of unrighteous, as his sacrifice has not been approved by God; 1 John 3:12 characterized Cain as being "of the evil one," as having murdered his own brother, and as committing murder "because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous"; and Jude 11 referred to certain heretics who "walk in the way of Cain."

[284] David Carr argued that ידע of Cain 'knows' his unnamed wife in Gen 4:1 associated not only with sexuality but also with knowledge that echoes the Eden narrative in Gen 2-3 (Gen 2:9, 17; 3:5, 7, 22). David M. Carr, *Genesis 1-11* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2021), 149. However, ידע in Gen 4:17 and 25 and in the subsequent chapters (Gen 19:5, 8; 24:16) focused purely on procreation.

of the human race.[285] However, the sudden appearance of her in Genesis has troubled readers since antiquity to the present day. Who was Cain's wife? How did Cain find her? Was she one of Cain's siblings? Did she know that Cain had murdered her own brother before they were married? If she had known what Cain would become, why would she had married him? Did she worry that marrying a murderer would damage her reputation, and even harm her physical and mental health?

Cultural References Before the Bible

Since the rise of comparative studies in biblical scholarship, scholars have often compared Gen 4:1-16 to other ancient literature from Mesopotamia and Egypt. Previous studies have compared literary features and sibling rivalry motifs between Cain and Abel. The following discussion focuses on the consorts of the protagonist in these ancient works. The ancient narratives of Dumuzi and Enkimdu, and Seth and Osiris, share striking similarities with Cain and Abel narratives in the Hebrew Bible, particularly their motifs of rivalry.[286] Both narratives provide us more information about the consorts: the Mesopotamian goddess Inanna-Ishtar,[287] and the Egyptian goddess Isis.

[285] See also O'Connor, *Genesis 1-25A*, 85.

[286] See the fourth chapter of Daniel D. Lowery's monograph, "Ancient Near Eatern Context" in *Toward a Poetics of Genesis 1-11: Reading Genesis 4:17-22 in Its Near Eastern Context* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 122-230, in particular 159-177; Marjo C.A. Korpel, Johannes C. de Moor, *Adam, Eve, and the Devil: A New Beginning* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 134-135.

[287] Theodor Herzl Gaster, *Myth, legend, and custom in the Old Testament; a comparative study with chapters from Sir James G. Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 53-54.

Sumerian Dumuzi and Enkimdu (Inanna-Ishtar)

An early Sumerian myth about the dispute between the shepherd god Dumuzi and the farmer god Enkimdu echoes Cain and Abel narrative in the Hebrew Bible (*ANET*, 41-2).[288] Goddess Inanna faced the choice of marrying either the farmer god or the shepherd god (ETCSL 4.08.33 lines 7-11). While Inanna's brother, the sun-god Utu, favored Dumuzi (lines 12-19) and asked Inanna to marry him, Inanna was more interested in Enkimdu (lines 20-34). She was captivated by Enkimdu's ability to grow vegetables and grains. Dumuzi, the shepherd god, picked a quarrel with the peace-loving farmer god, Enkimdu, after being rejected by goddess Inanna. The more gentle Enkimdu tried to appease Dumuzi by offering Dumuzi to graze the flocks in his land (lines 74-49). However, Dumuzi remained determined to have Inanna (lines 80-83). The rivalry between the two gods ends in reconciliation. The poem ends with a hymn of praise to Inanna. In some versions, after Enkimdu withdrew from the relationship, he told Inanna to marry Dumuzi and then wandered away. The rivalry motif between Dumuzi and Enkimdu underlies various layers of Cain and Abel narratives in the Bible (Gen 4:1-16): the rivalry between two professions: a shepherd and a farmer, the struggle for being accepted, the feeling of inferiority and frustration, and one's ego turning into aggressive attitude toward another. The similarity between the two narratives does not suggest that this ancient literature was a direct source behind the biblical writer. It is possible, however, that this myth had been absorbed and circulated in ancient Mesopotamia through various forms and survived in later cultures.

[288] The marriage between Inanna and Dumuzi is sometimes compared with the "sacred marriage" in Gen 6:1-4. See Mirjam Zimmermann and Ruben Zimmermann, "Heilige Hochzeit« der Göttersöhne und Menschentöchter? Spuren des Mythos in Gen 6,1–4." *ZAW* 111 (1999), 327-352.

The Sumerian name Inanna, also known as "Lady of Heaven," was later called Ishtar in Assyrian, Akkadian, and Babylonian literature.[289] She was by far the most complex and important goddess in ancient Mesopotamia.[290] The Sumerian hymn to Inanna (ETCSL 4.07.3) summarized the complexity of her: A great-hearted, magnificent lady who was able to gather up divine powers of heaven and earth, on the one hand (lines 1-10), and stirred confusion and chaos against those who were disobedient to her, on the other hand (lines 18-28). Inanna-Ishtar was the only goddess whose roles were not absorbed by other male deities, but continued to grow in importance during the Old Babylonian periods.[291] As a goddess, Inanna-Ishtar embodied all contradictory images. She was the goddess of the evening and morning star, the embodiment of both love and war, and the dynamic principle of change. Her mobility between heaven and earth granted her enormous power, with which she confronted both gods and humans. Her success in returning from the netherworld also made her the goddess of both death and life (ETCSL 1.4.1). As the chief goddess of the city of Uruk, she represented both warfare and sexuality. These disparate roles and strong emotions pushed her cross gender boundaries, as she embodied both male and female characteristics in one deity. Unlike other goddesses who carried out their womanly pursuits, Inanna-Ishtar never performed any domestic duties as an ordinary wife, nor had she taken up the role as a mother (Dumuzi-Inanna C iv 1 6–13). Her undomesticated features were also reflected in

[289] Gebhard J. Selz, "Five Divine Ladies: Thoughts on Inana(k), Istar, In(n)in(a), Annunitum, and ʿAnat, and the Origin of the Title Queen of Heaven," *NIN: Journal of Near Eastern Gender Studies* 1 (2000): 29-62; Discussion on the relevance between the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar and Canaanite goddess Astarte, see Mark S. Smith, "'Athtart in Late Bronze Age Syrian Texts," in *Transformation of a Goddess Ishtar – Astarte – Aphrodite*, ed. David T. Sugimoto (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 33-86.

[290] See Rivkah Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and Coincidence of Opposites," *History of Religions* 30:3 (1991), 261-278; also Miroslav Marcovich, "From Ishtar to Aphrodite," Journal of Aesthetic Education Vol. 30, no. 2, (Summer 1996), 43-59. Marcovich demonstrated that Greek goddess Aphrodite was not a Greek native but a gradually developed from the Sumerian goddess Inanna ca. 3000 BCE.

[291] Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of Goddesses*, 77.

her love with Dumuzi. The Sumerian love poetry emphasized the mutual nature of the lovers' intimacy and vivid descriptions of the first blush of love and sexuality. Dumuzi was depicted standing before Inanna, offering words of love (Dumuzid-Inanna W, ETCSL 4.09.23); Inanna was presented as having an interested in pleasure and satisfaction of her beloved, and she fantasized about the happiness he would find in the beauty of her physical form (Dumuzi-Inanna C, ETCSL 4.08.03). Despite her deep affection to Dumuzi, she preserved her innocence until her wedding. While Inanna was dangerous and threatening because of her freedom and unpredictability, she was appealing and attractive. She thus became the female model of those women who were not considered socially desirable.[292] All things considered, Inanna was concurrently a central and marginal deity to the living community. She embodied the contrasting images of strength and vulnerability as lover, consort, sexual partner, warrior, and enforcer of divine justice. These roles reflect the fear and attraction that women elicit.

Egyptian Seth and Osiris (Isis)

Another mythical counterpart to the Cain and Abel narrative is the Egyptian myth of Osiris and Seth.[293] This narrative has been retold over thousands of years in ancient Egypt, and it has

[292] Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of Goddesses*, 25.

[293] Ilse Lichtenstadter, "Origin and Interpretation of some Koranic Symbols," in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*. Edited by George Makisi (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 429-432; Alan Mulhern, *The Sower and the Seed : Reflections on the Development of Consciousness* (Boca Raton, FL: Routledge, 2018), 106-111; On the prominent motif that royal ideologies share with cosmogonies and myths of human origins in ancient Near Eastern literature, see N. Wyatt, "Cain's Wife," *Folklore* 97:1 (1986): 88-95. also Korpel and de Moor, *Adam, Eve, and the Devil: A New Beginning*, 81-83.

different versions. [294] In general, Osiris, Seth, Isis, and Nephthys were children of Nut and Geb.[295] Osiris, the Pharaoh, and his queen sister Isis were in love. Isis later became Osiris's wife and assisted him in ruling Egypt during his mythological kingship on earth. Maliciously jealous of Osiris, their brother Seth was determined to take his throne. At this point there are various versions of this myth. The fullest account was given by Plutarch, a Roman writer of the first century CE.[296] According to Plutarch, Seth trapped Osiris into a beautiful sarcophagus, he nailed Osiris and consigned him into the Nile (Plutarch, *Mor*. 5.13). Isis mourned inconsolably and began to search for her husband. Eventually Isis found Osiris scattered parts and reunited his body. Through her magic Isis managed to gather Osiris' body parts and conceived a son, Horus, from Osiris even after the death of her husband (Plutarch, *Mor*. 5.18). In Pyramid Texts spell 477, the two brothers went in a physical battle. Osiris was defeated and dismembered by Seth.[297] His body parts were then found by Isis who later brought him back to life in order to impregnate her . In all versions Isis subsequently gave birth to Horus. She nurtured and protected her son, who later defected Seth, and claimed his rightful position as the king of Egypt to reestablish civilization.

[294] The Osiris myth is not extant in a full epic version but pieced together from several ancient and classical sources: Thy Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom, the Coffin Texts of the Middle Kingdom, the *Book of the Dead* from the New Kingdom, and the summary of Plutarch concerning Isis and Osiris from the second century CE.

[295] More on Nut, Geb and their children, see Susan T. Hollis, *Five Egyptian Goddesses: Their Possible Beginnings, Actions, and Relationships in the Third Millennium BCE* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2020), 69-79.

[296] Jaime Alvar, *Romanising Oriental Gods: Myth, Salvation and Ethics in the Cults of Cybele, Isis and Mithras*, trans. Richard Gordon (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 39-52.

[297] See also Geraldine Pinch, *Handbook of Egyptian Mythology* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2002), 78-80.

Isis was among the most important deities in ancient Egypt.[298] She played prominent roles in the Pyramid Texts by the end of Dynasty V, dated to the first half of third millennium BCE.[299] As the "sister whom Osiris loved on earth," Isis dutifully supported Osiris as he governed Egypt. In the Pyramid Texts, Isis had a premonition of Osiris's murder by Seth. She was sitting in despair, and was weeping for her beloved brother-husband. After the death of Osiris, Isis showed unwavering determination to nurture Horus until he was old enough to avenge his father and reclaim his rightful inheritance as king of all Egypt. Her underlying roles as the sister-wife of Osiris and mother of Horus became the foundation of all other aspects of her as a vital Egyptian goddess.[300] As the nurturing mother, Isis was often depicted as the mother of kings in ancient Egypt. As early as the Pyramid Texts, the king drank milk from the breasts of his mother Isis.[301] Pharaohs of the New Kingdom and later periods depicted themselves as the son of Isis. As the protector of her son, Isis kept Horus from various dangers. She healed Horus from a potentially lethal scorpion sting, and this became the mythological basis for her healing powers. Isis was invoked specifically for healing a child or protecting an individual as if she did for Horus. Her sustaining role as protector was extended to protect royal births in the Middle Kingdom story (Westcar Papyrus). As the goddess with immense magical power, Isis was able to revive Osiris to impregnate her. Her magical power extended to the afterlife, where she protected the deceased. She appeared over 80 times in the Pyramid Texts assisting the deceased king.[302] Her care in later

[298] On Isis, see Barbara S. Lesko, *The Great Goddesses of Egypt* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 155-202.

[299] Susan T. Hollis, *Five Egyptian Goddesses*, 91.

[300] George Hart, *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2005), 79-83; Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 146-49.

[301] Hart, *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses, 80-81.*

[302] Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, 146.

periods extended from royal to commoner and she assisted the deceased in a personal way. As the goddess who was wise in speech and whose heart was more cunning than millions of men, Isis offered to use her magical power to alleviate the pain of the sun god Ra in exchange for his secret name.[303] Her scheme to discover the secret name of Ra, knowledge of which conferred limitless power, made her "the mistress of the gods who knows Ra by his own name." With Ra's permission, Isis was able to pass the knowledge of his mysterious name onto her son Horus. Through her craftiness and determination, Horus gained the power that no other god can rival. Isis, as a nurturer, protector, healer, and with her assisting role for the deceased, eventually grew to surpass Osiris. Isis eventually achieved an unrivalled position as a great mother goddess of Egypt in late antiquity.

Both ancient goddesses, Inanna-Ishtar and Isis, encompassed more inclusive characteristics and transcending features that are often found in male deities. Both were great consolers of their spouses and exhibited dynamic life-giving forces from within themselves, differed from the traditional perception of women in the Hebrew Bible. As discussed in the introductory chapter, ancient goddesses exemplified cultural projections of women's social roles.[304] Tivka-Frymer (1992) argued that the extensive roles of goddesses were diminished from early on, and this trend continued to intensify in the Old Babylonian periods and later.[305] The decline in the public role of women was reflected in the eclipse of goddesses.[306] These potent female deities, who played roles in the family, became powerful seals of approval for human women's family roles. These models

[303] See Isis and the Name of Ra in Pap. Turin 1993 (ca. 1300 BCE), a Ramesside incantation to remove poison from a patient based from Deir el-Medina: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/literature/isisandra.html (accessed on Jun 17, 2023).

[304] Other discussions on the diverse roles of women in ancient epic, see Helene P. Foley, "Women in Ancient Epic," in *A Companion to Ancient Epic*, ed. John Miles Foley (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005), 105-18.

[305] Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of Goddesses*, 70-71.

[306] Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of Goddesses*, 80.

gave women esteem within these roles, so they became a source of self-satisfaction and nourishment. The same divine model made cultural attitudes and stereotypes part of the sacred realm, lending powerful support to these attitudes and their change.[307] These changes permanently transformed how people perceived the role of women in monotheistic religions, which ultimately reflected in the Bible. In "Can a Sexist Model Liberate Us? Ancient Near Eastern 'fertility' Goddesses," Jo Ann Hackett articulated that ancient goddesses were often admired not for their many sources of power and multifaceted personalities, but for their role as fertility goddesses.[308] I concur with Hackett's assessment that exaggerating the connection between fertility and female deities in ancient religions diffused the power of female deities and trivialized their roles. This led them to accept their positions in the pantheons in ancient Mesopotamian literature.[309]

Jewish Traditions

Book of Jubilees (ʾAwan)

The earliest source to provide information about Cain's sister-wife is the book of *Jubilees*. While Genesis separates genealogy lists from biblical narratives in Gen 5 and 11, the author of *Jubilees* presents the genealogy within the narrative. After the expulsion, Adam and Eve settled in the land of ʿElda (*Jub* 3:26-35), Eve bore two sons, Cain and Abel, and a daughter ʾAwan (און) in three consecutive Jubilees (*Jub* 4:1). After Cain murdered his brother (*Jub* 4:2-6) and the mourning of the first couple, Eve bore Seth and ʿAzūra (עצורה in *Jub* 4:7-8). Cain later married ʾAwan, his

[307] Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of Goddesses*, 25

[308] Jo Ann Hackett, "Can a Sexist Model Liberate Us? Ancient near Eastern 'Fertility' Goddesses," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 5.1 (1989), 67.

[309] Hackett, "Can a Sexist Model Liberate Us?" 75.

twin sister. They had Enoch and Cain built a city with his son's name (*Jub* 4:9). Like Cain, Seth married his younger sister ʿAzūra and they had Enosh (*Jub* 4:11). Beyond the sibling relationships with their own husbands, *Jubilees* provides no other information about the women. The author of Jubilees probably assumed that Abel remained single throughout his transient life, as the name of Abel's wife is not mentioned in the book.

ʾAwan comes from the root *ʾwn* (און), its root means "to be strong, mighty."[310] The meaning power can either be rendered negatively as *ʾāwen* (אָוֶן) "trouble", "wickedness" (Num 23:21; Psa 7:15; Job 5:6) as compared to Arabic *ʾayn* (أَيْن) "weariness, trouble", or as physical power *ʾôn* (און) "potency" and generative power as "wealth" (cf. Gen 49:3, Deut 21:17, Hos 12:9, Job 18:7, 12).[311] One might be tempted to render her name as "wickedness" or "vice" based on the negative inference of Cain's deeds, which gives her identity a negative connotation. Since the Bible does not mention any deeds of Cain's wife except her childbearing function, it is unnecessary to demonize her character through the meaning of her name. ʾAwan, as a powerful consort of Cain, is probably a more reasonable expression of her, given what she had endured the deeds of her husband. The name of Seth's wife ʾAzūra (עֲזוּרָה) means "to restraint". This word comes from the Hebrew root *ʾzr* (אזר) meaning "to gird," or "to encompass"(1 Sam 2:4; Job 30:18). Lipscomb associated her name with the Hebrew root *ʿzr* (עזר) meaning "to help, assist."[312]

Biblical Antiquities (Themech)

[310] HALOT, 22

[311] See also discussion in John T. Rook, "The Names of the Wives in Jubilees," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 7 (1990), 108-09.

[312] W.L. Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," 156.

As discussed in the previous chapter, *Bib. Ant.* is notable for its emphasis on the names of both sons and daughters. Unlike biblical genealogies focusing on the male descendants, the author of *Bib. Ant*. properly introduced every son and daughter in the primordial genealogy. The genealogy of Seth is highlighted at the beginning of the book. "The beginning of the world. Adam begat three sons and one daughter, Cain, Noaba, Abel and Seth" (*Bib. Ant.* 1.1). The mention of Noaba as the second child on the list, placing her between Cain and Abel, suggests that Abel was the third child, rather than the second, as suggested in the biblical narrative. Unlike *Jubilees*, the author of *Bib. Ant*. highlighted that the name of Cain's wife was Themech (*Bib. Ant.* 2:1-2) without providing any background information about her. The uniqueness of this name perplexed many scholars, as it was not found in any other sources. The same name, Themech, was also assigned to Sisera's mother in *Bib. Ant.* 31:8, where she is unnamed in Judg 5:28. The Latin name Themech was translated from Greek, which was originally written in Hebrew. Some scholars have discussed the possibility that her name has original Hebrew roots.

Louis Ginzberg (1928) suggested that its Hebrew root תמח = תמחה means "may she be destroyed, which could be a significant meaning of her name."[313] However, Ginzberg offered no explanation why she was given this name.[314] In the Hebrew Bible, Temah (תֶּמַח) as a proper name is found in Ezr 2:53 (LXX Θεμα), and Neh 7:55 (LXX Θημα),[315] which is from the root *mḥh* (מחה) "to wipe out, annihilate".[316] The Nif. Impf 3fs of תמח > תִּמָּחֶה/תִּמָּח fits Ginzberg's suggestion for the meaning of her name. On the other hand, Ginzberg argued that the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*

[313] Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews v.6* (The Jewish publication society of America, 1928), 198; also in Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews v.5*, 144.

[314] Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews v.6*, 198.

[315] BDB, 1069.

[316] HALOT, 567.

58.5, a voluminous Hebrew work that drew largely on Pseudo-Philo's earlier history of biblical events, may have misread or emended the name Tamar (תמר) to Sisera's mother's name.

Howard Jacobson (1996) proposed that Themech may have not existed in the original Hebrew manuscript because no similar name appears in the extensive list of Adam's daughters in *Bib. Ant.* 1:4.[317] To Jacobson, there was scarcely be a reason for the author of *Bib. Ant.* to introduce a daughter Noaba for Adam in *Bib. Ant.* 1:1 if it was not to provide a mate for Cain. What seemed clear to Jacobson was that whether the name was mentioned explicitly or not, no one could avoid realizing that Cain's wife must have been his sister. Jacobson thus argued that *Bib. Ant.* 2:1 represented a version at variance with that of *Bib. Ant.* 1:1. In addition, in Midrashic elaborations, the words "wife" and "twin" are sometimes brought together to represent the unusual relationship. For instance, *Midrash Haggadol ad* Gen. 4:2 shows עמו נולד קין ותאומתו אשתו, and Pirqe R. El. 21 has אשתו תאומתו. If *Bib. Ant.* used a similar phrase in the original Hebrew manuscript, namely ותהי אשתו תאומתו, it is conceivable that *tĕʿômātô* (תאומתו), literally "and his female twin," was misread as a proper noun and ultimately Themech was the result.[318] As for Sisera's mother Themech (*Bib. Ant.* 31:8), Jacobson followed Ginzberg's proposal that the author of *Jerahmeel* may have misread or emended the reading of *tmr* (תמר) and there may have had a confusion between *tmr* (תמר) and tmk (תמך) as the Hebrew script of *resh* (ר) and final *kap* (ך-) looked alike.[319] In other words, the meaning of Sisera's mother's name was related to the meaning *tmk* (תמך "to take hold of").[320] Mary T. DesCamp (2007) suggested that the author of *Bib. Ant.* named Sisera's mother "Themech" to

[317] Jacobson, *A Commentary on LAB*, 294.
[318] Jacobson, *A Commentary on LAB*, 295.
[319] Jacobson, *A Commentary on LAB*, 856.
[320] HALOT, 1751.

remind the ancient reader of Cain's wife, who gave birth of an entire line of corrupt human beings, just as Sisera's mother evoked evil. [321] However, it is less likely that is the case, as the author of *Bib. Ant.* did not offer an ethical judgment when he presented Cain's genealogy in *Bib. Ant.* 2. Other scholars, such as John Byron and Abram Spiro, suggested that a different name of Cain's wife in *Bib. Ant.* may have been a counterreaction to the *Jubilees* account.[322] Whether this counterreaction was to avoid the conclusion that Cain's marriage was incestuous, or it was an improvement of Jubilees' genealogy remains unclear. Moreover, if we follow Jacobson's proposal, that Themech was a misreading תאומתו "and his twin sister," there would have been another possibility: it may have been either the Greek or the Latin translator's intention to avoid the incestuous relationship instead of the author of *Bib. Ant*. as the original Hebrew manuscript is not yet found. All these suggestions further complicated the proposal that the author intended to avoid an incestuous marriage, which is not reflected in the extant manuscript. In any case, many scholars, such as Caryn Tamber-Rosenau 2015,[323] Colleen M. Conway 2017,[324] Mary Therese DesCamp,[325] have highlighted how biblical writer's description about Sisera in Judg 4-5 had a negative impact on the interpretation of his mother's name as Themech in *Bib. Ant*. Negative interpretations of women due to the bad deeds of their beloved ones, Cain and Sisera, had inevitably affected the two nameless women in the Bible: Cain's wife and Sisera's mother.

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[321] Mary Therese DesCamp, *Metaphor and Ideology. Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum and Literary Methods Through a Cognitive Lens* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 317.

[322] Byron proposed that the author of *Bib. Ant.* did not agree with *Jubilees* not only on the name of the wife of Cain, but also the her relationship with Cain as sibling, see Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition*, 24; Spiro suggested that *Bib. Ant.* deliberately left her out so as to conceal the incest, see Abram Spiro, "Manners of Rewriting Biblical History from Chronicles to Pseudo-Philo" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1953), 183-85, fn. 126.

[323] Caryn Tamber-Rosenau, *Women in Drag: Gender and Performance in the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish Literature* (Piscataway, NJ.: Gorgias Press, 2018), 218-21.

[324] Colleen M. Conway, *Sex and slaughter in the tent of Jael: a Cultural History of a Biblical Story* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 38-39.

[325] Mary Therese DesCamp, *Metaphor and Ideology*, 317-18.

Antiquities of the Jew (Ant. J.)

Another first century writing, the *Antiquities of the Jews*, Flavius Josephus highlighted,

> "Adam and Eve had two sons: the elder of them was named Cain; which name, when it is interpreted, signifies a possession: the younger was Abel, which signifies sorrow. **They had also daughters (*Ant. J.* 1.52.1)**. After Cain killed his brother, **God cast both him and his wife out of the land.** Cain and his wife traveled over many countries. Then they built a city named Nod and settled there, with whom they had children (*Ant. J.* 1.60).

Two interpretations regarding the identity of Cain's wife can be derived from this illustration. First, while Cain's wife is unnamed in the *Antiquities*, Josephus mentions that other daughters were born to Adam and Eve. This suggests that Cain's wife may have been one of his sisters. Second, Josephus mentions that Cain had a wife who was exiled with him. Both inferences suggest that that Cain married one of his sisters, and they were married before the exile.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (Tg. Ps.-J.)

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, an interpretative translation of the Hebrew Bible collected from various sources in Jerusalem, provides additional information about Cain's identity:

> And Adam knew (ידע) Eve his wife, who had desired the angel (דהוה חמידת למלאכא); and she conceived, and bore Cain; and she said, I have acquired a man, the angel of the Lord (קניתי לגברא ית מלאכא דיי). (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 4:1)

This interpretation suggests that Adam was not the father of Cain because he was born by Eve and the angel Samael (סמאל), "the angel of death" (מלאך מותא). Samael appeared during Eve's dialogue with the serpent, "And the woman observed (וחמת) Sammael, the angel of death, and she was frightened (ודחילת)." (*Tg.Ps.-J.* Gen 3:6) Yet, the next chapter mentioned that she had desired (חמידת) the angel (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 4:1). The following verse further specified the difference in genealogy between Cain and Abel, "and she additionally bore (ואוסיפת למילד) from her husband Adam (מן בעלה אדם) his twin (תיומתיה) Abel" (*Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 4:2). Florentino G. Martínez (2003) highlighted three inferences based on the additional information in Gen 4:1. First, *yd*ʿ (ידע) in *Tg. Ps.-J.* should not be interpreted with the biblical sense that Adam "had intercourse" with Eve,[326] but Adam "knew something about" Eve that she had sexual desire of the angel and then she conceived from Samael. Second, the phrase "who had desired the angel" (דהוה חמידת למלאכא) may be a faint echo of the complex tradition regarding the sexual character of the first sin in later rabbinic Aggadah, i.e. the serpent aroused the desire of Eve.[327] The first two inferences are to conclude that Samael was Cain's father instead of Adam. Third, the appearance of Samael is to separate Cain's evil conduct from the good one created by God.[328] The illegitimate identity of Cain as the son of Samael illustrated by *Tg. Ps.-J.* symbolized the perennial conflict between good and evil, righteousness and wickedness.[329] It is worth noting that *Tg. Ps.-J.* did not provide information

[326] Florentino García Martínez, "Eve's Children in the Targumim," in *Eve's Children. The Biblical Stories Retold and Interpreted in Jewish and Christian Traditions*. ed. by Gerard P. Luttikhuizen (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 31-32; also Guy G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed. Studies in Gnostic Mythology*. Nag Hammadi Studies 24 (Brill, 1984), 47; Rachel Adelman highlighted the parallel accounts between Eve impregnated by Samael and the Greek mythology Leda, wife of Tyndraeus the King of Sparta is seduced (or raped) by Zeus in "Cain, Son of the Fallen Angel Samael," 2021. TheTorah.com. https://thetorah.com/article/cain-son-of-the-fallen-angel-samael (accessed on Jun 13, 2023).

[327] Martínez, "Eve's Children in the Targumim," 32.

[328] Martínez, "Eve's Children in the Targumim," 33.

[329] Martínez, "Eve's Children in the Targumim," 41.

about Cain's wife. It also did not suggest that a twin sister was born either with Cain or Abel. However, this interpretation revealed that there was an explanation in early Jewish traditions to shift the blame to Eve's infidelity in order to safeguard the purity of the Adam and Seth's genealogy. Moreover, the explanation of Eve's lust for the angel of death in *Tg. Ps.-J.* smoothly combined the origin of evil in Gen 3 and the lust of fallen angels for the daughters of men in Gen 6. This explanation has been adopted to answer the question why Gen 4:1 Eve said, "I have gotten a man with the Lord" in some rabbinic sources.[330]

Although rabbinic Judaism rejected the book of *Jubilees*, the interpretation that Cain's wife was his sister gradually became the prevailing interpretation for the sibling dispute in rabbinic traditions.[331] Two leading explanations in rabbinic traditions relate to the number of twin sisters born to Cain and Abel. First, *Genesis Rabbah* (*Gen. Rab.*) reports Rabbi Yehoshua b. Karhah's interpretation, "two went up to the bed and seven descended, Cain and his twin sister, Abel and his *two* twin sisters (ושתי תאומותיו)" (*Gen. Rab.* 22:2-3). This report first highlights that there was an extra twin sister born with Abel. Then it highlights the brothers' dispute over who should marry Abel's twin as wife:

> Rabbi Aibu said: the first Eve returned to the dust. Then what were they arguing about? Rabbi Huna said: **an additional twin sister was born with Abel. And each claimed her**. This one said: I will take her because I am the first born. The other

[330] Lieve M. Teugels, " The Twin Sisters of Cain and Abel: A Survey of The Rabbinic Sources" in in *Eve's Children* (Brill, 2003), 47-48.

[331] See also discussion in Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition*, 23-28.

> one said: I will take her because she was born with me. Because of this "…Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him." (*Gen. Rab.* 22:7)

Martínez proposed that Cain was fighting for the right to continue the lineage through Abel's unnamed twin sister.[332] This would have both legitimized Cain's claim to the lineage and avoided the concern about incestuous marriage.[333] The interpretive marker of having three daughters is clearly illustrated by Rashi, also known as Shlomo Yitzchaki, when he explained that a twin sister was born with Cain and with Abel in his *Commentary on Genesis* Gen 4:1-2:

> The threefold "את" (את קין את אחיו את הבל) signify extension of the scope of the text, teaching that a twin sister was born with Cain, and that with Abel two were born; consequently the text states ותוסף "and she bore more'' than the previous time (*Gen. Rab.* 22:3).

According to Rashi, the threefold את was used to indicate that a text required amplification. While ותהר ותלד את קין literally means "and she added and she bore Cain" in Gen 4:1, Rashi argued that in this case, instead of taking את as a direct object marker, this את taught us that a twin sister was born together "with" Cain, thus Gen 4:1 should be read, "she conceived and she bore 'with' Cain. The two times את in Gen 4:2 indicated that two twin sisters were born "with" Abel. Thus, Gen 4:2 should have read, "and she additionally bore [a twin sister] "with" his brother, [and a twin sister] "with" Abel (ותסף ללדת את אחיו את הבל)." Notice that the Hebrew does not say she "then"

[332] Martinez, "Eve's Children in the Targumim," 42-43.

[333] Martinez, "Eve's Children in the Targumim," 43.

bore Abel, but *wtsp* (ותסף "and she added"). The rabbinic interpretation tradition had a long tradition of dispute over the morality and lawfulness of marriage between a brother and a sister.[334] In the discussion of prohibition of incest with one's sister in Lev 20:17, Rashi discussed the case of Cain's marriage:

> It is a wicked thing (חסד הוא) — It is an Aramaic expression, the Hebrew חרפה (disgrace) being in that language חסודא (cf. Onkelos on Genesis 34:14). A Midrashic explanation of it (of חסד הוא) is; If you should say, "**but Cain married his sister**!" then I reply, Cain's case was an exceptional one; an act of loving kindness (חסד) was done by the Omnipresent in order that His world might be built up through him (i.e. He made the propagation of the human race possible through this union), as it is said (Psalms 89:3) "The world was built up through חסד, loving-kindness."

Rashi believed that Cain marrying his sister was an act of divine mercy, allowing the human race to continue to propagate. However, in another rabbinic interpretation, Cain's wife was accused of being the consort of the murderer:

> And Cain knew his wife ..." "**Their inward thought** is that their houses shall continue forever" (Psalms 49:12a), Rabbi Yudan and Rabbi Pinchas, Rabbi Yudan said: why did the wicked believe that "**their houses** would continue forever (ibid.)? "**they** called **their lands** after **their own names**" (Psalms 49:12b) - Tiberias after

[334] See discussion in Teugels, "The Twin Sisters of Cain and Abel", 53-55.

the name Tiberius; Alexandira after the name Alexander; Antochia after the name Antiochus. Rabbi Pinchas said: "**their inward thought** is that **their houses** shall continue forever," tomorrow **their houses** will become **their graves** "**their dwelling** places for all generations," because **they** are not living and not judged - and not only that, but **they** called **their lands** after **their own names**. "And he built a city, and he called the name of the city, like the name of his son, Enoch". (*Gen. Rab.* 23:1)

As part of a murderous household, Cain's wife was accused of being an accomplice in covering up Cain's evil deeds in *Gen. Rab.* 23:1. The third person plural form in Psalm 49:12 was referred to explain the destined failure of Cain's lineage due to his sin. In this interpretation, Cain's wife was a key player in the planning and execution of Cain's evil schemes. While one Jewish interpretation tradition suggested that three daughters were born with Cain and Abel, another tradition found in Babylonian Talmud (BT) indicates that a fewer number of daughters were born with the first sibling in Genesis:

Rabbi Joḥanan b. Ḥanina said: The day consisted of twelve hours… in the seventh, Eve became his [Adam's] mate; in the eighth, they ascended to bed as two and descended as four; , "on the eighth day, **they ascended as two and descended as four**". (BT *Sanhedrin* 38b:)

Moreover, in BT tractate *Yevamot* 62a:

It was taught: Rabbi Nathan stated: Beth Shammai ruled: Two males and two females; and Beth Hillel ruled: A male and a female. Said Rabbi Ḥuna: What is the reason which Rabbi 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**.

The above interpretation reads "**and she added** and she bore his brother Abel" (**ותסף** ללדת את־אחיו את־הבל) in Gen 4:2 as "**she added [a twin sister]** to Abel," resulting in one female counterpart for each brother.[335] Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer (Pirqe R. El.), a late rabbinic work containing exegesis and retelling of biblical stories, also noted that a twin sister was born with each brother:

Rabbi Miyasha said: Cain **and his twin sister** were born together (נולד קין **ותאומתו** עמו), and Abel **and his twin sister** were born together (נולד הבל **ותאומתו** עמו). (Pirqe R. El. 21:3)

Here Rabbi Eliezer cited Rabbi Miyasha, inferring that one twin sister was born with each brother to serve as wife. Then he cited Rabbi Simeon's discussion of the incestuous deed of marry one's sister, as found in Lev. 20:17. According to the biblical account, there were no other women on earth, so Cain was eventually allowed to marry his sister. This is seen as an act of God's grace (Ps. 89:3). Later, in Pirqe R. El. 21:7, Rabbi Eliezer provided a reason for the sibling dispute.

[335] Teugels, "The Twin Sisters of Cain and Abel," 56.

> 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." (Pirqe R. El. 21:7)

Pirqe R. El. 21:7 suggested that the beauty of Abel's twin-sister was an additional reason for the sibling dispute. However, the *Tosefta* in the *Geniza Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* provided another explanation for Cain's grudge against his brother:

> 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. (*Tosefta in Genizah* Oxford Bodleian Ms. Heb. C74r, lines 18-26)[336]

[336] Michael L. Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, ed. and trans. Michael L. Klein (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1986), 11.

The *Tosefta in Genizah* suggests that Cain was assigned to marry Abel's twin-sister, and Abel to Cain's, to avoid an incestuous marriage. However, Cain's twin-sister was more beautiful than Cain's future wife. This became the reason for the dispute of the two brothers, because both of them wanted to claim Cain's sister as their wife.

The above discussions showed that three proposals circulated in rabbinic traditions assigning a daughter of Adam to be the wife of Cain. The first proposal was that Cain married the additional sister of Abel, as suggested in *Gen. Rab*. This would have made her a half-sister of Cain, if we combine the interpretation in the *Targ. Ps-J*. that Cain and Abel were not born from the same father. The second proposal was that Cain married the twin-sister of Abel, as suggested by the Babylonian Talmud. The third proposal was that Cain married the twin-sister of Cain. However, all of these suggestions would have resulted in incestuous marriages, which were clearly prohibited in Lev. 20:17. While the Bible is silenced about Cain's wife's identity and deeds, except for her marriage to Cain and childbearing for him. She is nonetheless being blamed for assisting in all of Cain's evil plotting, as suggested in *Gen. Rab*. Modern readers who are bothered by the contrasting images of Cain's wife in rabbinic interpretations might consider following the advice of Ibn Ezra: "Those who ask whom Cain and Seth married raise a worthless question. Scripture told us that Adam begot sons and daughters. The same is true of all of them" (*Ibn Ezra on Genesis* 5:29). Nevertheless, we still need to ask: why did early exegetes obsess with the identity of Cain's wife and try so hard to find out who she was? *Gen. Rab*. 23.1 infers that she was an accomplice of Cain's evil plan. A woman without a name or a voice in the Bible was eventually accused of plotting evil plans with her husband, who was destined to perish (cf. Gen 4:11-12). Both Martínez and Lieve M. Teugels discussed the fundamental concerns of the rabbis regarding the prohibition

of incestuous unions (Lev 20:17, 20:17, Deut 27:22), and how the rabbis have offered various proposals to solve this problem. Martínez highlighted that *Neofiti* (*Neof*.) and *Pseudo-Jonathan* (*Tg. Ps.-J*.) added a gloss that explicitly exempted from the prohibition of incest. This was done in order to allow them fill the world.[337] Moreover, the author of *Tosefta* highlighted that Adam commanded the brothers to marry the twin sister of their brother to avoid direct incest.[338] Amzallag, on the other hand, proposed that the function of the Cain genealogy was to preserve the memory of the development of copper metallurgy in the Southern Levant, specifically the transition from an archaic to an advanced mode of smelting. This observation constituted a coherent myth of Qenite origin.[339] To Amzallag, the exposition of the Cainite genealogy before the Sethite genealogy was an unexpected feature. The current arrangement of the genealogies stemmed from the need to demonstrate the Qenites' identity as the former people of YHWH and to separate them as far as possible from the emergence of YHWH's new people, Israel.[340]

Christian Traditions

The dispute between Cain and Abel over their twin sister has been elaborated in the early Christian teachings.[341] John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople from 398-404 CE, provided a detailed account on the identity of Cain's wife in his writings of the Primeval History:

[337] Martínez, "Eve's Children in the Targumim," 39.

[338] Martínez, "Eve's Children in the Targumim," 44. Similar evaluation has been made by Teugels, "The Twin Sisters of Cain and Abel," 53.

[339] See detailed analysis in Amzallag, "Why is the Cain Genealogy (Gen 4:17-24) Integrated into the Book of Genesis?" 29-38.

[340] Amzallag, "Why is the Cain Genealogy (Gen 4:17-24) Integrated into the Book of Genesis?" 42.

[341] Johannes B. Glenthøj offered a valuable bibliography in citing all early sources of Genesis 4 in Syriac and Greek literature, including the discussion of Cain's wife. See J. B. Glenthøj, *Cain and Abel in Syriac and Greek Writers* (4th-6th centuries) (Lovanii: E. Peeters. 1997), ix-xxvi.

> "… it is likely in this case too that **Eve gave birth to a daughter after Cain and Abel, and Cain took her for wife**. You see, since it was in the beginning and the human race had to increase from then on, **it was permissible to marry their own sisters**. This, of course, is the reason why Scripture leaves us to presuppose what was involved when it reports the event in these words only, "Cain had intercourse with his wife; she conceived and gave birth to Enoch, and (Cain) was the founder of a city named after his son Enoch…. See how they are now instructed little by little: having become mortal, **they want their memory to be kept unfading both through their offspring and from the names of places which they call after their children** (JohnChr 167).[342]

Women were commonly blamed either as a culprit or as an accomplice in early Christian interpretations, as early church fathers firmly believed that Eve was responsible for sin's entrance into the world.[343] Although Chrysostom acknowledged that Adam and Eve had been an original "equality of honor," he believed that Eve as "helper" was much superior to the animals whom God had also made to assist man, and a woman did not possess the "image of God" (Gen 1:26) as a man did.[344] Her subordinate status was not simply a result of the fall, but was an inferior one even at the moment of her creation.[345]

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[342] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis 18-45*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 37 (Hom 20:3-4).

[343] See Elizabeth A. Clark, *Women in the Early Churc*h (Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press, 1983Liturgical Press, 1983), 27.

[344] Clark, *Women in the Early Churc*h, 33-34.

[345] Clark, *Women in the Early Churc*h, 35-36.

In response to those who argued that Cain had an incestuous relationship with his sister, Didymus of Alexandria (ca. 313–398), the Egyptian theologian and monk representing the Alexandrian school of exegesis, condemned those who made this claim and explained that this marriage was allowed out of necessity. It would have been incest only if there were other women available to Cain at the time. Hence, "Cain was therefore not to be blamed for this, even if he sinned in many ways. It should be noted that it did not say, Cain knew his sister, but his wife, this term being appropriate to procreation."[346] Similar argument has been made by Theodoret of Cyrrhus (c.393-458), an influential theologian of the School of Antioch, biblical commentator, and Christian bishop of Cyrrhus.[347]

Cave of Treasure (Levudah)

The most notable proposal for an intermarriage between twin siblings is found in the *Cave of Treasures*:

> Then Adam and Eve descended from the holy mountain to its fringes below and there Adam knew his wife Eve. She conceived and gave birth to Cain and together with him to his sister Levudah. Then she conceived again and gave birth to Abel and Kalimath, his sister within the same womb. When the children had grown up, Adam spoke to Eve, "**Cain shall marry Kalimath who has been born together with Abel, and Abel marry Levudah who has been born together with Cain**."

[346] Didymus the Blind, *Commentary on Genesis*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 129-130.

[347] See also discussion of intermarriage with one's sister in Emmanouela Grypeou and Helen Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters Between Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 123-125.

> But Cain told his mother Eve: "I want to take my sister as wife, and Abel may marry his sister," for Levudah was beautiful. (*Cave* 5:18-22)[348]

Similar to Pirqe R. El. 21:7, we are told that Cain wanted to marry his own twin-sister because she was more beautiful. The *Cave* is more explicit in stating that it was Adam's command for Cain to marry Abel's twin-sister. This arrangement was intended to avoid transgressing the priestly commandment. Later in the *Cave*, we learn that Cain was persuaded by Satan to murder his brother "for Levudah's sake" (*Cave* 5:27).[349] In addition, the rejection of his offering by God aroused Cain's jealousy of Abel. After God drove Cain into exile, he took his twin sister, Levudah, as his wife. They settled in Nod (*Cave* 5:31-32). Jason Scully (2014) argued that the *Cave* mixed Jewish themes concerning exaltation of Seth with ascetical themes to emphasize the priestly duty and sexual purity, which echoed Syriac Christian authors like Ephrem.[350] After being expelled from the garden of Eden, Adam wanted to continue his priestly duties. He built the Cave of Treasures on top of a mountain and called it the House of Prayer (*Cave* 5:17). Seth's priestly care over Adam's body allowed Cain and his descendants to share some of the benefits of Adam's original glory.[351] Throughout the writing, Cain and his descendants were portrayed as wicked, while Seth's sons and daughters maintained moral and sexual purity:

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[348] Alexander Toepel, "The Cave of Treasures," in *Old Testament pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, ed. Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, Alexander Panayotov (Grand Rapids, MI.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 544.

[349] A similar name and motif is found in another Christian extracanonical writing the *Testament of Adam* 3:5: "you have heard, my son Seth, that a flood is coming and will wash the whole earth because of the daughters of Cain, your brother, who killed your brother Abel out of passion for your sister Lebuda."

[350] John Scully, "The Exaltation of Seth and Nazirite Asceticism in the Cave of Treasures," *Vigiliae Christianae* 68 (2014): 310-328.

[351] Scully, "The Exaltation of Seth and Nazirite Asceticism," 317.

> They were holy and saintly, **their wives and sons were pure and their daughters chaste and undefiled**. **Among their wives, sons, and daughters there was no impure desire or lewdness**, nor were there heard among them curses or lies, for their whole oath consisted in "by the blood of Abel." (*Cave* 7:8-11)

Nevertheless, Seth's later descendants experienced a second fall when they lusted after the daughters of Cain, who lived in the valley below Seth and his descendants (Cave 13:12-13, 14:1). In Islamic traditions, the name Lebūdhā is mentioned in al-Ṭabari's *History of the Prophets and Kings I* (*Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk I*):

> According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Isḥāq: We have the names of fifteen men and four women, **among them Cain and his twin sister, Abel, (Abel's twin sister) Labūdhā**, Adam's daughter Ashūth and her twin brother, **Seth and his twin sister, Ḥazūrah** and her twin brother , (born) when (Adam) was one hundred and thirty years old (*Annales I*, 146).[352]

> According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Isḥāq: **Cain married Adam's daughter Ashūt**. (*Annales I*, 168)[353]

[352] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 317.
[353] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 338.

Unlike the *Cave*, which mentions Lavudah as the twin sister of Cain, Ṭabarī's *Annales* shows that Labūdhā was the twin sister of Abel and was later said to be Cain's wife. In addition, a contrasting account is found in the birth account of Seth:

> When one hundred and thirty years of Adam's life had passed—that is, five years after Cain had killed Abel—Eve gave birth to Adam's son Seth. **The people of the Torah have mentioned that Seth was born without a twin**. They explain Seth as "Gift of God," meaning that he was a replacement for Abel (*Annales I*, 153).[354]

> Ibn Isḥāq, in turn, said we were told by Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah b. al-Faḍl—(Ibn Isḥāq): Adam's son **Seth married his sister, Adam's daughter Ḥazūrah** (*Annales I*, 164).[355]

Seth was mentioned in the biblical account as being born without a twin. In *Annales I*, 146, Seth was said to have a twin sister, Ḥazūrah, which was influenced by the *Jubilees*' tradition (cf. ʾAzūra in Jub. 4:11).[356] Ṭabarī further elaborated on the intermarriage and mingling between Cainite and Sethite descendants until the days of Noah. According to Ibn Isḥāq, Cain's descendants invented musical instruments such as flutes, drums, lutes, pandores, and lyres during the time of Mahalalel b. Kenan (*Annales I*, 168).[357] In another account given by Aḥmad b. Zuhayr, we learn

[354] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 324.
[355] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 335.
[356] see discussion in Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 317 fn.905.
[357] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 339.

that Iblīs invented music and used it to lead the two descendants of Adam to mingle with one another:

> There were two tribes (*baṭn*) of Adam's descendants. One of them dwelled in the plain [Cain's descendants], and the other in the mountain [Seth's descendants]. **The mountain men were handsome, and the mountain women ugly, while the women of the plain were beautiful, and the men ugly.** *Iblīs* came to one of the inhabitants of the plain in the form of a young man and hired himself out as his servant. **Iblīs invented something like the flutes used by shepherds but produced with it a sound, the likes of which people had not heard before**…. One of the mountain people intruded upon them [plain people] during that festival of theirs. He saw the beauty of the women and, going back to his companions, told them about it. They moved down to live with the women, with the result that wickedness appeared among the women (*Annales I*, 169).[358]

Aḥmad's account suggested that the female descendants of Seth who lived in the mountains were ugly, while the female descendants of Cain who lived on the plain were beautiful. In addition, according to al-Ḥakam (ca. 47/667 - 113/731), the beautiful female children of Cain were always eager to find husbands. They displayed their finery and talents to the beautiful male children of Seth. The male children of Seth were attracted to the daughters of Cain because the daughters who lived in the mountains were ugly:

[358] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 340.

There were eight hundred years between Adam and Noah. **Their women were as ugly as could be**, and their men were handsome. **A woman always wanted a man for herself**. Therefore, this verse was revealed: "And do not display your finery as in the first Jāhiliyyah!"… One hundred handsome children of Seth said: Would that we could look at what our cousins-meaning the children of Cain-are doing. So the hundred went down to the beautiful female children of Cain. **The women detained the men**, and they remained for a while…. The result was the coming of sin. **They intermarried and mingled, and the children of Cain grew in numbers until they filled the earth**. They are the ones who drowned in the days of Noah (*Annales I*, 170).[359]

Although *Jubilees* does not mention about the Cainite genealogy, Ibn Ḥumayd's account shows that later traditions were interested in identifying the daughters from this genealogy:

When Enoch's son **Methuselah** was 137 years old, he married ʿ**Adnā (Ednā in *Jub* 4:27), the daughter of** ʿ**Azrāʾīl b. Abūshīl b. Enoch b. Cain b. Adam**. She bore him his son Lamech. Methuselah lived 700 years after the birth of Lamech . (Several) sons and daughters were born to him…. When **Lamech** b. Methuselah b.

[359] Rosenthal, *The History of al- Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 340-41. While remained nameless, Ephrem provided a similar account in his Commentary on Genesis. In explaining the identity of sons of gods and daughters of men in Gen 6:2, Ephrem saw the sons of Seth as sons of God. The beautiful daughters of men whom they saw were the daughters of Cain who adorned themselves and became a snare to the eyes of the sons of Seth. Because the sons of Seth were going into the daughters of Cain, they turned away from their first wives whom they had previously taken. Then the wives of Seth began to abandon their modesty which up until that time they had preserved for their husbands' sake. Ephrem, *Commentary on Genesis*, 134-35. See also discussion in David A. Skelton, "Angels Among Us? The Watchers Myth and Angelology in Ephrem's Commentary on Genesis and the Ethiopic Tradition," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* (2019): 16-20.

> Enoch was 187 years old, **he married Batanūs(h) (Betenos in *Jub* 4:28) the daughter of Barākīl b. Mehujael b. Enoch b. Cain b. Adam**. **She bore him Noah**, the prophet—may God pray for him and give him peace! After Noah's birth, Lamech lived another 595 years. (Several) sons and daughters were born to him. The total length of his life was 780 years. Then he died. When Lamech's son **Noah** was 500 years old, **he married ʿAmzūrah (ʾEmzara in *Jub* 4:33), the daughter of Barākīl b. Mehujael b. Enoch b. Cain b. Adam**. She bore him his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They were Noah's children. (*Annales I*, 178)[360]

According to the tradition illustrated by al-Ḥakam, every male descendant of Seth eventually married a female descendant of Cain. This included Methuselah (Gen 5:25-27), Lamech (Gen 5:28-30), and Noah (Gen 5:32).[361]

First Book of Adam and Eve (Luluwa)

Similar names and marriage motifs are found in the *First Book of Adam and Eve*, a sixth century Christian extracanonical work written in Geʿez, which was probably translated from an original Arabic language. The *First Book* begins immediately after Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden, followed by the birth of Cain, Abel, and their twin sisters. It ends with the time that Cain killed his brother. The *Second Book* continues the narrative of the *First Book*, focusing on the lives of the patriarchs before the flood. It detailed the death of Adam and Cain; how the

[360] Rosenthal, *The History of al- Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 346-47.

[361] According to Muḥammad b. Sahl b. ʿAskar, both wives of Japheth and Ham were also descendants of Cain, while Shem's wife is not mentioned in this account. See *Annales II*, 211-12 or William M. Brinner, *The History of al- Ṭabarī. Vol. 2: Prophets and Patriarchs* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 11.

descendants of Seth on the mountain were tempted by the daughters of Cain in the valley. It ends with the birth of Noah. In the *First Book*, Cain's twin sister is called Luluwa, while Abel's twin sister is Aklia, Acleima, or Kelimath. Luluwa means "beautiful," because she was more beautiful than her mother (*First Book* 74:6-8). In the *Rolls*, Cain's twin sister was called Lusia, but her name has no known meaning.[362] According to Ilan, the names Luluwa, Lusia, and Levudah are probably all translation variations of the same name, which may have been derived from a common source.[363] After the children were weaned, Eve conceived again and gave birth to another son and daughter. The son was named Abel, and the daughter was named Aklia (75:11). Aklia eventually married Seth. The *Second Book of Adam and Eve* provides more details about Luluwa and her marriage to Cain:

> 1 When Luluwa heard Cain's words, she wept and went to call her father and mother, and told them how Cain had killed his brother Abel… 6 When the mourning for his brother was ended, **Cain took his sister Luluwa and married her, without permission from his father and mother**. Because of their heavy hearts they could not keep him from her. 7 He then went down to the foot of the mountain, away from the garden, near the place where he had killed his brother. 8 And in that place were many fruit trees and forest trees. His sister gave birth to his children, who in their turn began to multiply by degrees until they filled that place. (*Second Book* 1:1, 6-8)

[362] See Margaret D. Gibson. *Kitāb al Magāll* Arabic Book of the Roles Cambridge Uni 1901, 11, 17.

[363] See discussion in Ilan, "Biblical Women's Names in the Apocryphal Traditions,"30 and appendix "Table 4: Cave of Treasures Traditions."

Unlike the *Cave* and the *Rolls*, the *First* and *Second Book of Adam and Eve* do not provide a complete genealogy from Adam and Seth to Jesus. Other than Eve, only two primordial women's names are mentioned in this composition: Luluwa, the wife of Cain, and Akleimia/Aklia, the wife of Seth. However, this composition also describes Luluwa's response after learning that Cain had murdered her brother. She was distressed and went to inform her parents about Cain's deed (*Second Book* 1:1). We are not told about her feelings when she married her twin-brother. The narrative about her ends after she gave birth to Cain's children. According to this narrative, the children of Cain seemed to inherited Luluwa's beauty, as their beautiful appearances and figures (vv.31) were the reason that the descendants of Seth came down from the mountain and lived with them (*Second Book* 20:16-38).

Early church fathers considered *Jubilees* as part of their collections of sacred writings. The genealogy in *Jubilees* was soon incorporated into the life of Jesus, translated into Greek and Syriac, and then into Latin and Geʿez. These were the principal languages of much of the Christian world at the time. The book was thus known in the early Christian world and alluded in the writings of the church fathers. According to Ilan, distorted forms of the names of the wives in the *Jubilees* are found in later Christian sources.[364] In addition, some of the names mentioned in these writings are interchangeable with one to another. For instance, *Jubilees* mentions that Cain married his sister ʾAwan (4:9), and Seth married his sister ʾAzūra (4:11). Similar names are found in the tenth century *Annals of Eutychius of Alexandria.* Bishop Eutychius, also known as Said ibn Batriq, mentions that the twin sister of Cain was called Azrun, while Abel's twin sister was Owain, which in Greek means "Laphura" (Eutychius PG 111 910). Cain refused his parents' request to marry

[364] Ilan, "Biblical Women," 17 and appendix "Table 1: The Jubilees Traditions."

Abel's sister because his own sister Azrun was more beautiful. In another fifth century chronicle, the *Chronicle of John Malalas, the* Byzantine chronicler from Antioch, recorded that Eve bore sons Cain, Abel and Seth, and two daughters, Azoura and Asouam (*PG* 97 65A). These names appear to be another distorted variants of *Jubilees* ʾAwan and ʾAzūra.

Islamic Traditions

Stories of the Prophets

While the Qurʾan does not mention Cain's wife, the *Stories of the Prophets* (*Qiṣaṣ Al-Anbiyā*), a collection of narratives adapted from the Qurʾan and other Islamic literature, gathered a few reports about her. Three names have been associated with her in this collection:

Iqlīmā

According to Ibn ʿAbbās and Muḥammad b. Isḥāq, Eve gave birth to forty children in twenty births. Each birth resulted in a pair of twins, except for Seth who was born alone.[365] Cain and his twin sister Iqlīmā[366] (or Aqlīmā,[367] or Qalīma),[368] were the first twin born to Adam and Eve. Eve then bore Abel and his twin, Labūdā, in one birth.[369] This account appears to be a descendant of the *Cave* tradition, as they share similar motifs:

[365] Thaʿlabī, *ʿArāʿis al-majālis fī Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā, or Lives of the Prophets as recounted by Abū Isḥāq Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Thaʿlabī, translated and annotated by William M. Brinner* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 73-74.

[366] Thaʿlabī, *Qiṣaṣ Al-Anbiyā*, 73.

[367] Thaʿlabī, *Qiṣaṣ Al-Anbiyā*, 74.

[368] Rosenthal, *The History of al- Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 314, n.893 (*Annales I*, 144).

[369] Thaʿlabī, *Qiṣaṣ Al-Anbiyā*, 74.

> Cain wanted to turn down Adam's request to marry Abel's sister, but married his own twin instead because Iqlīmā was more beautiful. It is explicitly mentioned that God commanded Adam to ask Cain to marry Labūdā. Because Cain refused, Adam asked both Cain and Abel to offer a sacrifice to God. The one whose sacrifice was accepted by God would have the right to Iqlīmā. While Genesis 4 does not state the reason why the two brothers offered their sacrifices to God, the *Stories* inform us that they did so in order to know who could take Iqlīmā as wife. Moreover, Cain took Iqlīmā as his wife, and they went to Aden in the land of Yemen.[370]

ʿAnāq

According to Muʿāwiyah b. ʿAmmār, ʿAnāq was the first daughter of Adam and Eve, and she was born before Cain.[371] She was reported to be the first person to commit fornication and to act wickedly on earth. Because of this, she was later killed. *Stories* do not related her as the wife of Cain. Her name is usually connected with the narrative of the legendary giant ʿŪd̲j̲, who is considered to be the son of Cain and his sister ʿAnāq.[372] ʿŪd̲j̲ was supposed to be the only creature to survive the flood in the time of Noah, but was later killed by Moses.

ʿAmālah

According to Muʿāwiyah b. ʿAmmār, after Cain and Abel were born, God created a female *jinnī,* named ʿAmālah in the likeness of a human being.[373] God then commanded Adam to ask Cain

[370] Thaʿlabī,, *Qiṣaṣ Al-Anbiyā*, 79-80.

[371] Thaʿlabī, *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā,* 75.

[372] Jean-Charles Coulon, "Anāq bt. Ādam, the Islamic Story of the Very First Witch," *Hawwa* (2019): 144, fn. 28.

[373] Thaʿlabī, *Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyā,* 75.

to marry her, and he did. When Abel grew up, God sent a *houri* (a virgin of Paradise as mentioned in Qurʾan 44:54; 52:20; 55:72; 56:72) to be his wife. Her name was Tarakah.[374] Cain then asked Adam to allow him to take Tarakah as wife, as he was the eldest son and he should have more right to her. Adam then asked the brothers to offer sacrifice to God. The one whose offering was accepted would be more worthy of the *houri* than the other.

Reformation

In comparison to early Christian teachings, biblical interpreters during the Reformation held a more sympathetic view of Cain's wife. Konrad Pellikan (1478-1556), a German Protestant theologian, Hebraist, and Protestant reformer who worked chiefly in Switzerland, argued that Cain did not commit incest. In his *Commentary on Genesis* 4:17, Pellikan maintained that Cain's wife was an unknown relative, not his mother or sister.[375] According to Pellikan, biblical writers only recorded the names and genealogies of those who were in the line of succession to Jesus in the New Testament. Since Cain's genealogy is not related to Jesus, it is not surprising that his wife is not mentioned in the Bible. In his *Lectures on Genesis* 4:17, Martin Luther (1483-1546) highly praised Cain's wife:

> "… the girl [wife of Cain] who married him [Cain] must be lavishly praised. How could she be glad at the marriage of her brother, who was a murderer, accursed, and excommunicated? Moreover, she undoubtedly asked her father humbly why he was joining her, an innocent person, with the accursed man and was forcing her into

[374] Ibid.

[375] John L. Thompson, *Genesis I-II* (Illinois: IVP Academic 2012), 207.

> exile. Cain's conduct, too, justifiably filled her with fear that he would dare to do to his sister and wife what he had dared to do to his brother. When Adam was bringing this marriage about, Adam, therefore, had to be extremely eloquent in order to persuade his daughter that she should not reject her father's command, and that, although Cain was cursed and was bearing the punishment for his sin, God would nevertheless preserve her, who was innocent, and would bless her. I have no doubt whatever that because of his wife, who married her bloodthirsty brother in holy trust in God and out of obedience to her parents, God bestowed many personal blessings on Cain through all his descendants."[376]

Luther's reading of Cain's wife as his sister was likely influenced by rabbinic interpretations. Unlike his predecessors, Luther's *Lectures on Genesis* transformed the women of Genesis into saints, praising their actions as being shaped primarily by the virtue of faith and the promise of redemption. Luther neither ignored nor demonized Cain's wife; instead, he illustrated her psychological struggles. Despite her fears and doubts about the marriage, the younger woman obeyed her parents' command to marry her cursed brother. She was willing to humble herself by marrying her brother, who had murdered another brother. Her self-sacrifice in this marriage and her subsequent exile with Cain made her a blessed woman.[377] Mickey Leland Mattox (2003) examined Martin Luther's interpretation of the female characters in the Genesis narrative.[378]

[376] Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis*, 4:17.

[377] Ibid.

[378] Mattox presented the shift of Martin Luther's views on Eve after he married Katharina. The first two chapters compares Luther's treatment of Eve between the young Luther and the old Luther. The single Luther in chapter 1 gave a conservative reading of Eve that is very much in line with the early exegetical tradition in which Eve's subordinate position is established by the created order; the married Luther in chapter 2 emphasized the equality of the sexes and the absence of domination in the original order of creation. Moreover, Luther emphasized

According to Mattox, Eve was a heroine who served as an example of a godly life.[379] Moreover, in Luther's interpretation of human sexual distinction, he emphasized the fundamental goodness of the female sex, and the structure of finite human existence as determined by God: "it is not within the power of the human person to be either a man or a woman, but as one is created by God, so one must be." (WA 24.52-53 *Lectures On Gen*.1:27)[380] In his *Commentary on Genesis*, John Calvin (1509-1564) noted that Cain married his sister before murdering his brother:

> From the context we may gather that Cain, before he slew his brother had married a wife; otherwise Moses would now have related something respecting his marriage; because it would be a fact worthy to be recorded, that any one of his sisters could be found, who would not shrink with horror from committing herself into the hand of one whom she knew to be defiled with a brother's blood; and while a free choice was still given her, should rather choose spontaneously to follow an exile and a fugitive, than to remain in her father's family. (Calvin on Gen 4:17)[381]

Calvin understood that Cain's wife was one of his sisters, whom he married before he murdered Abel. Calvin believed that the biblical narrator would have provided more information

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the equal capacity of both male and female for faith or unbelief. The subordination of woman to man, then, is seen by Luther as a consequence of the Fall. Mattox points out that the sixteenth century saw a significant shift in understandings of gender roles. See Mickey Leland Mattox*, "Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs": Martin Luther's Interpretation of the Women of Genesis in the Enarrationes in Genesin, 1535-1545* (Brill, 2003), 29-108.

[379] Mattox, *Martin Luther's Interpretation of the Women*, 50-51.

[380] Mattox, *Martin Luther's Interpretation of the Women*, 52.

[381] John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, trans. John King from the Original Latin and Compared with the French Edition (Edinburgh: Printed for the Calvin Translation Society, 1847; repr., Grand Rapids, MI.: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), 215.

about her reaction if she had married Cain after learning of his crime. It was also her free will to go into exile with Cain.

Christian Art

Unlike Eve, Cain's wife was not a popular character in religious art. Only a few portrayals of her can be found. Three illustrated manuscripts from the Greek *Octateuch*, dated from the beginning of the eleventh century, show similar motifs in depicting the Cain narrative in Genesis 4. The illustration begins on the left, with Cain being cursed (Gen 4:9-12). The hand of God is shown from the arc of heaven above Cain. Then Cain repents and weeps (Gen 4:13-14). On the right-hand side, Cain is seated on a bench when Enoch, his son, is born (Gen 4:17). A midwife is carrying a bowl towards Cain's wife, who is seated on a bed. Enoch is sleeping in a crib on the side of the bed (Gen 4:17). Two of these paintings are currently located at the Apostolic Library of the Vatican (gr.746 fol.46r and gr.747 fol.26r). The third one was from the *Smyrna Octateuch* (A.1 fol. 17r). It was previously located at the Evangelical School of Smyrna, Turkey, before it was destroyed by fire in 1922. [382]

[382] D. C. Dirk, *Miniatures de l'Octateuque grec de Smyrne, manuscrit de l'École évangélique de Smyrne*, préface de D.-C. Hesseling (Leyde: A. W. Sijthoff, 1909), 25.



Figure 1. Cain and His Family. Octateuch (gr.746 fol.46r), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 11th century CE.

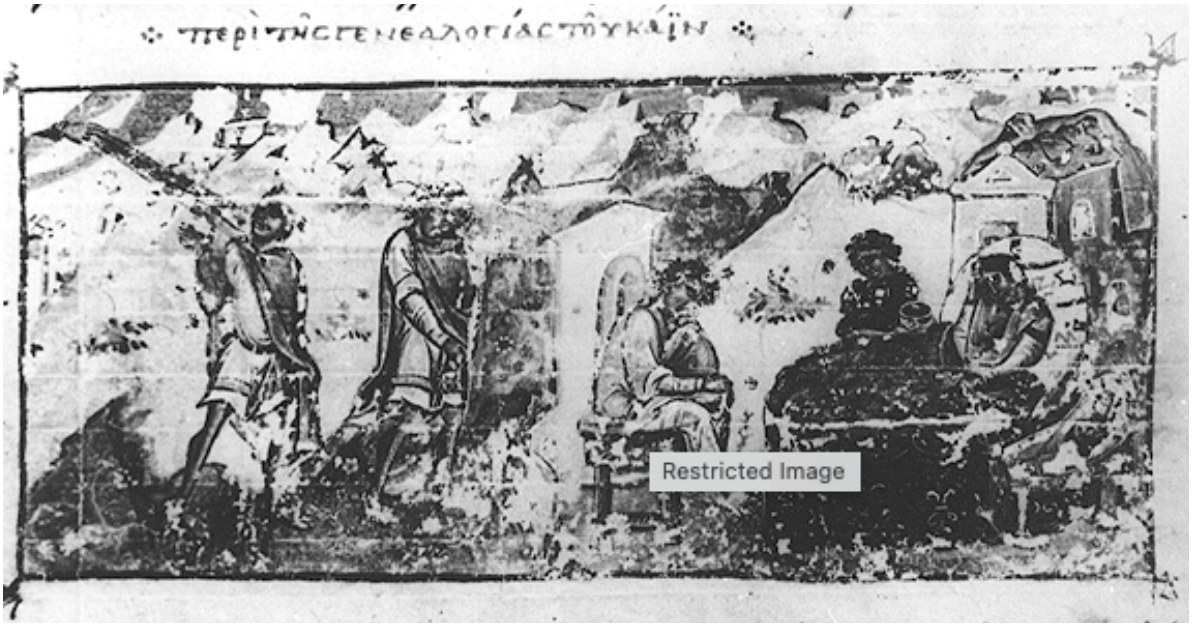


Figure 2.Cain and His Family.Octateuch (gr.747 fol.26r), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 11th century CE.

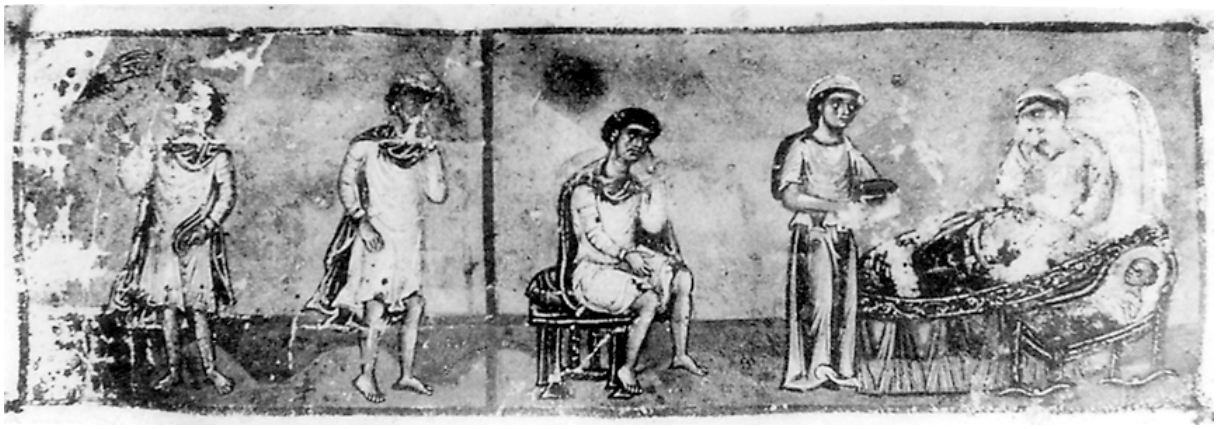


Figure 3. Cain and His Family. Smyrna Octateuch (A.1 fol. 17r), Greek Evangelical School of Smyrna, Turkey, 11th century CE..

A surprising appearance of both the wives of Cain and Abel is found in the stone sculpture at the left embrasures of the North façade of the Librarians Portal (Portail des Libraires). Dated to the late thirteenth century, here Cain is shown tilling the ground with a spade while his wife spins, holding a spindle in her right hand and a distaff in her left hand. Abel is seated with his right hand raised, holding a staff in his left hand, and tending a flock of sheep at his feet. Beside him, his wife is also shown seated, spinning, holding a spindle in her right hand and a distaff in her left hand (Fig. 4).[383] Both women are depicted as hardworking women who shared their husbands' earthly duties to support their families.

[383] Louise Pillion Lefrançois, *Les portails latéraux de la cathédrale de Rouen; étude historique et iconographique sur un ensemble de bas-relief de la fin du XIIIe siècle, avec 69 photographies dans le texte* (France: A. Picard et fils, 1907), 180, 205, and 211.



Figure 4. Cain and Abel with Their Wives. Portail des Libraires, Cathédrale Notre-Dame, late 13th century CE.

While the Cain and Abel narrative is frequently depicted in Christian art, scenes of Cain's life with his wife are rare.[384] One such image is found in the Velislav Bible (1325–1349), a fourteenth century illuminated manuscript that comprises narratives from the book of Genesis, Exodus, the visions of Daniel, and the stories of Samson and Judith.[385] It is a picture-book of the Bible, containing 747 illuminations with text that is limited to brief titles or descriptions. The text serves mainly as commentary and explanatory glosses, often directly related to the adjacent pictures. The purpose is to present the source in the Bible and guide lay clerics and preachers to prepare for sermons. The text at the top of the illustration refers to the murder in the previous folio, *Dixit autem Dominus ad Kayn*, "and the Lord said to Cain" (Genesis 4:9-10). This also corresponds

[384] Lenka Panušková, *The Velislav Bible, Finest Picture-Bible of the Late Middle Ages: Biblia Depicta As Devotional, Mnemonic and Study Tool* (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 94.

[385] On the historical background of the Velislav Bible, see the first chapter of Panušková, *The Velislav Bible*.

to the first scene in the upper register, but the following image and text show Cain fleeing from the Lord's countenance. In the upper register, Cain meets his wife. He is holding a staff, which may symbolize his itinerant life as a result of his sinful deed.[386] The two bottom scenes show Cain building a city, which he names after his firstborn son, Enoch (Gen 4:17).



Figure 5. Cain and His Family. Velislav's Bible (Ms xxiii c.124, f. 6v.), Národní Knihovna České Republiky, 14th century CE.

Conclusion

While the biblical narrator provided no information about the identity of Cain's wife, early interpretations of her have gradually shaped her into a negative figure, with some portraying her as an incestuous woman who participated in Cain's evil deeds. However, an anonymous woman

[386] Panušková, *The Velislav Bible*, 94.

married to a murderer does not necessarily mean that she was an evil person herself. It is more likely that Cain's wife, like many wives and mothers, dedicated her life to her family and children. She probably have shared the blame of her husband's deeds throughout her marriage, and she became the target of his blame as a result. As a conclusion to this chapter, I would like to honor Cain's wife with an excerpt from a sermon given by Rev. J.B. Clayton, a Baptist church pastor preaching at the First Baptist Church on May 16, 1909 on Genesis 4,[387] the following Sunday sermon after the Mother's Day. In his sermon, Rev. Clayton paid tribute to Cain's wife:

> "Something funny about where Cain got his wife? Do you think she saw anything funny in being yoked to a murderer and wondering if her turn would come next? Yet she was faithful to his need—women are made that way! I don't know where she came from, but I think from that kindly country whence come all good and faithful women – Heaven. She knew no better, and did no worse than shelter him in her faithful love. I have seen many strange things under the sun, but the strangest of them all is the woman who would rather be in perdition with her husband than be in heaven without him. The heroism of war sinks into the blook-soaked dust of the battlefield at the presence of such a faithful woman, whose divine nature compels her to mercifully comfort a man whom other men would drive to his death. Women can teach us what mercy is – the mercy that ought to make us broth early to every man. Even the outcast and the criminal."

[387] "Praises Wife of Cain: Such Women Teach Mercy, declares Rev. J.B. Clayton." *The Washington Post* (1877-1922); May 17, 1909.

Chapter 4: ADAH AND ZILLAH

19 וַיִּקַּח־לוֹ לֶמֶךְ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים שֵׁם הָאַחַת עָדָה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית צִלָּה: 20 וַתֵּלֶד עָדָה אֶת־יָבָל הוּא הָיָה אֲבִי
יֹשֵׁב אֹהֶל וּמִקְנֶה: 21 וְשֵׁם אָחִיו יוּבָל הוּא הָיָה אֲבִי כָּל־תֹּפֵשׂ כִּנּוֹר וְעוּגָב: 22 וְצִלָּה גַם־הוּא יָלְדָה אֶת־
תּוּבַל קַיִן לֹטֵשׁ כָּל־חֹרֵשׁ נְחֹשֶׁת וּבַרְזֶל וַאֲחוֹת תּוּבַל־קַיִן נַעֲמָה: 23 וַיֹּאמֶר לֶמֶךְ לְנָשָׁיו עָדָה וְצִלָּה שְׁמַעַן
קוֹלִי נְשֵׁי לֶמֶךְ הַאְזֵנָּה אִמְרָתִי כִּי אִישׁ הָרַגְתִּי לְפִצְעִי וְיֶלֶד לְחַבֻּרָתִי: 24 כִּי שִׁבְעָתַיִם יֻקַּם־קָיִן וְלֶמֶךְ
שִׁבְעִים וְשִׁבְעָה:

[19] Lamech took two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. [20] Adah bore Jabal; he was the ancestor of those who dwell in tents with herds. [21] His brother's name was Jubal; he was the ancestor of all those who play the lyre and pipe. [22] Zillah bore Tubal-Cain, the one who sharpens all kinds of bronze and iron tools. The sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah. [23] Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear to my voice; wives of Lamech, attend to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. [24] If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold." (Gen 4:19-24)

Gen 4:19-24 is usually portrayed as the beginning of civilizations. Various scholars suggest that this passage highlights the development of the Cainite genealogy. After Cain's wife bore Enoch in Gen 4:17, the Cainite genealogy hastens four generations in the next verse. Lamech then becomes the seventh generation, i.e. Adam, Cain, Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methushael and Lamech. The second part of this genealogy (Gen 4:19-24) concentrates on Lamech and his two wives — Adah and Zillah. Jabal and Jubal were two sons of Adah; While Tubal-Cain and his sister Naamah

were of Zillah. Lamech's three sons were associated with various activities that are important in the development of societies: tent-making, pasturing (vv.20), music (vv.21), and metallurgy (vv.22). Naamah, the only named daughter in the Primeval History, did not have a specified vocation. The discussion of Naamah's role would be elaborated in the following chapter, as she was often interpreted as Noah's wife in the history of interpretation. The Cainite genealogy ended with an enigmatic speech of Lamech to his two wives.

Jewish Traditions

Generally, interpretations of Adah and Zillah in Jewish traditions can be divided into two parts. The first part (Gen 4:19-22) focuses on onomastic studies of Adah and Zillah to identify their functions in the Cainite genealogy and their relationships with Lamech. The second part (Gen 4:23-24) focuses on their reactions to Lamech's speech and deeds.

Biblical Onomastics of Adah and Zillah (Gen 4:19-22)

Unlike Cain's wife, the two wives of Lamech, Adah and Zillah, are usually interpreted through the meanings of their names. The Hebrew name of Adah (עדה) is connected to the Herbew root *ʿădî* (עדי), which means "to adorn oneself with" (cf. Ug. *ʿdy*, JArm. *ʿdy*).[388] This III-weak root *ʿdh* (עדה) also means "to pass by" or "to go through" (cf. Arb. *ʿdw*, Geʿez. *ʿadawa*).[389] This root is related to a number of personal names in the Bible. The same name Adah (עדה) is found in Gen 36:2, 4, 10, 12 and 16 as one of the three wives of Esau, the eldest son of Isaac (Gen 36:2). Another

[388] BDB, 725; HALOT, 791. See also Johannes Gabriel, "Die Kainitengenealogie (Gn 4, 17-24)," *Biblica* 40:2 (1959): 416.

[389] BDB, 723.

personal name Eleadah (אלעדה) "God has adorned" is found in 1 Chr 7:20 as a descendant of an Ephraim.[390] Adaiah (עדיה) "Yahweh has adorned (the bearer of the name)" is attested in 2 Kgs 22:1, Ezra 10:29, 39; Neh 11:5, 12; 1C 6:26, 8:21, and 9:12.[391] According to Richard S. Hess (1993), the onomastic environment of this Hebrew root *ʿd(h/y)* occurred quite broadly in West Asia.[392] This root could have been related to a personal name in Aramaic *ʿdyh*, perhaps also *a-di-ia(-a)*, an Arabian queen who lived during the time of Ashurbanipal, and *[y]a-a-du-na*, a personal names in Ugaritic.[393] *ʿd(h/y)* as a personal name could have been listed under the divine name elements. Hence, the onomastic environment of her name might have extended through a variety of periods in the West Semitic world of the Ancient Near East.[394]

As for Zillah (צלה), the III-weak root of her name can be rendered *ṣēl* "shadow, protection" with the root *ṣll* (cf. Aram. *ṭll*; Geʿez. *ṣallala*, < Akk. *ṣullulu* "to roof over, to cover over, to provide shade"), or as a verbal form *ṣālal* (צלל) "to grow dark."[395] The same Hebrew root means "to tremble, to quiver" (cf. JArm. *ṣĕlal*; Syr. *ṣal*; Arb. *ṣalla*, *ṣalṣala* "to clink, to tinkle").[396] As noun the same root relates to musical instruments *ṣelṣĕlîm* (צלצלים) "percussion, cymbals" (Ps 150:5) and *mĕṣiltayim* (מצלתים in 1 Ch 13:8 15:19; 16:5, 42; 25:6; 2 Ch 5:12, 13; 29:25; Ezr 3:10; Ne 12:27).[397] Hess proposed that the former etymology of Zillah as "shadow, shade, or protection" might carry the sense of refreshment of darkness or of protection, while the latter could refer to

[390] BDB 46.
[391] See also HALOT 791.
[392] Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1-11*, 47.
[393] Ibid.
[394] Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1-11*, 47-48.
[395] BDB 853.
[396] BDB 852, HALOT 1027.
[397] BDB 853.

Zillah's beautiful voice (Gabiel 1959:416). Moreover, the verbal form of Adah's name *ʿādāh* "to ornament" in Gen 4:17-24 might suggest an implicit wordplay with Zillah "cymbal." Both meanings refer to the development of arts.[398] To Hess, the etymology and wordplay of personal names carried the narrative forward and provided important clues to the theme and direction of the narrative.[399] Similar case took place for Zillah's daughter Naamah (נעמה). The Hebrew root *nʿm* also has two possible etymologies. It can either mean "to be pleasant," "lovely" (cf. Arb. *naʿima*, Ug. and Ph. *nʿm*),[400] or render "to sing" (cf. Arab *nağama* "to speak in a low, gentle voice," Syr. *neʿmto* "gentle sound"),[401] denoting her singing with sweet voice.[402] Cassuto (1961) first recognized the parallel roots of Zillah and Naamah appearing together in the Ugaritic *Baal Cycle* (KTU 1.3 I 18-19):[403]

(18) *qm. ybd. wyšr*	He stood, recited and sang
(19) ***mṣltm***.*bd.* ***nʿm***	[with] cymbals a pleasant song.[404]

The first-century Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria portrayed negative images of Adah and Zillah, not only through the meaning of their names but also the names of their children, to vindicate that Lamech's generations were destined to death. In his treatise *On the*

[398] See discussion in Hess 47-49. See also Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 234.

[399] Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1-11*, 161.

[400] HALOT 705.

[401] BDB 654.

[402] Hess, *Studies in the Personal Names of Genesis 1-11*, 54-55, 127.

[403] Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 234.

[404] An alternate translation is provided by Smith and Pitard: "he stood, chant, and sang; cymbals in the virtuoso's hand." Noted that *bd* is used as prep. "into the hands of" instead of as n.ms. "song." See Olmo Lete, 214, also 587-88, and 614), also Mark S. Smith, Wayne T. Pitard, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle Volume II. Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU/CAT 1.3-1.4* (Brill, 2009), 69, 92.

Posterity of Cain, Philo provided a systematic study of the two genealogies of Lamech in Genesis 4 and 5. Philo noted that there is a twofold meaning of Lamech, understood as "humiliation" (*Post. Cain* 39-42):[405] One inherited wicked character, whose irrational passion brought low his generations and eventually became the soul of death (Post. Cain 72-75).[406] The other inherited good characters such as love and virtues, who acknowledged that all creation was a gift of God, and he and his generations eventually became men of real nobility, like Seth.[407]

As for the Cainite Lamech, Philo highlighted that Lamech arranged his own marriage, and he fancied that he would bring good to humanity through well-aimed projects.[408] However, "Lamech chose wives for himself, and chose very great evils."[409] Philo then discussed each wife in detail:

> Lamech, marries as his first wife **Ada, a which means "witness."**[410] **Adah bears witness to worthless things, and is borne witness to (as helping) in the attempts to accomplish each of them.** But if you shall think well to have her for a partner, she will bear to you a very great mischief, even Jabal, which signifies "one altering."[411]

[405] Philo, *On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, LCL 227 (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1929), 351.

[406] *Philo: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*, 369

[407] *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*, Treatise (22) 351, 353.

[408] See discussion in *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*, 371-2

[409] *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain* line 78 in Greek, 369.

[410] *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain,* Treatise 23.

[411] *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*, Treatise 23-24, lines 83-87 in Greek, 373, 375.

Philo rendered Adah's name "witness."[412] This name made people believe what this family brought to people should be right, and people would succeed by following them.[413] The name of Adah's son Jabal meant "one who alters" in Gen 4:20. He was the remover of virtue's boundaries by right reason, and he made virtues vices.[414] Jabal was the forefather of cattle-herding. Cattle, however, were soulless creatures. Jabal's brother Jubal uttered words that "inclined this way and that." He was the one with no sure, firm speech.[415]

> **Zillah means "a shadow" and is a figure of bodily and external goods, which in reality differ not a whit from a shadow.** Is not beauty a shadow, which after a short-lived bloom withers away? What else is strength and vigor of body, which any chance illness breaks up? What else are the organs of sense with all their accuracy, which a noisome rheum can impair, or old age, the disease to which all of us in common must submit, reduces to inefficiency ?[416]

Philo followed the Hebrew meaning of Zillah, whose name signified "shadow." He interpreted her as a symbol of unsubstantial goods to the body and to the outside world. He continued to elaborate on the meaning of Zillah's children's names in relation to shadow:

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[412] Discussion of the possible derivation meaning in Greek, see *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain* 499.

[413] See also discussion in *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*, 324.

[414] *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*, lines 79-93 in Greek.

[415] *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain, lines* 100-111 324.

[416] *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*, Treatise 23, lines 112-115 in Greek, 393

> Of this shadow and its fleeting dreams a son is born, to whom was given the name of Tubal, meaning "all together".[417] Accurately characterizing each one of these he goes on to say, "This man was a wielder of the hammer, a smith in brass and iron work" (Gen 4:22). For the soul that is vehemently concerned about bodily pleasures or the materials of outward things, is being ever hammered on an anvil, beaten out by the blows of his desires with their long swoop and reach.[418] We are told that **the sister of Tubal was Naamah, meaning "fatness"**; for when those, who make bodily comfort and the material things of which I have spoken their object, succeed in getting something which they crave after, the consequence is that they grow fat.[419]

Philo rendered the name of Zillah's son Tubal-Cain as "all in one." Tubal-Cain represented health and wealth, denoting the sum of human bliss. He was a craftsman by trade, a "hammer," and the real war-maker for lusts and batterers of mankind. He was the son of "shadow." His sister Naamah means "fatness," the product of plenty.[420]

Genesis Rabbah assigned different functions for Adah and Zillah in their marriage with Lamech, and illustrated each function in detail. *Gen. Rab*. first cited R. Azariah, who followed R. Judah b. R. Simon, to generalize the practice of marrying two wives as the common practice before the flood: 'This is what the men of the generation of the flood would do:

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[417] Ibid.

[418] *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*, Treatise 24, lines 115-117 in Greek, 395.

[419] *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*, Treatise 35, lines 117-120 in Greek, 397

[420] *Philo II: On the Posterity and Exile of Cain*, lines 112-123, 325

> "And Lamech took for himself two wives, one was named Adah and the other was named Zillah" (Genesis 4:19). R. Azariah said in the name of R. Judah b. R. Simon: "This is what the men of the generation of the Flood would do: **each one of them would take two wives, one for procreation (אחת לפריה ורביה) and the other for sexual pleasure (ואחת לתשמיש)**."[421] (*Gen. Rab*. 23:2)

This interpretation is possibly also influenced by the reading of Gen 6:2 in which it says when the sons of God saw the daughters of men were fair,[422] "they took **wives** for themselves of all they chose" (ויקחו להם **נשים** מכל אשר בחרו). The impulsiveness of the sons and the plural form "wives" (נשים) probably indicated those who took more than one wife before the flood. Then the text elaborated how the two women lived:

> The one who was for procreation would sit like a widow in her own lifetime (יושבת כאלו אלמנה בחייה) (in the lifetime of her husband בחיי בעלה), and the one that was for intercourse would drink a cup for sterility so that she did not bear [children] (היה משקה כוס של עקרים שלא תלד), and would sit by him adorned like a prostitute (והיתה יושבת אצלו מקשטת כזונה). (*Gen. Rab*. 23:2)

As the wife who was destined to procreate, Adah spent her lifetime waiting for her husband to be with her. As the wife who was destined to provide sexual pleasure for Lamech, Zillah dressed

[421] Sokoloff 593b, 1237b; Jastrow 1704; Levy Ch-W 2:564

[422] John Day argued that תובה in Gen 6:2 means "good looking" (cf. Judg 15:2) instead of meaning morally good. See "The Sons of God and Daughters of Men and the Giants: Disputed Points in the Interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4," *HeBAI* 1 (2012): 431.

like a prostitute (כזונה). She took every precaution to prevent prenancy. *Gen. Rab*. then condemned Lamech's intention and his deed by citing Job 24:21:

> As it is written: "He devours the barren that do not conceive, and does not do good to the widow (Job 24:21)." Know that among them the best was Lamech, and he took two wives, as it says "And Lamech took for himself two wives, one was named Adah" - because she became pregnant (דעדה מניה) and the other was named Zillah" - because she sat in his shade (שהיתה יושבת בצלו). (*Gen. Rab*. 23:2)

According to this midrashic interpretation, Lamech knew this practice well and intentionally took Adah and Zillah as wives to serve different purposes for his own pleasure. The Hebrew root of Adah (עדה) is connected with the Aramaic word עדי meaning "to carry on," and "to become pregnant." The same root is used in *TgO Gen* 16:4 and *PJ Gen* 16:4 to render Hagar's pregnancy (עדיאת) after Abram had a relation with her.[423] Therefore, Lamech married Adah for reproduction and motherhood. Zillah's name (זלה) is connected with *tsēll* (צל "shadow"). In the case, Zillah would "sit in his shadow," meaning she would be there for his pleasure. Moreover, the Hebrew root *tsll*, "shadow," had an erotic association with her beauty and sexuality (Song 2:3).[424] As a result, Zillah was seen as a mere object of lust and self-indulgence. The interpretations of Adah and Zillah's names based on *Gen. Rab.* enormously influenced rabbinic interpretations in

[423] ועל לות הגר ועדיאת וחזת ארי עדיאת "he [Abram] had relations with Hagar and she became pregnant and she saw that she had become pregnant." *TgO Gen* 16:4

[424] James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA.:Harvard University Press, 1998), 194; Ruth Kara-Ivanov Kaniel. *The Feminine Messiah: King David in the Image of the Shekhinah in Kabbalistic Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 13; Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition*, 143, fn.47.

following centuries. In his *Commentary on Genesis*, Rashi cited *Gen. Rab.* 23:2 and discussed the significance of their names that were related to their functions. Rashi assigned different functions for each wife in their marriage and clarified their daily lives in detail:

> Two Wives (שתי נשים)… the latter [the one for companionship and charm] was given a cup of some sterilizing drink in order that she might become barren (משקה כדי שתעקר כוס של עקרין), and was adorned like a bride and fed with the best food (ומקשטת ככלה ומאכילה מעדנים), whilst her fellow-wife [the one for child-bearing] was left without her husband's companionship and ever mourned like a widow. (*Rashi on Gen* 4:19.2)

> Adah. She was the one intended for propagation (פריה ורביה), and she was so named because she was repulsive (שמגונה) to him and kept aloof from his side (ומוסרת מאצלו). *ʿdh* (עדה) is the Aramaic translation of *ṣwrh* (סורה) "to keep aloof". (*Rashi on Gen* 4:19.3)

Rashi alluded Adah's name to her repulsive behavior. The Hebrew word *mĕgūnā* (מגנה) comes from the III-weak root *gĕnî* (גני), *gĕna(h)* (גנה), or *gĕnaʾ* (גנא), which means "to be disgraced, reprove."[425] Rashi connected Adah's name עדה to the Hebrew word *sūrā* (סורה), which means "to turn aside," to denote that Adah turned aside from her husband. To Rashi, this despicable act of Adah justified the reason for her husband to have a second wife, Zillah:

[425] See גני in Jastrow, 259 and Sokoloff, 133b גנא in Levy Ch-W 1:147; גנה in Klein 104 col.3.

> Zillah. She was the one for companionship alone (היא של תשמיש), and she was so named because she always abided in his shadow (על שם שיושבת תמיד בצלו). Thus is the statement of the Agada in Genesis Rabbah 23:2.

As for Zillah, Rashi first followed *Gen. Rab*. 23:2 to suggest that she took a sterilizing drink to keep herself barren. He then added that Zillah was adorned like a bride and served only good food. Her name, Zillah (זלה), suggested that she lived "in Lamech's shadow" (בצלו). However, this interpretation contradicts the biblical account that Zillah bore Tubal-Cain and Naamah in Gen 4:22. Nevertheless, Rashi did not discuss this contradiction further in his commentary. Another vivid portrayal of the marital relationship between Adah, Zillah, and Lamech is found in Rabbi David Kimchi's (acronym RaDaK, ca.1160-1235) *Commentary on Genesis*:

> Lamech took himself two wives (ויקח לו למך). It appears that the generations prior to Lemech and even subsequent to him did not marry more than one wife. It was he (Lemech) who violated and took himself two wives. This is why they were quarreling (לפיכך היו מתקוטטות), and they showed hostility to one another (והיו צרות זו לזו). Hence, Lamech had to threaten to kill them (והוצרך להוכיחן ולהפחידן להרוג אותן) if they would disturb his domestic peace. (Radak on *Genesis* 4:19)

Unlike Rashi, Kimchi suggested that Lamech was the first one to take for himself two wives, as it was not the custom originally, that's why the text said "Lamech took for himself" (ויקח לו למך) in Gen 4:19. Because of this, according to Kimchi, Adah and Zillah were not in a harmonious relationship. They entered into dispute and they showed hostility with one another.

The word *mitqōṭāṭōt* (מתקוטטות) might come from a by-form.[426] Its root rendered either qūṭ (קוט), *qĕṭaṭ* (קטט) (also attested in Ug. vb. *qwṭt* "to feel repugnance"),[427] or *qwts* (קוץ) "to feel loathing".[428] Its ethpalpal verbal form *qĕṭāṭâ* (קטטה) is "to quarrel."[429]Another word *tsrwt* (צרות) comes from the root *ṣārâ* (צרה), which means "distress, adversary."[430] It means that they showed hostility to one another. This is why Lamech had to give them a warning in Gen 4:23 to let them know he had killed a man and he could have killed them, too (RaDaK on *Genesis* 4:19). In addition, a more elaborative genealogical account about the background of Adah and Zillah comes from *Sefer Ha-Yashar*. In Bereshit 9:

> And when Cainan (קינן cf. Cain קין in Gen 4:17) was seventy years he had already begotten three sons and **two daughters**. And these are the names of Cain's sons. The name of the first-born was Mahalaleel (מהללאל), and the second Enon (עינן), and the third Marad (מרד); **and their sisters were Adah (עדה) and Zillah (צילה).** Those are all that were born unto Cainan—five children. And **Lamech, the son of Methusael (למך בן מתושאל), became the son-in-law of Cainan, taking his two daughters to wives**.

The Cainite genealogical account in *Sefer Ha-Yashar* placed Cain's third son, Mehujael (מחויאל), in Gen 4:18 as his firstborn Mahalaleel (מהללאל), while the first son, Enoch (חנוך), in Gen

[426] This vocalization is based on the Hithpōʿl 1cs impf. of qūṭ (קוט) > wāʾetqōṭāṭâ (וָאֶתְקוֹטָטָה) in Ps 119:158, see BDB, 876; HALOT, 1083.

[427] Olmo Lete, (q-ṭ) 719 and (qṭṭ) 721.

[428] See BDB 880, HALOT, 1089

[429] Sokoloff 478b; Jastrow 1347; Levy Ch-W 2:353.

[430] See BDB 865-866; HALOT 1054-55.

4:17 to the second, i.e. Enon (עינן). The second son, Irad (עירד), became the third son, Marad (מרד). Adah and Zillah were the sisters of Marad, namely the daughters of Enon. Only Lamech followed the Genesis account, who was the son of Methusael (ומתושאל). In this case, Adah and Zillah were cousins of Lamech. Then the text continued to elaborate the lives of the two wives:

> And Adah conceived and bare a son unto Lamech and she called his name Jabal (יבל), and she conceived again and bare a son and she called his name Jubal (יובל).
>
> And Zillah her sister was barren in those days, she had no child as yet. For in those days the sons of man began to rebel against the Lord, and transgressed the laws of God which he commanded unto them, to be fruitful and multiply upon the earth. And the sons of man gave to part of their wives to drink a drink of barrenness, so that they should continue in their beauty, and not lose their fine figures and looks. And when the sons of man caused part of their wives to take that drink, Zillah was among them. And the women that bare children became abominable in the eyes of their husbands, being consigned, as it were, to widowhood, though their husbands were alive, for the men were attached only to their barren wives.

While *Sefer Ha-Yashar* did not mention the meaning of Adah and Zillah's names, the roles assigned to them basically followed the account in *Gen. Rab.* 23:2, which also contradicted the biblical account, in which Zillah bore Tubal-Cain and Naamah. Athalya Brenner (2005) argued that rabbinic interpretations exonerated Lamech's action of marrying two wives. These interpretations highlighted that marrying two wives was a general practice before the flood, and

by assigning specific purpose for each role.[431] In addition, the interchangeable roles between Adah and Zillah are based on multiple meanings of Adah's name. These meanings relate her to her beautiful appearance as "ornament" (עֲדִי),[432] her function as a wife "to pass by" (עָדָה),[433] and the rather free interpretations of Zillah's name as "shadow." A more recent example of their interchangeable functions and free interpretations through their names is reflected in Miguel A. De La Torre's *Genesis* commentary. Through the meaning of their names, De La Torre suggests that Adah was the one who drank a potion to make herself sterile so that she could keep her figure in shape; while Zillah as "shadow" served the role of procreation, based on his reading of *Gen. Rab.* 23:2.[434] To De La Torre, the meaning of Adah's name implies that Lamech "luxuriated" in Adah's body, while the meaning of Zillah's names implies that Lamech used to sit in the "shade" of Zillah's children, with reference to the Jerusalem Talmud, Yebamot 6:5.[435]

Adah and Zillah Responses to Lamech's Speech (Gen 4:23-24)

Adah and Zillah's responses to Lamech's speech have been interpreted in different ways. The background of Lamech's speech in Gen 4:23 was based on Midrash Tanḥuma. This midrash elaborates on how Lamech killed a man and a child. In Mid. Tanḥuma, Bereshit 11.2,[436] we are

[431] See further discussion in Athalya Brenner-Idan, *I Am--: Biblical Women Tell Their Own Stories* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 18.

[432] See BDB 725.

[433] BDB 723.

[434] Miguel A. De La Torre, *Genesis* (Lousiville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 101.

[435] Ibid.

[436] The complete text of Mid. Tanḥuma, Bereshit 11.2: Lamech, his descendant in the seventh generation, who was blind (וסומא), would go hunting led about by his young son. At the sight of game, the lad would apprise his father of its whereabouts. One time the lad said to his father: "I see some kind of beast in the distance." Lamech sent his arrow in that direction, and Cain was slain. As they approached the corpse, the lad saw a horn protruding from the forehead of the slain creature, and he said to his father: "The corpse resembles a man, but a horn protrudes from its forehead." Thereupon, Lamech cried out: "Woe is me, it is my grandfather." In his grief, he clasped his hands together, and accidentally struck the child's head, killing him (בחרטה ונגע בראש התינוק והרגו בשוגג). As it is said: I can slay a man by a wound of mine and a child by a strike of mine (Gen. 4:23).

told that Lamech mistakenly killed Cain by following a wrong instruction from his young son. After recognizing his mistake, Lamech turned his grief into anger and accidentally struck Tubal-Cain to death. Then, Mid. Tanḥuma, Bereshit 11.4 continued to elaborate on what had happened after Lamech returned home:

> Upon returning home, Lamech said to his wives: "Let us go to bed." They replied: "You have slain our ancestor and our son Tubal-Cain; we shall no longer go to bed with you. (אמרו לו: הרגת את קין זקננו ותובל קין בננו, לא נעלה)". He replied: "Cain received his punishment only after seven generations, surely mine should be postponed for seventy and seven generations." **They said, "We shall not listen to you," (אמרו לו: לא נשמע לך). "Why should we give birth to one who will be dishonored?" (מה אנו מולידות למארה)** Thereupon, he said: "Let us go to the court for a decision." They went to Adam, and **Adah and Zillah cried out: "Oh, lord Lamech, our husband, has slain our grandfather."** Whereupon Lamech declared: "Did our grandfather kill unwittingly?" Adam replied: "Wives of Lamech, Pay attention to my words! Lamech said: Have I slained a man intentionally? (Gen. 4:23). **Therefore I say to you [Adah and Zillah]: Go and obey your husband (לכו השמעו לבעליכן)." They [Adah and Zillah] replied: "O physician, heal your own lameness. You have not had sexual intercourse with your wife for one hundred and thirty years, yet you command us to do so (אמרולו: אסיא, אסי חגרתך, אתה פרשת ממטתך מאה ושלשים שנה ואתה מלמד אותנו)."**[437] Hence it is written

[437] See also Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* v.1, 3:6, "The Descendants of Adam and Lilith. When the wives of Lamech heard the decision of Adam, that they were to continue to live with their husband, they turned upon him, saying, "O physician, heal thine own lameness!" They were alluding to the fact that he himself had been

in Scripture following this incident: And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and begot his son in his own likeness (Gen. 5:3).

After the two accidents, Adah and Zillah refused to sleep with Lamech. They believed that there was no purpose in bearing children under such a curse. When Lamech tried to explain himself, Adah and Zillah refused to listen. He then took the matter to Adam, seeking his help. After listening to both sides of the argument, Adam told Adah and Zillah to obey their husband. However, Adah and Zillah challenged Adam's advice. They pointed out that Adam had restrained himself from having children with his own wife, Eve. Yet, Adam was now asking the women to go back to their husband. Adah and Zillah's response was to attest to Gen 5:3, which states that Adam lived for one hundred and thirty years and begot his son, Seth. Another elaboration is found in *Gen. Rab*. 23:4:

> And Lamech said to his wives. R. Jose b. R. Ḥanina said, "He [Lamech] demanded them [his wives] to perform their marital duties (תבען לתשמיש). They [Adah and Zillah] said to him, "Tomorrow a flood will come, are we to bear children for a curse (נשמע לך ונהיה פרות ורבות למארה)?

Following to the reading in *Mid. Tanḥuma* and *Gen. Rab.* on Lamech's speech, Rashi's sympathetic view of Lamech was strengthened in his interpretation of Gen 4:23:

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living apart from his wife since the death of Abel, for he had said, "Why should I beget children, if it is but to expose them to death?" Though he avoided intercourse with Eve, he was visited in his sleep by female spirits, and from his union with them sprang shades and demons of various kinds, and they were endowed with peculiar gifts."

> Hear my voice (שמען קולי)… As soon as he learned that it was his forefather Cain, he smote his hands together, struck his son between them and so killed him too. His wives thereupon separated from him (והיו נשיו פורשות ממנו), but he endeavored to appease them (והוא מפיסן). Hear my voice (שמען קולי) meaning "to obey me and return to me" (להשמע לי לתשמיש), for the man I slew, was he slain by my wounding? (להשמע לי לתשמיש, וכי איש אשר הרגתי לפצעי הוא נהרג) (Rashi on Genesis 4:23)

According to Rashi, Adah and Zillah refused to have sex with Lamech because he killed Cain by accident, after listening to Tubal-Cain's false information. Lamech then struck Tubal-Cain, the only son of Zillah. Hence, "hear my voice" (שמען קולי) in Gen 4:23 suggested that Lamech requested his wives to obey him and return to him to perform their duties (להשמע לי לתשמיש). Rashi appreciated Lamech's endeavor to appease his wives, even though they separated from him, but he did not explain why Adah and Zillah had to separate from him. Ibn Ezra, on the other hand, discussed the reason why Adah and Zillah restrained from having sex with Lamech in his commentary on Genesis 4:23:

> … As to our verse, it is to be interpreted as our sages did. The sages told us that Adah and Zillah restrained themselves from him (נמנעו), i.e. they refused to have sex with him, because they were afraid (פחדו) that their offspring, who were the seventh generation from Cain, would die or be killed as punishment for Cain's sin (לקין ויהרגו או ימותו). (Ibn Ezra on Gen 4:23)

Ibn Ezra's elaboration was based on *Gen. Rab.* 23:4, as it highlighted, "Cain slew, yet judgment was suspended for him for seven generations" (קין הרג ונתלה לו שבעה דורות). Adah and Zillah refused to sleep with Lamech because they worried that their children would be the seventh generation from Cain, so they presumed that their sons would either be killed or die from the curse of Cain. Lamech explained to the wives that he was the seventh generation, not the children of Adah and Zillah. However, Ibn Ezra added that it was in fact not only Lamech's children but all descendants of Cain, who would be wiped out because Cain had murdered his brother (בני למך וכל זרעו מתו במבול ולא נשאר לקין שם מחמס אחיו). Ramban, also known as Rabbi Moses ben Nahman (1194–1270), showed a more sympathetic view of Adah and Zillah. In his discussion of Lamech's speech, Ramban highlighted the fear of Adah and Zillah:

> His wives [Adah and Zillah] were then afraid that he [Lamech] might be punished because he brought the sword and murder into the world, and he thus retained in his hand the evil deed of his ancestor [Cain] since he was a descendant of the first murderer (כי הוא בן המרצח הראשון) and he created destruction tools to do violence (לחבל וברא משחית). (Ramban on Gen 4:23)

Earlier in this text, Ramban highlighted that Lamech was a very wise and skillful man. He was capable to teach his three sons various skillsets: how to pasture cattle, how to forge metals, and how to make various type of weapons. Adah and Zillah were concerned that their highly capable husband, Lamech, would be punished. To the wives, Lamech was not only the descendant of Cain, the first murderer in biblical history, but he also brought various types of murdering tools into the world.

The above discussion from the rabbinic interpretations reveals three reasons in rabbinic interpretations to explain why Adad and Zillah restrained from having sex with Lamech: first, they were angry with Lamech, who had killed Cain and Tubal-Cain (Midrash Tanḥuma and Rashi). Second, they worried that their sons, who would be the seventh generations, would either be killed or die from the curse of Cain (Ibn Ezra, Ramban). Third, they worried that the flood would come soon, and they did not want their children to suffer from the curse (*Gen. Rab*.). Modern readers might interpret Adah and Zillah's response to Adam's admonition in Midrash Tanḥuma as a courageous act of defiance against a patriarchal authority figure. However, the late medieval illustrations in the *Mirror of Human Salvation* depicted them as rebellious wives, who were parallel to the torturers of Jesus.

Christian Traditions

Adah and Zillah did not receive much attention from early church fathers, even though the act of Lamech in Gen 4 had received wide theological and ethical concerns than the Lamech in Gen 5.[438] Ephraem the Syrian (306-373) was one of the few who discussed the identity of Adah and Zillah, and their responses to Lamech's speech:

> There are some who say, concerning Lamech's words to his wives, that **his wives were daughters of Seth and they were exhorting him to do well**, and he said to

[438] See EBR Lamech 676.

them, "What have you seen in me that is detestable or similar to my father Cain? For I, like Cain, have killed a man for wounding me."[439]

…**because the wives [of Lamech] saw that the line of their generation would be cut off**. They were giving birth not to males but to females only, for [Moses] said that it was when men multiplied on the earth and daughters were born to them. (Gen 6:1) **When these wives saw the plight of their generation, they became fearful and knew that the judgment decreed against Cain and his seven generations had come upon their generation**.[440]

Ephraem the Syrian suggested that Adah and Zillah were descendants from the Sethite genealogy and exhorted Lamech to do well with good intention. Although this interpretation does not follow biblical chronology, as Seth was born after Lamech's speech (Gen 4:25), it might suggest Ephraem viewed both the Cainite and Sethite genealogies as happening simultaneously. Additionally, Ephraem followed rabbinic interpretations that viewed Adah and Zillah as worried about their children being punished or killed because of the curse of Cain. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) portrayed very negative views of Adah and Zillah in his interpretation of Gen 4:18-22:

Genesis 4:18-22 terminates all the generations of Cain, being eight in number, including Adam, — to wit, seven from Adam to Lamech, who married two wives, and whose children, among whom a woman also is named, form the eighth

[439] Ephrem, the Syrian, Saint, et al. *Selected Prose Works : Commentary on Genesis, Commentary on Exodus, Homily on Our Lord, Letter to Publius* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 131.

[440] Ibid.

> generation. **Whereby it is elegantly signified that the earthly city shall to its termination have carnal generations proceeding from the intercourse of males and females. And therefore the wives themselves of the man who is the last named father of Cain's line, are registered in their own names** — a practice nowhere followed before the deluge save in Eve's case. (Augustine, *City of God* Book XV, 17)

The chapter began by addressing Adam as the progenitor of both the Cainite and the Sethite genealogies. Augustine then discussed how Sethite generations were saved as indicated by the meaning of Seth's name, which signifies "resurrection." He contrasted this with the Cainite generations, which were terminated because they had "carnal" generations. To illustrate this, Augustine highlighted that the meaning of Enosh (אנוש), the son of Seth, strictly signifies "man." He also noted that "Hebrew linguists told us it [the meaning of this word] could not be applied to woman. This was because Enosh represented the resurrection of the child, when they neither marry nor are given in marriage in Luke 20:35-36" (*City of God Book* XV, 17). Moreover, Cain's generations were terminated because they focused on sexual relationships between males and females, as evidence by the named women. Therefore, the wives of the man—Adah and Zillah—were registered in their own names. John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407) described Lamech's song as a sorrowful confession to Adah and Zillah:

> Lamech said to his wives Ada and Zillah, as the text says, "Listen to my voice, wives of Lamech, pay attention to my words." Consider at once, I ask you, from the outset how much benefit this man gained from the punishment inflicted on Cain.

> Not only does he not await accusation from someone else to the effect that he has been guilty of this sin or some worse one, but without anyone's accusing him or censuring him he confesses his own guilt, admits his crimes and outlines to his wives the magnitude of his sin, as to fulfill the proverb of the inspired writer," He who accuses himself at the beginning of the speech is in the right (Prov 18:17). You see, confession is of the greatest efficacy for correction of faults. (Homilies in Gen. XX.6).

Chrysostom interpreted Lamech's speech to his wives as an earnest and unprompted confession. While Chrysostom did not highlight Adah and Zillah's reactions, he may have seen them as humble listeners standing by Lamech for support during his confession. This is also reflected in an early Christian illustration, *Sacra Parallela* Parisinus Graecus (GR.923, fol. 313v), which shows Adah and Zillah standing by Lamech as he speaks.

Reformation

Martin Luther (1438-1546) criticized Lamech for his polygamous and murderous acts, and condemned Lamech's sin because of his ill intention to increase the number of children by means of polygamous marriage. However, in his 1535 *Lectures on Genesis*, he praised highly to Adah and Zillah in explaining Lamech's speech as empty boast:

> Why does Lamech make this announcement in his home and only in the presence of his wives, rather than before his church? **Moreover, it is possible that the good and godly wives were perturbed by the murder their husband had committed**.

> Therefore the ungodly murderer, in order to appear to be in a similar situation with his father Cain, desires to reassure his wives, so that they might not think that he ought to be killed. This is the custom of the wicked church: it wants to utter prophecies which have their origin in its own head. But such prophecies are futile. (*Lectures on Genesis* 4:23)

John Calvin (1509-1564), like Martin Luther, condemned Lamech for taking two wives (Calvin on Gen 4:19). Like Wolfgang Musculus (1497-1563), Calvin saw Lamech's marriage as the origin of polygamy in a perverse and degenerate generation.[441] He saw Adah and Zillah as soothing agents who could mitigate the cruelty and ferocity of a man like Lamech:

> But, as I have said, the occasion of his holding this conversation with his wives is to be noticed. We know that sanguinary men, as they are a terror to others, so are they everywhere hated by all. The wives, therefore, of Lamech were justly alarmed on account of their husband, whose violence was intolerable to the whole human race, lest, a conspiracy being formed, all should unite to crush him, as one deserving of public odium and execration. **Now Moses, to exhibit his desperate barbarity, seeing that the soothing arts of wives are often wont to mitigate cruel and ferocious men, declares that Lamech cast forth the venom of his cruelty into the bosom of his wives**. (Calvin on Gen 4:23)

[441] Konrad Pellikan (1478-1556), on the other hand, regarded Lamech's marriage was an exception of polygamy, it was not a custom of the men of that time. See Thompson, *Genesis I-II*, 207.

Modern Interpretations

Since the rise of comparative biblical scholarship, there has been a shift in the interpretations of Adah and Zillah. Theodor H. Gaster (1969) argued that the song of Lamech (Gen 4:23-24) may have been an ancient war cry that alluded to early battle taunts.[442] In the Ugaritic "Poem of Baal," Baal accused the upstart conduct of Yam and invoked the curse that the "Lord of Hell Ḥorôn might break his head and goddess Ashtareth cracked his skull.[443] Based on this background, Gaster proposed that the names of Adah and Zillah may have been chosen by the poet to signify the Semitic "dawn" and "dusk" because they suggested common nouns of contrasting sense and thus constituted what is called a *merism*.[444]

This proposal is based on the Semitic roots of Adah (עדד < דעה). This root is compared with its Arabic *gadāh* (غدو < غداة) "early morning", hence "dawn."[445] It is also equivalent to Akkadian *edēdu* "do early."[446] Zillah *ṣll* (צלל) is connected with the verb "to grow dark" and the noun "shadow," hence "dusk." Therefore, the names Adah and Zillah signify "maid of the dawn" and "maid of the dusk," respectively. Everett Fox picked up this reading in his translation of the *Schocken Bible* (1995),[447] followed by Sarna (2001),[448] Goodman (2014),[449] and Lanchester

[442] Theodor Herzl Gaster, Myth, legend, and custom in the Old Testament; a comparative study with chapters from Sir James G. Frazer's Folklore in the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 76

[443] Ibid.

[444] Gaster, *Myth, legend, and custom in the Old Testament*, 78.

[445] See Wehr 666; BDB 725.

[446] See Gaster, *Myth, legend, and custom in the Old Testament*, 350; also Benno Landsberger, "Schwierige akkadische Wörter," *AfO* 3 (1926): 169.

[447] Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; a New Translation with Introductions, Commentary, and Notes* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 28.

[448] Sarna, *Genesis*, 37.

[449] Lenn E. Goodman, "Leaving Eden," in *Lenn E. Goodman: Judaism, Humanity, and Nature*, eds. Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, and Aaron W. Hughes (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 103.

(2014).[450] This proposal inspired various non-fiction writers to connect Adah and Zillah to ancient deities. For instance, Normandi Ellis (1999) alluded to the sisterhood of goddesses and their contrasting manifestations found in ancient goddesses of the two wives of Lamech.[451] Ellis interpreted Adah, "Brilliance" as the Alpha, or the beginning; and Zillah, "Shadow," as the Omega, or the end. According to Ellis, Adah and Zillah, the beginning and the end, are like other ancient goddesses such as Inanna and Ereshkigal, Isis and Nephthys, who appeared as birth and death, light and darkness, heaven and hell. Charles N. Pope (2016) connected the etymologies of their names with the Egyptian deity Thoth, the god of the moon, and the cycles of the sun and moon.[452] In addition, Pope suggested that Sheshat, the consort of Thoth and the goddess of writing and measurement, could be seen as "goddess Zillah." Pope also cited another non-fiction writer, Zecharia Sitchin, who associated Sheshat with the number seven.[453] This association may be a reference to Lamech, who was the seventh generation since Cain, in order to justify Sheshat as "goddess-Zilla" as one of her epithets associated with the number seven. However, none of the above-mentioned ancient sources contain any literary motifs that can be directly linked to Lamech's narrative in Gen 4:19-24.

[450] H. C. O. Lanchester, *The Book of Genesis 1-24* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 27.

[451] Normandi Ellis, *Feasts of Light Celebrations for the Seasons of Life Based on the Egyptian Goddess Mysteries* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1999), 146.

[452] Charles N. Pope, *Living in Truth: Archaeology and the Patriarchs (Part I) Early Pharaohs*, 43-44.

[453] Zecharia Sitchin, *When Time Began. Book V of the Earth* (Rochester, VT.: Bear & Company, 1994; repr., New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc, 2007), 163.

Christian Art

Three contrasting themes emerge in medieval Christian art depicting Adah and Zillah and their relationship with Lamech. Adah and Zillah are portrayed as humble listeners, family contributors, and heathens.

Adah and Zillah as Humble Listeners

The first theme portrays Adah and Zillah as humble listeners to their husband's confession. One of the earliest images of Adah and Zillah is found in the ninth century *Sacra Parallela* (GR.923, fol. 313v), a Byzantine writing with excerpts of quotes from the Bible and patristic texts for ethical and moral teaching. This typological illustration places Lamech's confession to Adah and Zillah in Gen 4:22-23 on the upper left margin. Adah and Zillah are standing on either side of their husband; they listen to their husband's remorse and show support to him. The lower left margin shows Reuben addressing his brothers. In Gen 37:18-24, Joseph's brothers, out of jealousy, conspired to kill Joseph in Dothan. Having known their killing scheme, Reuben reminded them not to shed blood on their younger brother in Gen 37:22 in order to spare Joseph's life. His brothers listened to Reuben and altered their killing plan.



Figure 6.Lamech's Confession to Adah and Zillah (Left). Sacra Parallela Parisinus Graecus (GR.923, fol. 313v), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 9th century CE.

Three similar column illustrations from the early twelfth century *Octateuch*, the first eight books of the Septuagint, depict Lamech's narrative in Gen 4:19-24.[454] On the left, two men are shown in the walled city. In the middle, Lamech is drawing a bow. The boy holding the arrow is indicating that he showed Lamech the target in the bush. Cain is standing in a sheaf of grain. On the right, Lamech is confessing before his wives. Adah and Zillah, standing together opposite Lamech, humbly listened to Lamech's speech. The column miniatures in the *Octateuch* reflect that early and medieval Christian church fathers adopted the rabbinic interpretations that Lamech accidentally killed Cain and Tubal-Cain. He then went home and confessed to Adah and Zillah.[455]

[454] Octateuch comprises the Pentateuch, the Book of Joshua, the Book of Judges and the Book of Ruth.

[455] Jerome took Aquila and Symmachus to reckon that Gen 4:23-24 is taken to signify Lamech had been destined to kill Cain, because he was in the seventh generation from Adam (Ep.36.4). Jerome, *Saint Jerome's Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, *translated with Introduction and Commentary by C.T.R. Hayward* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 123.



Figure 7. Lamech and His Family. Octateuch (R.746, fol. 47r), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 12th century CE.



Figure 8. Lamech and His Family. Octateuch (GR.747, fol. 26v), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 12th century CE.

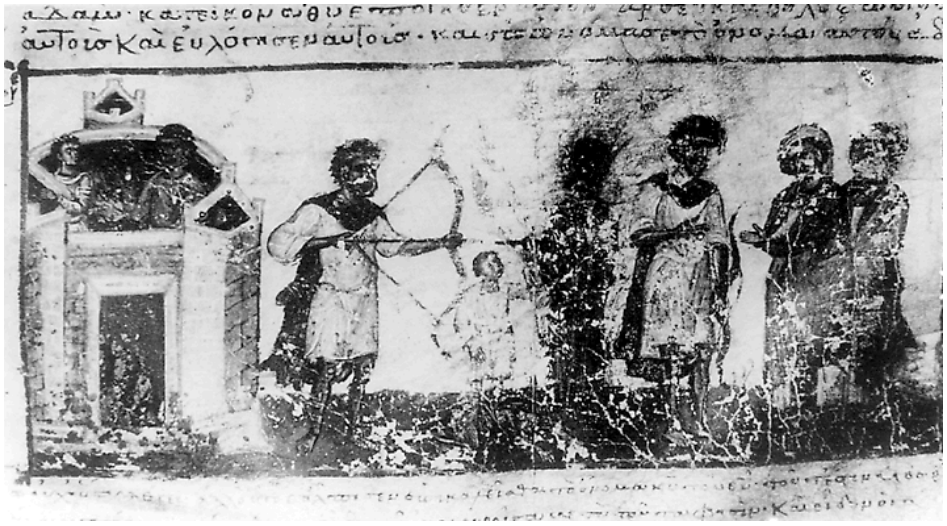


Figure 9. Lamech and His Family. Smyrna Octateuch (A.1. fol. 17v), Evangelical School of Smyrna, 12th century CE.

Another portrayal of Adah and Zillah as humble listeners can be found in The *Cycle of Old and New Testament Images* (Art Institute Chicago, Ms 533, fol. 12r). This full-page miniature dated between 1244 and 1255 depicts Lamech confessing to Adah and Zillah. Lamech raises his right hand and places his left hand on his heart, as if to accuse himself. Adah and Zillah sit on either side of him, each placing one hand on his leg in a gesture of support.



Figure 10.Lamech Confessing to Adah and Zillah. Cycle of Old and New Testament Images (1915.533.fol. 12r), Art Institute of Chicago, mid-13th century CE.

Three frescoes in the Church of the Ascension at the Dečani Monastery in Kosovo depict Lamech's narrative, with Adah and Zillah portrayed as humble listeners. The frescoes date to the early fourteenth century, and some parts of these images have faded. On the left, Lamech is portrayed going hunting with his son. He accidentally kills Cain. Adah and Zillah, on the right, are

unaware of this incident. In the middle, Lamech brings the body of Tubal-Cain home. Adah and Zillah come out of the house and find what Lamech has done. On the right, Lamech confesses to Adah and Zillah. He is holding them under his arms. Lamech's children are standing next to Adah and Zillah.



Figure 11. Lamech and His Family. Church of the Ascension, Dečani, Kosovo, mid-14th century CE.[456]

Adah and Zillah as Family Contributors

The second theme in medieval Christian art depicts Adah and Zillah as contributors to the Lamech's family. This theme can be represented by five illustrations. The first one is found in the illustrated Old English *Heptateuch*, a collaborative project presumably under the editorship of an English abbot Ælfric of Eynsham (ca. 950-ca.1010). The Old English *Hexateuch* is known of its lavishly illustrated manuscript. In one of the *Heptateuch* manuscripts, currently located in the British Library (Cotton MS Claudius B.iv. fol.10r), a column miniature shows Lamech and his family. The miniature above portrays Lamech standing in the middle, extending his hands to his

[456] Dečani Church Frescoes (Genesis): https://www.decani.org/en/photo-albums-church/decani-frescoes/fresco-cycles/genesis# (accessed on Jun 17, 2023).

son, Tubal-Cain, as if Lamech teaching Tubal-Cain to make a tool. On the left, Adah and Zillah are veiled, facing each other in conversation. Their hands point towards Tubal-Cain, and their discussion seems to be about his work. The miniature below shows Lamech, flanked by his son Jabal and his wife Adah. Jabal, the eldest son of Adah, was the forefather of tent dwellers. Adah, with her hands raised, seems to be participating in the conversation.



Figure 12. Lamech and His Family. Cotton MS Claudius B IV (fol.10r), British Library, 11th-12th century CE.

The mid-14th century picture Bible *Egerton Genesis* contains an illustration depicting the scene of Lamech, his two wives, and four children, each of whom displaying their vocations (British Library, Egerton MS 1894, fol. 2v).[457] In the upper left register, Jubal, the father of music,

[457] Egerton MS 1894, fol. 2v: https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=egerton_ms_1894_f002v (accessed on Jun 17, 2023)

as inscribed, is standing beside the house. He is looking at a young man, perhaps his son or pupil, who is sitting on a bench in front of the house and playing a harp that is partially covered by a bag. Next to the young musician portrays a shepherd wearing a hat, and holding a crook, stands in the doorway of a wooden hut with a wheel placing before it. Jabal, as inscribed, stands beside the house, indicating that he was the father of tent-dwellers. In the middle, Lamech is flanked by his two wives. Adah on his left, her name inscribed as "Oda," and Zillah on his right, her name inscribed as "Sella." The two wives are facing Lamech and pointing towards their own children on both sides of the painting. This suggests that both wives are asking for Lamech's attention to their own children. Lamech, with his brows furrowed, suggests that he is troubled by dedicating his time to the different needs of his two wives. On the right, Zillah's son Tubal-Cain (inscribed as "TubalCayn"), an artificer in brass, wears a cap and a brooch. He raises a hammer with his right hand and holds a piece of metal in pincers on an anvil. Next to him, Naamah (inscribed as "Noemma"), a weaver of cloth, is sitting veiled at a loom and weaving.



Figure 13. Lamech and His Family. Egerton Genesis (Egerton MS fol. 2v), British Library, mid-14th century CE.

Another exquisite pictures to show the daily lives of Adah and Zillah can be found in the mid-fourteenth century *Velislav's Bible*.[458] Both Adah and Zillah are portrayed together with their children in the lower left register of f.7v. Lamech is flanked by his two wives. The whole family is watching Zillah's two sons dancing and playing music. Jabal, the forefather of shepherds who lived in tents (Gen 4:20), is depicted dancing in the tent with his hands rising above his head. While Jubal, the forefather of all musicians (Gen 4:21), is seated on the right and playing the zither. Zillah and her children are depicted in the upper right register of f.7v. Tubal-Cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools (Gen 4:22), is forging in a massive tower with battlements. Naamah, his little sister, stands next to their mother on the left. Zillah tenderly touches Naamah's head, showing her love and protection.

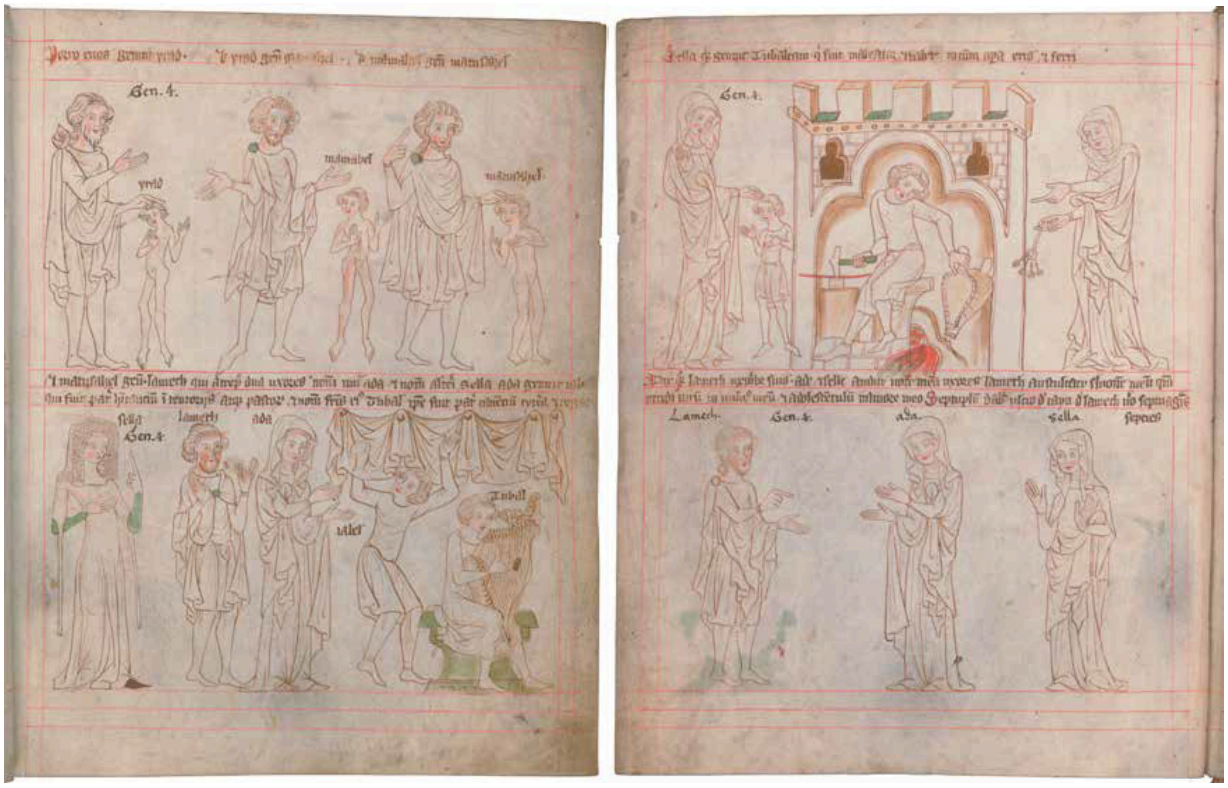


Figure 14. Lamech and His Family. Velislav Bible (MS XXIII C 124, f. 7r), Národní Knihovna České Republiky, Prague, mid-14th century CE.

[458] Lenka, *The Velislav Bible*, 95-97.

Another mid-sixteenth century woodcut painting portrays Lamech's family was made by Sebald Beham (1500-1550). This painting is part of the illustration series titled "*The Old Testament Patriarchs with Their Wives and Children*" (British Museum 1908, 0627.1).[459] In the painting, Lamech is standing on the left, wearing a cloak and a hat. Adad is standing in the middle, conservatively dressed and with her hands folded. On the right is Zillah, the younger, attractive wife of Lamech. This interpretation of Adah and Zillah follows the rabbinic tradition that Adah was for procreation, while Zillah was for pleasure (*Ber. Rab*. 23:2-3). Their four children are also depicted, each with toys that represent their future vocations.



Figure 15. Lamech and His Family. The Old Testament Patriarchs with Their Wives and Children (1908, 0627.1), British Museum, mid-16th century CE.

[459] British Museum 1908, 0627.1: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1908-0627-1 (accessed on Jun 15, 2023)

An exceptionally fine engraving from the sixteenth century, titled "Lamech and his two wives" (Plate 9), was designed by the well-known Flemish painter Maerten de Vos (1532-1603). It is part of a series of prints depicting the lives of primordial patriarchs and their families, called *The Story of the First Men*.[460] In the engraving, Lamech is portrayed at the center, talking to Adah and Zillah, who are seated in front of a farmhouse on the left. Adah is veiled, while Zillah, on the left, is sitting in the shade to indicate the meaning of her name as "shadow." Their four children are surrounding their parents: two children are playing music on the left, and the other two are making tools and tending sheep in the foreground. Lamech seems to be hastening to talk to Adah and Zillah about what he has done (Gen 4:23-24). Between the 1570s and 1590s, de Vos helped to fuel the flourishing print publishing business in Antwerp. His designs were engraved by leading engravers, including Jan Sadeler I (1550-1600). The Sadeler family, one of the most successful Flemish engraver dynasties, dominated Northern European printmaking in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This print is one of their many works, and its wide circulation in Europe during that time explains de Vos's international reputation and influence.[461]

[460] British Museum (Asset no.: 118465001) https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1937-0915-40 (accessed on Jun 17, 2023).

[461] On popularity of De Vos's work, see Amanda K. Herrin, "9 Pioneers of the Printed Paradise: Maarten de Vos, Jan Sadeler I and Emblematic Natural History in the Late Sixteenth Century," in Zoology in *Early Modern Culture: Intersections of Science, Theology, Philology, and Political and Religious Education*, ed. Karl A. E.. Enenkel and Paul J. Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 329-400.



Figure 16. Lamech and His Two Wives. The Story of the First Men (1937,0915.40 Plate 9), British Museum, late 16th century CE.

Adah and Zillah as Prototypes of Heathens

In contrast to the positive portrayals of Adah and Zillah in the first two themes of medieval Christian art, the third theme presents the two wives as prototypes of heathens who physically and verbally abused Lamech, similar to how Job's wife and the devil tortured Job, and the soldiers and the people abused Jesus. The negative portrayal of Adah and Zillah was prevalent in late medieval period. A typical example is found in *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, or the *Mirror of Human Salvation*, one of the most important popular theological work for laymen and unlearned clerics (*liber laicorum*) between the first quarter of the fourteenth and the end of the fifteenth centuries.[462] *Speculum*'s popularity is evidenced in its almost immediate translations from the original medieval

[462] Adrian Wilson & Joyce Lancaster Wilson. *A medieval mirror: Speculum Humanae Salvationis, 1324-1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 10.

Latin into German, French, English, Dutch and Czech.[463] The book's unique vivid illustrations of biblical events, more fully and dramatically rendered than any other book of the period, were likely a major factor in its success. In addition, *Speculum* adopted the late medieval concept of typology. This typological biblical interpretation combined themes from the Old Testament (OT) with the New Testament (NT), based on the notion that every event in the NT is prefigured by the events recounted in the OT. Unlike other typological works that usually compared only one OT event with a passage in NT, *Speculum* compared as many as three themes from the OT. The purpose was to instill the need for salvation in the minds of the people and the dread of eternal damnation through various lessons of piety and teachings of fall and redemption. The subject matter is both didactic and devotional, which reflected the author's good knowledge of scholastic literature as well as the contemporary Franciscan and Dominican writers.

[463] E. Silber, "Reconstructed Toledo 'Speculum Humanae Salvationis'," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XLIII (1980) , 33.

In *Speculum*, Adah and Zillah, the silenced wives of Lamech in the Bible, are often portrayed as tormentors who inflicted suffering on their pious husband. This typological theme, under the title "Flagellation," [464] compares the Lamech passage in Gen 4:19-22 with the Job passage in Job 2:1-10, and the Jesus passage in Matt 27:27-30 and John 19:2-3. As Katherine Low highlights, the *Speculum* constantly shows that Lamech's two wives foreshadowed Job's wife and Satan in the book of Job, as well as the pagans who beat Christ with whips and rods, and the Jews who lashed Christ with their tongues.[465] In the ca. 1320 *Speculum* (Biblioteca del Cabildo, Toledo, Spain M.10.8, fol. 23r), the author compared Gen 4:19-22 with Job 2:1-10. On the left column, Lamech is standing in the middle with his arms crossed. Adah and Zillah, standing on both sides of Lamech, raise their right hands, fists clenched, and prepare to beat their husband. Their left hands pull Lamech's hair on both sides. Moreover, both of their mouths are open, and they are portrayed as mocking him. On the right column, the nude Job is depicted kneeling with one leg in the center and holding a bowl in his hand. His body is covered with sores. Job's wife and Satan stand on both sides of him. The suffering Job, who is shown wearing a halo, prefigures the endurance and faith of Jesus Christ. This typological theme compares Adah and Zillah with Job's wife, who abused her husband with malicious words, and the devil, who scourged Job both physically and psychologically.

[464] E. Silber, "Reconstructed Toledo 'Speculum Humanae Salvationis,' 35.

[465] Katherine Low, *The Bible, Gender, and Reception History: The Case of Job's Wife* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013). 69.



Figure 17. Lamech Mocked by His Wives (left). Speculum Humanae Salvationis (10.8 fol.23r), Biblioteca del Cabildo, Toledo, mid-14th century CE.

Beating, pulling Lamech's hair, and mocking him seem to be constant artistic motifs used to depict the evil deeds of the two silenced wives of the Bible. Similar dramatic depictions of Adah and Zillah can be found in a number of ink and water-colored *Speculums*, either in the Latin or German versions. The ca. 1360 full-page miniature of *Speculum* (Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt, MS 2505, fol.37r.) is divided into two registers. The upper register bears the caption, "Lamech afflicted by his two wives. That is Christ, by two nations" (*Lamech Affligitur a duabus uxoribus suis. Sic XPC a Duobus Populis*). The text at the bottom of the page, continued on the following page, clarifies the meaning of the "two nations": Jesus was flagellated

by the pagans and the Jews (*Sic Christus Flagellatus fuit a Paganis Flagellis a Judeis Conumeliis*), the former use their tongues, while the latter use whips and rods.[466]



Figure 18. Lamech Mocked by His Wives (above). Speculum Humanae Salvationis (MS 2505, fol.37r), Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt, Cologne, mid-14th century CE.

[466] Text on the next folio (fols. 37v-38r). See also discussion in Horst Appuhn, *Heilsspiegel: Die Bilder des Mittelalterlichen Erbauungsbuches Speculum Humanae Salvationis* (Dortmund: Harenberg, 1981), 95-96.



Figure 19. Lamech Mocked by His Wives (left). Speculum Humanae Salvationis (M.140, fol. 23r), Morgan Library, 14th century CE.

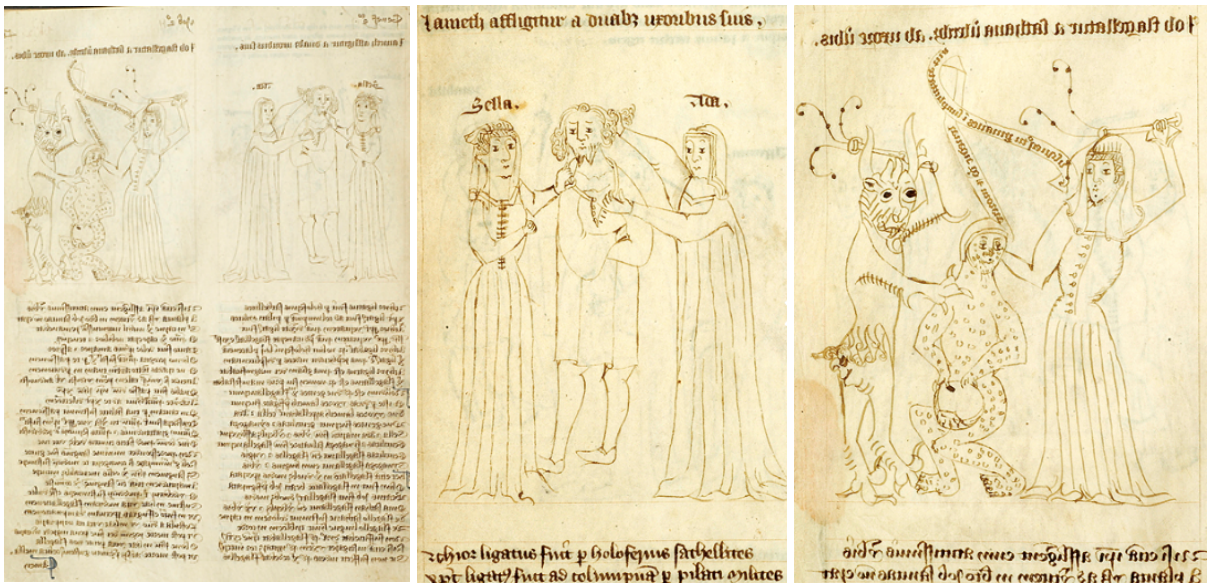


Figure 20. Lamech Mocked by His Wives (left). Speculum Humanae Salvationis. (M.766.fol. 42r), Morgan Library, early 15th century CE.



Figure 21. Lamech Mocked by His Wives (left). Speculum Humanae Salvationis (M.385.fol. 23r L), Morgan Library, mid-15th Century CE.



Figure 22. Lamech Tortured by His Wives (left). Speculum Humanae Salvationis (M.782.fol. 35r), Morgan Library, mid-15th Century CE..

Reference sources outside the Bible occasionally appear in the *Speculum*'s manuscript, such as the *Historia Scholastica* of Petrus Comestor, the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine,

the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, and other medieval texts.[467] In the 1468 Latin block book *Speculum* edition, Adah and Zillah are portrayed tormenting Lamech on the upper left column.[468]The title of the miniature highlights that Lamech was conflicted by his "bad" wives (*Lamech constringitur (confligitur) a malis suis uxoribus*). A partly visible caption above suggests that the miniature is Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*. On the lower left, Job is whipped by the devil and his wife (*Job flagellabatur a demone et ab uxore*). In this book block edition, two additional typological themes are found.[469] On the upper right, Jesus is crowned with a crown of thorns (*Cristus coronatur spinea corona*) and is sitting on a bench. His hands are bound, and two soldiers are pressing the crown down on his head with staves. In the 1476 edition (Morgan Library, M.158. fol. 36v), Jesus is shown with his right hand raised to his breast and his left hand holding a palm frond. The caption above notes that Jesus' passion was even for the evangelists (*Ihesus ward mit dornen gekronet in allen Passion noch den ewangelisten)*. On the lower right, a unique scene is portrayed. The concubine is shown taking the king's crown and putting it on herself (*Concubina ipsius coronam regis acceptam sibi ipsi imposuit*). She slaps the king with the other hand. The 1476 edition explicitly identifies the woman as Apame, the concubine of Darius. She took the king's crown and wore it on herself (*Appemen nam dem Kunig sin cron ab sine houbts vnd satzte su vff in selbs houpt tertii esdra III*). The attendant on the right is holding Darius' scepter, indicating that his power has been seized. King Darius' wrists are bound, reflecting the binding of Jesus' wrists. Like some other chapters in the block book *Speculum* edition, both the Lamech

[467] Adrian Wilson & Joyce Lancaster Wilson. *A medieval mirror: Speculum Humanae Salvationis, 1324-1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 25.

[468] Adrian Wilson & Joyce Lancaster Wilson. *A medieval mirror: Speculum Humanae Salvationis, 1324-1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 141.

[469] The block book edition demonstrated three events from OT to prefigure the NT. Its parenthetical references are the Douay-Rheims version of the Vulgate.

narrative and the Darius narrative are drawn from Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* (c. 1170).[470] Comestor was known as the "master of the histories" because of his scholastic history, which was a concise paraphrase, gloss, and explanation of scriptural events from creation to Christ's ascension. His work had a profound impact on medieval and Reformation biblical scholars, especially beginning students who needed study aids and teachers who needed resources to prepare their lectures. His writing reflects his keen interest and knowledge of the rabbinic traditions in biblical interpretation.[471] In addition to the rabbinic interpretations, Comestor also included sources from Josephus, Augustine, Bede, Ambrose, Jerome, the *Glossa Ordinaria*, and Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.[472]

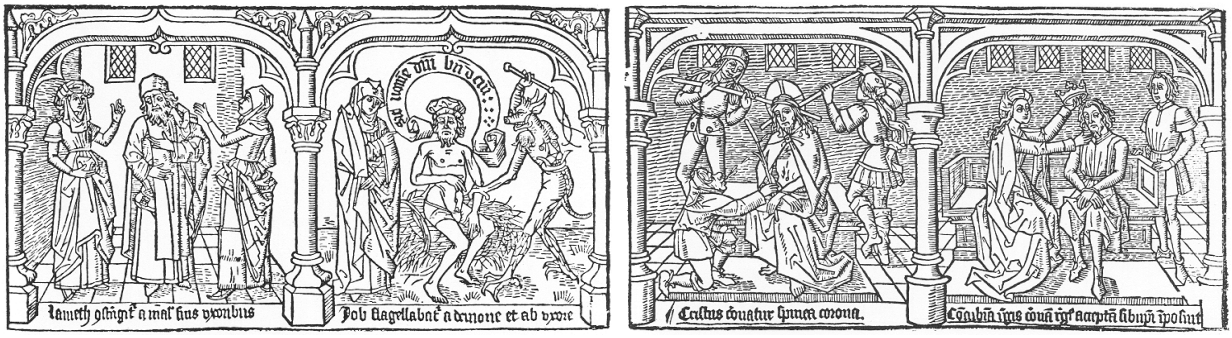


Figure 23. Lamech Mocked by His Wives (Left). Speculum Humanae Salvationis, 15th century CE.

[470] The 1468 edition of Speculum showed 8 occasions that events from Speculum were adopted, including this one, they are in Chapters 3, 5, 6, 19, 20, 21, and 27.

[471] Esra Shereshevsky, "Hebrew Traditions in Peter Comestor's 'Historia Scholastica': I. Genesis," *JQR* 59.4 (1969): 268-89.

[472] Saralyn R. Daly, "Peter Comestor: Master of Histories." *Speculum* 32.1 (1957): 64; Clark, Mark. "Peter Comestor and Peter Lombard: Brothers in Deed." *Traditio* 60 (2005): 85-142.

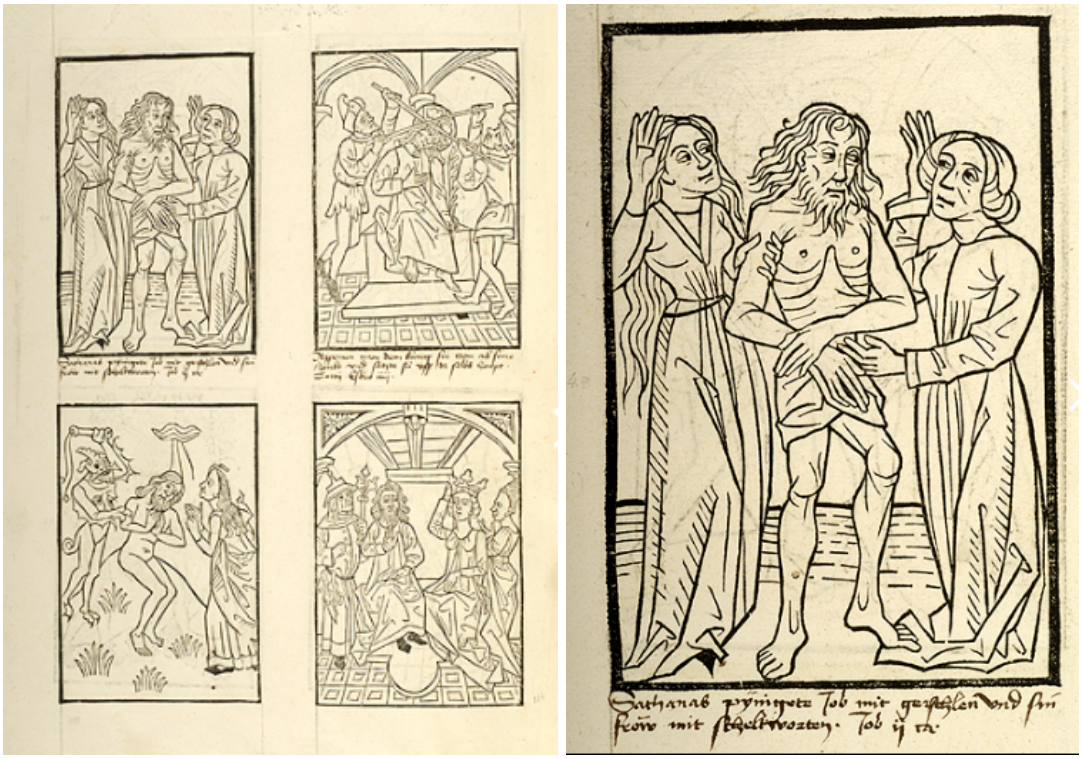


Figure 24. Lamech Mocked by His Wives. Speculum Humanae Salvationis (M.158. fol. 36v), Morgan Library, 15th century CE..

An explicit example depicting Adah and Zillah as notorious wives can be found in the stained glass window in the Temple Saint-Étienne in Mulhouse, France, which was created around 1340. This typology places the afflictions of Lamech, Job, and Christ together. The passion of Christ is placed in the middle to articulate how OT events on both sides foreshadowed the NT. Jesus is portrayed in the middle, bound by ropes around his hands. Two soldiers on either side raise scourges to torment him. On the left, Adah and Zillah are shown as two veiled wives standing like the soldiers on either side of Lamech, who is positioned like Jesus in the middle. They are pulling Lamech on each side with one hand and raising the other hand as if to hurt him. On the right, Job is shown sitting naked on a dunghill in the middle. He holds a vessel in his hand and is being tortured by his wife and Satan on both sides, mirroring the torment that Adah and Zillah inflict on Lamech.



Figure 25. Lamech Mocked by His Wives. Stained glass window in the Temple Protestant Saint-Étienne, Mulhouse, France, mid-14th century CE.

An early sixteenth-century *Book of Hours* also connects Adah and Zillah to the two soldiers who tortured Jesus. The upper register shows Christ, who is wearing a loincloth and has rays shining from his nimbus. He is flanked by two men who are scourging him with words. The lower register shows Lamech, who is wearing a hat and has his hands raised. He is surrounded by Adah and Zillah, who are wearing headdresses. One of them has her right hand on her hip and her left hand touching Lamech's hat. The caption between the vignettes clearly states the parallelism

between Lamech being beaten by his wives and Jesus being beaten by the infamous Jews (*Lameth fut batu de ses femmes; Jesus aussi parail lament fu batu des juifs infames a l'atasche tresrudemen*t).



Figure 26. Lamech Mocked by His Wives. Book of Hours (H.5.fol. 54r), Morgan Library, ca. 16th century CE.

William Blake (1757-1782) made a color print of Lamech and his two wives in 1795. Blake's work shows a more sympathetic view of Lamech's family. Lamech is portrayed remorseful after he accidentally killing a man who is lying on the ground. He is pulling his hair with his eyes open wide in shock. Adah and Zillah, standing beside Lamech, are depicted fearfully embracing each other. Their close relationship is reflected in their tight holding with one another for support and for sharing their grieves as they look at what their husband did.



Figure 27. Adah and Zillah Frightened. William Blake, Tate (UK. Ref.: N05061), late 18th century CE.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed various interpretive issues surrounding Adah and Zillah, from the onomastic studies of their names to their portrayals in late medieval illustrated manuscripts. Their interchanging roles and contrasting portrayals connect the meaning of their names to their functions in Lamech's family. The rather free and spontaneous connections to the meanings of the wives' names opened up multiple interpretations of their characters, which easily led to negative portrayals of them. The biblical narrator's silence about the wives' deeds does not change the fact that their polygamous marriage to Lamech and their membership in the shorter, discredited Cainite genealogy inevitably made them destined adversaries.

CHAPTER 5: THE WIFE OF NOAH

In a study of Noah and his wife in early Jewish and gnostic literature, Rainer Stichel (1979) included an illustration from a miniature series (fol. 20r-23r) about the flood narrative in an eighteenth-century Russian Bible.[473] The second illustration in the series depicts a conversation scene between the personified devil and Noah's wife. The description reads:

> And Satan came to the wife of Noah and brought her a hop branch and spoke to her. "Make a drink with this herb, give it to your husband, and ask him where he is going from you."[474]



Figure 28. Noah's Wife. State Historical Museum of Russia, Moscow (Slg. Uvarov, no. 34, Miniature fol. 21r), 18th century CE.

This scene followed by two illustrations: the intoxication of Noah and the destruction of the ark.[475] After being tempted by the devil, Noah's wife gave him a drug to intoxicate him. Noah fell for their scheme and disclosed the location of the ark. His wife then burned down the ark, which caused a serious delay in the divine salvation plan. The motifs of a woman being tempted by the devil and the intoxication of her husband through something consumable resonate with another biblical event, Gen 3:1-7. This

[473] Rainer Stichel, *Die Namen Noes, seines Bruders und seiner Frau: ein Beitrag zum Nachleben jüdischer Überlieferungen in der Ausserkanonischen und Gnostischen Literatur und in Denkmälern der Kunst* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 15.

[474] Stichel, *Die Namen Noes, seines Bruders und seiner Frau*, 118.

[475] See discussion in Stichel, *Die Namen Noes, seines Bruders und seiner Frau*, 118-119.

is no coincidence, as a very similar narrative is found in a Russian folk legend collected by A. N. Afanas'ev, in which Noah's wife is called Evga or Eva.[476] While it may be surprising to see Noah's wife being compared to Eve's downfall in this eighteenth-century Russian Bible, similar motifs can already been found in the Old Testament cycle miniature series in the early fourteenth-century *Queen Mary Psalter* (British Library Royal MS 2 B VII, ff.5v-7r).[477] The narrative begins with an angel speaking to Noah and instructing him to build the ark in the lower register of f.5v. This scene is followed by a scene showing a horned devil disguised in human clothes. The devil appears at the front door of Noah's house and speaks to Noah's wife (f.6r). The devil frames Noah's secrecy as a betrayal of the family. He gives her a drug to induce her husband to talk. Wearing a cap and holding an axe in his left hand over his shoulder, Noah comes home and is greeted by his wife. The wife pulls him into the house to sit on a bench, embraces him, and kisses him as she hands him a chalice that presumably contains the drug. She attempts to charm the secret out of him. However, the lower register of f.6r showed that Noah ignores her deceit, but listens to the angel's warning that the flood is coming soon, so he moves on to complete the ark by weaving wattles on the ark trestles. The next register (f.6v) shows Noah, his family, and animals entering the ark, while Noah's wife shows hesitation to enter.[478] The family is eventually saved the flood (f. 7r). Noah

[476] See Utley, "One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife," 430 fn.6-7; also Utley, "The Devil in the Ark (AaTh825)," in *The Flood Myth*, ed. Alan Dundes, 345. Discussion of this legend and its variants, see Jeanmarie Rouhier-Willoughby, Vera Kuznetsova, "Russian folk legends on Noah and the Flood," *Contemporary Legend Series* 3, vol. 1 (2011): 80-82.

[477] This *Queen Mary Psalter* consists of 223 tinted drawings, mostly two per page, illustrating the Old Testament scenes from the Fall of Lucifer and the Creation to the Death of Solomon, with accompanying Anglo-Norman explanatory. http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_2_B_VII (accessed on Jun 13, 2023).

[478] Adelaide Bennett, "Noah's Recalcitrant Wife in the Ramsey Abbey Psalter," *Notes in the History of Art* 2:1 (1982), 3.

sends out the raven and the dove from the ark, and of the dove returning to Noah with a branch in its beak.



Figure 29. Noah and His Family. Queen Mary Psalter (Roy.2.B.VII fol.5v-7r), British Library, early 14th century CE.

Another early fourteenth century British *Ramsey Abbey Psalter* (Morgan Library M.302 fol. 1v) also showed a negative portrayal of the wife of Noah.[479] This full-page prefatory miniature shows a typological theme of divine blessing through salvation and birth in four compartments: Noah and the Ark, the covenant between God and Abraham (Gen 15:5-7), the marriage of St. Joachim and Anna, and the birth of Mary. On the top left, Noah is standing in the ark. The ark is decorated with animal heads and is filled with birds and animals, such as sheep, rabbits, and donkeys, in both the upper and lower structures. Noah, like Abraham in his blue robe, raises his left hand and grasps his wife with his right hand. The wife, wearing a headdress and snood, carries a winged devil on her back. Both of their bodies are partially submerged in the water. Below the ark, dead bodies are found floating in the water. Another winged, horned devil emerges from a hole in the bottom of the ark, resonating the devil's evil scheme through Noah's wife. The inclusion of Noah's wife's relationship with the devil in both the Russian Bible and the two early fourteenth-century psalters is more than just an intrusion of a narrative. The colored drawings with vivid illustrations in the psalters were used to educate monks and nuns about piety and devotion. Noah's wife's appearance as the devil's aid to destroy God's divine salvation plan was perceived as a theological implication of this biblical teaching.

[479] Bennett, "Noah's Recalcitrant Wife in the Ramsey Abbey Psalter," 2-3. See also Utley, "Noah' His Wife, and the Devil," in *Studies in Biblical and Jewish folklore*, ed. Raphael Patai, Francis Lee Utley, and Dov Noy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), 68-69.

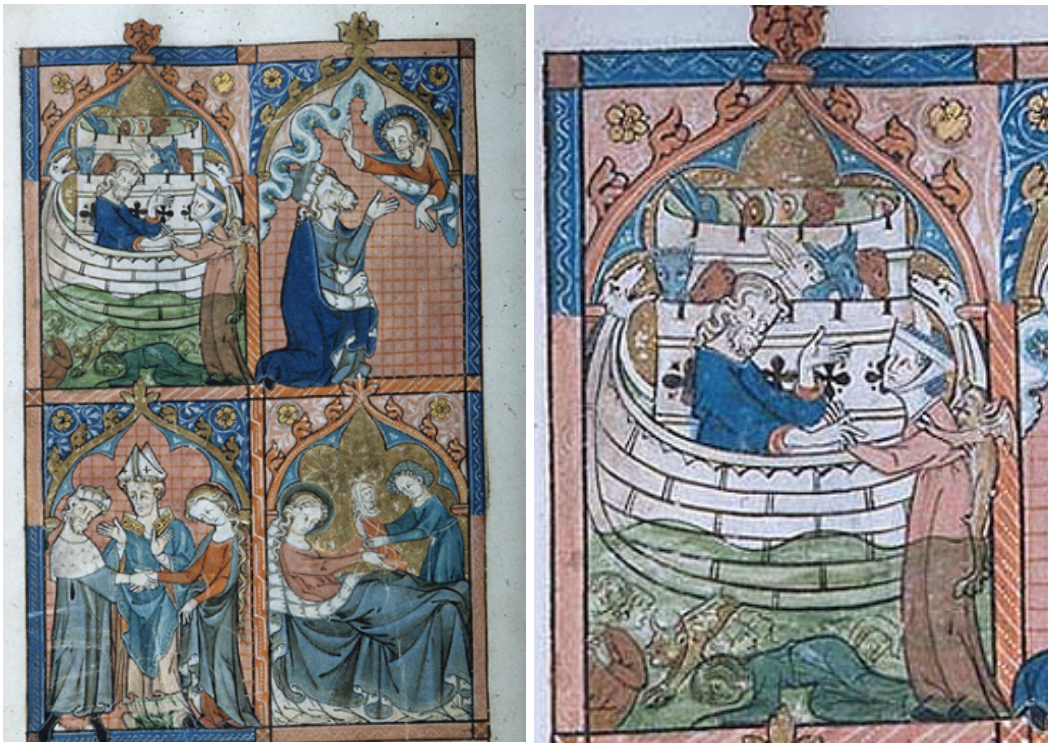


Figure 30. Noah's Wife (Upper Left). British Ramsey Abbey Psalter (M.302 fol. 1v), Morgan Library, early 14th century CE.

Noah's wife appears five times in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 6:18; 7:7, 13-14; 8:16, and 18), all in the Priestly traditions. While being given no names by the biblical writer, Noah's wife, together with the three wives of Noah's sons, were part of the biblical covenant established between God and Noah (Gen 6:18). The Bible mentions repeatedly that Noah's wife and the three wives of Noah's sons went into the ark (Gen 7:7, 13-14), survived the flood and went out of the ark together (Gen 8:16, 18). As one of the family members who was protected by God and survived the flood, Noah's wife was considered a blessed figure. The biblical narrator then describes a mysterious incident in which Noah became drunk and cursed Canaan and his descendants. Ham, Canaan's father, saw Noah's nakedness (Gen 9:20-27), but it was Canaan who was cursed (vv.25-27). The narrator did not hold Noah's wife accountable for this curse. How did a blessed, nameless

woman in the Bible become an evil character in later biblical traditions? Why was she accused of posing threats not only to her own family, but also to the divine salvation plan?

Cultural References of the Flood Narrative

Since the decipherment of the Gilgamesh tablet XI in the late nineteenth century, ancient flood narratives have often been compared to their biblical counterparts from various perspectives.[480] The following discussion focuses on the consorts in two ancient writings: the wife of Utnapishtim from the Babylonian flood narrative, Gilgamesh tablet XI, and goddess Pyrrha from the Greek flood myth Deucalion.

Gilgamesh Epic (Utnapishtim's Wife)

Despite the considerable amount of older versions of the *Gilgamesh Epic* found in ancient Mesopotamia,[481] the narrative of Utnapishtim only survived in the Standard Babylonian Epic.[482]

[480] See for instance E. K. V. Pearce, "The Flood and Archaeology," *Faith and Thought. Journal of the Victoria Institute* 101 (1974), 228-241; Lloyd R. Bailey, "Wood from 'Mount Ararat': Noah's Ark? *The Biblical Archaeologist* 40:4 (1977) 137-146; Frymer-Kensky, Tikva. "What the Babylonian Flood Stories Can and Cannot Teach Us About the Genesis Flood." *The Biblical Archaeology Review* 4, no. 4 (1978), 32; Lloyd R. Bailey, *Noah: the Person and the Story in History and Tradition* (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 11-27; Norman Cohn, *Noah's Flood. The Genesis Story in Western Thoughts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 1-10; Christine Dykgraaf, "The Mesopotamian Flood Epic in the Earliest Texts, the Bible, and the Qurʾan," in *Sacred Tropes: Tanakh, New Testament, and* Qurʾan *as Literature and Culture,* ed. Roberta Sterman Sabbath (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 233-243; Y.S. Chen, "The Flood Motif as a Stylistic and Temporal Device in Sumerian Literary Tradition," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 12 (2012), 158-189; Amanda Norsker, "Genesis 6:5-9:17. A Rewritten Babylonian Flood Myth," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 29:1 (2015):55-62.

[481] The Sumerian versions of Gilgamesh Epic are thoroughly discussed in the introduction part of A.R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic. Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Text. Volume I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3-70.

[482] Since the recovery of the Babylonian poem of Atra-ḫasīs, this flood epic is regarded as the source of Tablet XI of the late version. Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 215-6. The wife of Atra-ḫasīs, however, is not particularly mentioned in the poem, she is

According to this epic, Utnapishtim' wife was once the queen of Shuruppak prior the flood.[483] When the gods decided to bring about a great flood to destroy the city (XI.13-14),[484] the gods asked Utnapishtim to build a boat (XI.23-24). Enlil brought Utnapishtim's wife on board and had her kneel beside her husband (XI.199-201); Enlil touched their foreheads, and granted Utnapishtim and his wife immortality (XI.202-204).[485] Gilgamesh, the mythic king of Ur, was so desperate for immortality. Gilgamesh traveled to Utnapishtim, the only mortal to have achieved immortality, to consult about the secret of eternal life. Utnapishtim tested Gilgamesh's resolve by challenging him to stay awake for a week. Gilgamesh accepted the challenge, but he immediately fell into a deep sleep (XI.210-211). Utnapishtim called his wife to observe Gilgamesh. His wife, however, inclined to wake him up and ask him to return to his homeland safely (XI.215-218).[486] Utnapishtim then spoke to her, "Mankind is deceptive and will deceive you. Go, bake him daily rounds of bread, line them up by his head, and mark on the wall the days that he slept." (XI.219-222) To help Gilgamesh understand that he had failed the test, the wife followed Utnapishtim's proposal to bake a piece of bread each day and leave Gilgamesh's portion next to his recumbent body. She also made a mark on the wall for each day he laid down (XI.219-222). On the seventh morning, after

referred only as part of Atra-ḫasīs' family. The present study will not focus on it. Discussions on the manuscripts of Tablet XI in the Standard Babylonian Epic, see A.R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 18, 410-415, 700-703, 716-721.

[483] (XI.23-24 indicates that Ūta-napišti reigned the city of Šhuruppak in which the gods dwelt together with men.

[484] This translation follows textual reconstruction of A.R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic. Vol.1 Tablet XI.*

[485] "In the past Utnapishtim was (one of) mankind, but now Utnapishtim and his woman (sinništa) shall be like us gods! Cf. Gen. 3:22-23. When Utnapishtim and his wife are granted immortality, they "become like the gods" (ēmû kî ilāni, GE XI, 194). This is expressed most explicitly in the case of Enkidu, whose rise to humanity is described not only as "becoming human" but also as becoming "godlike" (kīma iii, I, iv, 34; cf. VII, iii, 36) in the only way possible for most humans

[486] His wife (mar-ḫi-is-su) spoke to him, to Utnapishtim the Far-Away: "Touch him, let the man awaken!" (By) the road he came let him go back in safety, (by) the gate he came out let him return to his land!" (lines 215-218)

she baked the last bread of the week, Utnapishtim woke Gilgamesh (XI.230) and showed him the seven pieces of bread that were lined up by his head and the seven marks on the wall. Gilgamesh immediately denied having slept for more than a moment (XI.231-233). When Gilgamesh recognized that he had failed the test through the aging of the bread by each day, he was in great despair. As Gilgamesh was about to begin his journey home, Utnapishtim's wife intervened. She asked her husband whether he remembered to give the farewell gift to their departing guest so that he can return to his land in honor (XI.273-275). This suggestion prompted Utnapishtim to reveal the secret of the rejuvenating plant found at the bottom of the sea that would return the youth whoever ate it. Gilgamesh retrieved the plant but the plant was snatched by a serpent. Gilgamesh's quest for immortality ended with naught.

Two key aspects of this ancient epic can help us better understand Utnapishtim's wife's role and its significance. The first aspect is the different terms used for "wife." Instead of using the more generic term aššatu,[487] Utnapishtim's wife was first called sinništu, "woman" (XI.201 and 204),[488] and then *marḫītum* "wife, spouse" (XI.212, 215, 219, and 273).[489] Jeffery Tigay (1982) highlighted the vocabulary change during Utnapishtim's account of the flood.[490] To Tigay, each term was restricted to a separate component of the tablet, the different vocabularies represented the preference of the components in this particular tablet.[491] However, the translation of *marḫītum* as "wife" was challenged by Tzvi Abusch (1993). In his study of divine tavernkeeper

[487] CAD 1968 Vol.1 Part II., 462-465., also ḫīrtu in CAD 1956 Vol. 6, 200-201 discussed by Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*, 232.

[488] CAD 1984 Vol.15, 286-292.

[489] CAD 1977 Vol. 10, 281

[490] See discussion in Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*, 232-233.

[491] Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*, 232.

Siduri's dialogue with Gilgamesh in the Old Babylonian version of Gilgamesh Epic, Abusch argued that the translation of *marḫītum* as "wife" is an exception limited only to Gilgamesh. The word *marḫītum* appears twice in the Old Babylonian version of the Gilgamesh Epic: One is in OB M iii 13 and the other in SB Tablet XI. In Tablet XI, the word *marḫītum* always appears as part of a formulaic speech introduction. This suggests that the non-flood section of Tablet XI, which deals with Utnapishtim and his wife, was added to the epic at a later date. The term *marḫītum* was likely drawn upon by later writers as a way of preserving an earlier choice of translation.[492] According to Abush, the use of *marḫītum* in OB M iii 13 was reminiscent of *reḫû* "to pour, to have intercourse, to inseminate," of the contemporaneous Old Babylonian Enkidu-Shamhat encounter.[493] Hence, *marḫītum* should not be translated as "wife" but "prostitute/harlot" or the like.[494] A.R. George (2003), however, argued that Abusch's reading was based on his speculation of the episode's development and function.[495] The rare occurrence of the term *marḫītum* was limited to the Gilgamesh epic except in a wisdom fragment from Ugarit, and in the synonym list Explicit Malku I, which defines its meaning as "wife." According to George, the ale-wife's advice to Gilgamesh was to state that a man should content himself with an ordinary life and the simple pleasures that derived from having plenty to eat and drink, clean clothes and a wash, and children and a wife.[496] This very advice by Siduri was frequently cited as a parallel to Eccl 9:7-9 to show that Ecclesiastics' emphasis upon enjoyment of life.[497] Treating the epic as a coherent text, even though the term

[492] Ibid.

[493] Tzvi. Abusch, "Gilgamesh's Request and Siduri's Denial, Part I: The Meaning of the Dialogue and Its Implications for the History of the Epic." in *Male and Female in the Epic of Gilgamesh: Encounters, Literary History, and Interpretation* (Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 75-76.

[494] Abusch, "Gilgamesh's Request and Siduri's Denial, Part I," 73, 86.

[495] A.R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 284 iii 13.

[496] George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 275.

[497] See C.L. Seow. *Ecclesiastes: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 301.

marḫītum became part of the formulaic speech in XI and might have reflected the writer's preference of an older word choice, the meaning of *marḫītum* in iii 13' as "prostitute/harlot" proposed by Abusch demeaned the good deeds of Ūta-napišti's wife in XI. 212, 215, 219, and 273. Therefore, it is unnecessary to emend the meaning of *marḫītum* in iii 13' that is based on speculations as suggested by A.R. George and we should retain the translation of *marḫītum* both in iii and XI as "wife" or "spouse."

The second aspect is the overall treatment of female characters in the *Gilgamesh Epic*. Rivkah Harris (1990) studied female characters of this ancient literature and highlighted that, in whatever version,[498] the epic was composed by men for the edification and entertainment of a presumably male audience.[499] In the Standard Babylonian version, women were regarded positively *only* when they assist Gilgamesh (and Enkidu) in their activities, when they nurtured, advised in a maternal fashion. The unnamed Utnapishtim's wife was portrayed like other Mesopotamian wives generally: relational, given definition as wife or daughter.[500] The passive role of Utnapishtim's wife was reflected in Enlil bringing her aboard the boat and having her kneel beside her husband (XI.201). Nevertheless, Utnapishtim's wife demonstrated her good nature in this narrative not only for her husband but also for a stranger. She was considerate and thoughtful for those in need. While fulfilling her feminine and maternal role as a consort, she strived for expressing her own voice in a male dominated world to show kindness to a stranger. She played an important role in the climax of the epic by helping Gilgamesh realize that he had failed the test

[498] Rivkah Harris, "Images of Women in the Gilgamesh Epic," in *Lingering over Words : Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran*, ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, Piotr Steinkeller (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press., 1990), 219-230.

[499] Harris, "Images of Women in the Gilgamesh Epic," 220.

[500] Harris, "Images of Women in the Gilgamesh Epic," 225-6.

to seek eternal life, and by reminding her husband to show hospitality to the desperate Gilgamesh on his journey home.

Greek Myth (Pyrrha)

Pyrrha and Deucalion are the Greek counterparts of the Sumerian and the biblical flood survivors.[501] Early Christian church fathers were well aware of the striking parallels between the Greek Deucalion and the biblical Noah. They acknowledged and discussed these flood stories in their writings, including Justin Martyr (*Second Apology*, 2nd century CE.), Theophilus of Antioch (2nd century CE.), Origen (*Contra Celsum*, 3rd century CE), Eusebius of Caesarea (*Preparation for the Gospel*, early 4th century CE.), Augustine (*City of God*, early 5th century CE.),[502] and Epiphanius of Salamis (*Panarion*, 4th century CE.). The earliest attestations of this couple are found in Pindar's *Olympian* 9 (O.9.41–61) and a Sicilian comic play by Epicharmus' *Prometheus and Pyrrha* (Epicharmus fr. 113, 20) in the fifth century BCE.[503] However, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1.313–1.415) and Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca* (1.7.2–1.7.3) between the first to second centuries CE are by far the closest parallels to the flood narrative in the Hebrew Bible.[504] Pyrrha's name

[501] See discussion in Jan N. Bremmer, "Near Eastern and Native Traditions in Apollodorus' Account of the Flood," in *Interpretations of the Flood*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and Gerard P. Luttikhuizen (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 45-55; Ephraim Nissan, "Revisiting The One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife," 454-455; Louis H. Feldman, "Questions about Great Flood, as Viewed by Philo, Pseudo-Philo, Josephus and the Rabbis," *ZAW* 115 (2003), 412; Cohn, *Noah's Flood*, 8-9; C. John Collins, "Noah, Deucalion, and the New Testament," *Biblica* 93.3 (2012), 403-426.

[502] See Collins, "Noah, Deucalion and the New Testament," 416.

[503] Scholarly discussions on the Greek great flood narrative, see Zoe Stamatopoulou, *Hesiod and Classical Greek Poetry: Reception and Transformation in the Fifth Century BCE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 133-134; Alan H. F. Griffin, "Ovid's Universal Flood," *Hermathena* 152 (1992): 39.

[504] Another first century BCE Latin poet Vergil mentioned the story of Pyrrha and Deucalion and knew about Pyrrha's creation of the human race from stones. See Virgil. *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1–6* (Loeb Classical Library), tran. Henry Rushton Fairclough, revised. G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 1916). Also the first century Plutarch treated the flood, and Deucalion and Pyrrha, as historical reference. See Plutarch. "Pyrrhus," in *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (London: William Heinemann, 1914), 349.

comes from the Greek word *purrhos* (πυρρος), which means "flame colored," the word resembles for "fire", or simply "red." Ancient writers of Greek mythology describe Pyrrha as being red haired, hence her name. Pyrrha's name also occurred in Mycenean Greek. She was the daughter of Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus, and Pandora, the very first woman. Marrying her cousin was not mentioned in Homer, but it was found in later periods.

Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca* gave Pyrrha a proper introduction of her identity and her participation throughout the flood narrative. According to this narrative, Deucalion was the son of Prometheus and the king of Phthia. He was a virtuous and god-fearing man. His wife and cousin Pyrrha was the daughter of Epimetheus and Pandora. She was a pious and upright woman. When Zeus determined to end the Bronze Race with the great flood, Deucalion followed Prometheus' advice to construct a chest, stored it with provisions, and boarded it with Pyrrha. After being carried in the chest across the sea for nine days, Deucalion and Pyrrha landed on a high mountain, Parnassus. When the rains stopped, Deucalion disembarked and sacrificed to Zeus, the god of Escape. Zeus then sent Hermes to him and allowed him to choose how to repopulate the earth. Obeying Zeus' instruction, Deucalion picked up stones and threw them behind his back. The stones that Deucalion threw became men, while those thrown by Pyrrha became women. Hence, people were called *laos* (Greek for "people"), metaphorically from *laas* (Greek for "stone"). That is why *laoi*, "people," metaphorically received their name from *laas*, "stone." Deucalion and Pyrrha had three children: Hellen, Amphictyon, and Protogenia. Some said that Hellen's father was Zeus. Amphictyon reigned over Attica after Cranaus. Protogenia became the mother of Aethlius by Zeus.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1.313–1.415) introduces Pyrrha to the narrative only after their rescue from the great flood. Nevertheless, this first-century Latin account provides even more elaborate details about Pyrrha's inner struggles during the re-creation of the human race from stones. After the couple were landed on a high mountain, Pyrrha and Deucalion looked over the desolate landscape and wept for the loss of the human race and the silence of solitude. They lamented bitterly and imagined what it would be like if they did not have each other. Confused about how to fulfill their destiny, the couple ritually cleansed themselves in the river Cephisus and went down the hill to consult the oracle of the goddess Themis, who they hoped would provide them a way to repopulate the earth. Themis told Pyrrha that they should cast the bones of their mother in order to reproduce successfully (1.381-3). For a time, the couple stood in horrified silence. Pyrrha, first to speak, refused the mandate. With trembling lips, she begged the goddess for forgiveness. She feared to desecrate her mother's bones and irritate her sacred spirit. But Deucalion solved Themis' riddle. He understood that their "great mother" was the earth itself and her "bones" were the stones around them. Pyrrha was moved by Deucalion's words yet hesitated to comply. But Deucalion showed his trust in Themis. Following the directions of the oracle, the couple did precisely as they had been told, and the stones they threw behind them were slowly metamorphosed into human form. Those stones that were thrown by Pyrrha became women, and those thrown by Deucalion became men. This proved the origin of a hardy race who endured toils and deeds (1.384-415). After this, the earth spontaneous produced the world of animals through moisture, nutritious soils combined with the heat from sunlight.

Like Utnapishtim's wife, Pyrrha is portrayed as a loyal consort to Deucalion. U. Schmitzer (1990) highlighted that Deucalion's address to his wife "o sister, o wife" (*o soror, o coniunx*, 1.351)

was reminiscent of the first speech in the Aeneid, where Juno described herself as both sister and wife of Jupiter (*et soror et coniunx*, Virg. Aen. 1.45).[505] The sister/wife relationship recalled other moral issues in the Iron Age that led to the destruction of the human race, as the biblical narrator in Gen 6:1-4 suggests. Andrew Feldherr (2020), on the other hand, stressed that the couple created their offspring "without the marriage bed" in Pindar's account. As the descendants of Titans and ancestors of men, Deucalion and Pyrrha created an ambiguity in the genealogical link between men and gods.[506] This genealogical gap between deities and their human "offspring" created the fundamental confusion of the underlying identity of human offspring as being both human beings and descendants of deities.[507] Nevertheless, both Pyrrha and Deucalion represented an ideal of married love that was blameless and god-fearing, as evidenced by their struggles during the process of repopulating the earth.[508] Pyrrha's hesitation showed her honesty and deep respect for both the gods and her mother. While Pyrrha did not recognize the meaning behind the riddle, her trust in Deucalion and willingness to follow his lead reflected the strength of their marriage. The god-fearing couple survived the flood and tried to do everything right to honor their parents. Their good

[505] Ulrich Schmitzer, *Zeitgeschichte in Ovids Metamorphosen. Mythologische Dictung unter politischem Anspruch* (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, Stuttgart, 1990), 75.

[506] Andrew Feldherr discussed Deucalion and Pyrrha's regeneration of the human race after the destruction of the flood. Feldherr linked the hermeneutic "transformation" of stones to bones both to a thematic interest in the relationship of the new future to its Iron Age past. Feldherr argueed that the connections between the content and the real-world presence of Ovid's text is the phenomenon of sexual difference. The opposition between male and female sexual difference encoded the difference between an ordered, stable future and a rebellious past. See Andrew Feldherr, "Between a Rock and a Hard Race: Gender and Text in Ovid's Deucalion and Pyrrha Episode (Met. 1.313-415), in *Metamorphic Readings Transformation, Language, and Gender in the Interpretation of Ovid's Metamorphoses*, ed. Alison Sharrock, Daniel Moeller, and Mats Malm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 54-83.

[507] Feldherr, "Between a Rock and a Hard Race," 57.

[508] Griffin, "Ovid's Universal Flood," 43.

qualities were fully reflected in the Ovid's account of the great flood, which presented them as examples of goodness, integrity and piety.[509]

Jewish Traditions

Book of Jubilees (ʾEmzara)

The *Book of Jubilees* provides the earliest record of Noah's wife's identity. Her name is Emzara (ዕምዛራ ʿ*mzr*). She was the daughter of Rakeʾel, the daughter of his father's brother (4:33). No other information about her is provided other than her ancestral root. This name, which literally means "the mother/matriarch of Sarai" (ʿ*imizara*), was likely chosen to strengthen the ancestral relationship between Noah and Abraham.[510] The *Book of Tobit*, another second century BCE, writing, provided an inference about the identity of the wife of Noah through the teaching of Tobit to his son in Tob 4. Tobit gave instructions to his son on various issues. In Tob 4:12, Tobit highlighted the importance of marrying a wife from their kindred, in which he showed good examples of the patriarchs.

> "Beware, my son, of every kind of fornication. First of all, marry a woman from among the descendants of your ancestors; do not marry a foreign woman, who is not of your father's tribe; for we are the descendants of the prophets. **Remember, my son, that Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our ancestors of old, all took**

[509] Comparison between Ovidian's Deucalion to the Genesis' Priestly and Yahwistic materials, see Griffin, "Ovid's Universal Flood," 41-42.

[510] Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," 159.

> **wives from among their kindred. They were blessed in their children, and their posterity will inherit the land**. So now, my son, love your kindred, and in your heart do not disdain your kindred, the sons and daughters of your people, by refusing to take a wife for yourself from among them. (Tob 4:12)

While the book of Tobit does not name Noah's wife, it does reveal that Noah married a woman from his own clan. She was not promiscuous, and both she and her children were blessed.

Rabbinc Interpretations (Naamah)

The widespread acceptance of Naamah (Gen 4:22) as Noah's wife originated with rabbinic interpretations. Several questions about Naamah were raised in rabbinic discussions: Who was she? (Rashi 4:22.3; Targ. P-J.); What had she done? (Bereishit Raabah 23:3; Midrash Aggadah on Gen 4:22.2); and why did Genesis mention Naamah from amongst all the women? (Ramban on Genesis 4:22.1; Gur Aryeh on Bereishit 4:22.2). The Hebrew root of her name *nʿm* (נעם) has two meanings. One meaning is "to be pleasant," "delightful," and "to be friendly with sb." (*naʿam* in Gen 49:15, Ezek 32:19, 2 Sam 1:26). The other meaning is "singing," or "sweet sounding" (*nĕʿîmâ* in 2 Sam 23:1; Ps.81:3; 135:3; 147:1).[511] The former focuses more on her character, while the latter connects her with her musical talent.

The earliest contrasting views of Naamah as Noah's wife are attested in *Gen. Rab.* 23:3. Rabbi Abba bar Kahana, a late third-century rabbi, identified Naamah, the sister of Tubal-Cain, as the wife of Noah (נעמה אשתו של נח היתה): "Why was she called Naʿamah? Because her deeds were

[511] BDB 653-4.

pleasant (שהיו מעשיה נעימים).” He then offered an alternative interpretation, “the Rabbis said: this was another Naamah. Why was she called Naamah? Because she performed singing (מנעמת) with a timbrel (בתף) to worship idols (לעבודת כוכבים).” These contrasting views of Naamah, whether she was a pleasant woman because of her deeds or a malevolent seductress, were generated based on the meaning of her name that had been passed down from the older traditions. These two interpretations of *nʿm* (נעם) influenced major medieval Jewish commentators including Rashi and Kimchi, who read Naamah as Noah’s wife. Rashi picked up the reading in *Gen. Rab.* 23.3 in his commentary on Genesis 4:22.3 and concluded that Naamah was the wife of Noah (נעמה. היא אשתו של נח) without further explanation. Kimchi followed Rabbi Abba bar Kahana and explained why Naamah was mentioned:

> “The reason that the Torah mentioning this is to inform us that Tubal-Cain did not have a brother, as opposed to his half-brother (יבל), but that the sibling he did have, i.e. a sister, was called Naamah. According to *Gen. Rab.* 23.3 this Naamah became the wife of Noah, being the only surviving individual of the offspring of the Cainite. She was called *nʿmh* (נעמה) in recognition of her good character. Other scholars in the same Midrash do not agree that the Naamah who became Noah’s wife was the one mentioned here. They attribute the name Naamah here to this woman’s ability to play music on these instruments.”

As a noted Hebrew grammarian, Kimchi focused strictly on two exegetical meanings of נעם: “pleasantness” and “musical talent.” His positive reading of her is reflected in his focus only on Naamah’s musical talent without highlighting her use of it for idolatry as other rabbis did. The

musical talent of Naamah is also mentioned in *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 4:22, in which Naamah is not only the sister of Tubal-Cain, she was also a woman of elegies (קינין) and songs (וזמרין).[512] Like Tubal-Cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools, *Tg. Ps.-J.* suggests that Naamah, Tubal-Cain's sister, was responsible for music. The Targum does not highlight her role as an adversary. In addition to the different interpretations of Naamah's name, there are also different accounts of her response to the angelic figures. *Midrash Aggadah* on Genesis 4:22:2 interprets Naamah as a blessing because of her pleasant deeds (נעמה שהנעימה בסוף מעשיה). Moreover, "the ministering angels sought to wander after her but she fled from before them (שבקשו מלאכי השרת לתעות אחריה וברחה מפניהם)." Naamah's refusal to be led astray by the demonic angels showed that she was a righteous character. Ramban (known as Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, 1194-1270) followed Rabbi Abba bar Kahana's positive reading of Naamah in his commentary on Genesis 4:22:2.

> In *Gen. Rab*. 23:3 they say that she was the wife of Noah. "And why was she called Naamah? Because her deeds were lovely and pleasant." The point of this midrash is that **she was famous in her time as a righteous woman who gave birth to righteous children (כי היתה צדקת והולידה צדיקים). This is why the scripture mentioned her**. If so, then a small remembrance of Cain was left in the world (ואם כן נשאר לקין זכר מעט בעולם). Certainly, if she was the not the woman who bore Noah's three sons, there would be no obvious reason to mention her.[513]

[512] See also Heb. Ben Sira 45:9. W.F. Albright, "Islam and the Religions of the Ancient Orient," *JAOS* 60 (1940): 297f. and fn.52.

[513] Feldman compared the justification for sparing Noah's wife in *Gen. Rab*. 23:3 to Deucalion and Pyrrha in Ovid's *Metamprphoses* 1.322f. See discussion in Feldman, "Questions about the Great Flood," 416 fn. 27.

Ramban connected Naamah's name to her pleasant deeds and righteous character, even regarding her as an exceptional example in the Cainite genealogy. He then highlighted two other interpretations of Naamah, which connects her with demonic angels:

> However, our rabbis have another Midrash concerning her which states that she was a very beautiful woman in whom the sons of gods erred. This is hinted in the verse, "and the 'sons of gods' saw the daughters of men (Gen 6:2)" mentioned in Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer. Still others say that she became the wife of Shamdon (היא היתה אשת שמדון), and the mother of Ashmedai (אם אשמדאי). Therefore it is from her that the demons were born (נולדו השדים) for her name is indeed found in writings for the use of the demons (כי כן ימצא שמה בכתבי שמושי השדים). The text hints and deals briefly with such hidden matters.

According to Pirqe R. El. 22:4, the angels (המלאכים) fell from heaven and saw the daughters of Cain walking about naked (בנות קין מהלכות גלויות בשר ערווה), with their eyes painted like prostitutes (ומכחלות עיניהן כזונות). The fallen angels went astray after the daughters (ותעו אחריהן) and took wives from amongst them.[514] This interpretation connects her beautiful appearance to the daughters of men mentioned in Gen 6:2, 4, who led the "divine beings" astray.[515] On the other hand, Naamah, the wife of the fallen angel Shamdon and the ancestress of all the demons, is

[514] On the discussion of encounter between Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer and Christian exegetical tradition, see Grypeou and Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity*, 185-88.

[515] On the seductive nature of the "daughters of Cain" as the fair daughters of men, see discussion in Grypeou and Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity*, 148-52.

discussed in more detail in the commentary on Gen 4:22 by Rabbeinu Bahya (also Rabbi Bachya ben Asher 1255-1340):

> And some say she was Ashmedon's wife (אשת אשמדון), the mother of Ashmedai (אם אשמדאי), and the demons were born from her. And the four women were the mothers of the demons. Lilith (לילית), Naamah (נעמה), Agaret (אגרת), and Machalat (מחלת), and each of them disposed of whole camps of followers and sects of unclean spirits…. Solomon alluded to all these [spirits of impurity] servants and handmaids. And these four women are the wives of Esau's servant (וד' נשים אלו נשיו של שרו של עשו),[516] and like him Esau married four women as the Torah interprets. (Rabbeinu Bahya, *Bereshit* 4:22.3)

According to Rabbeinu Bahya, in addition to Naamah, three other women were identified as the mothers of demons: Lilith,[517] Agaret, and Machalat.[518] Each of them had entire camps of followers and demon spirits." According to this tradition, they all eventually died like human

[516] Eliyahu Munk interpreted the four wives allegorically as "the spiritual counterpart of Esau in the celestial regions." See Rabbeinu Bahya, *Bereshit* 4:22.3 in Baḥya ben Asher, *Torah Commentary by Rabbi Bachya ben Asher*, trans. Eliyahu Munk, 2nd edition (Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 1998).

[517] For the image of Eve influence on the portrayal of Lilith, see Wojciech Kosior, "A Tale of Two Sisters: The Image of Eve Rabbinic Literature and Its Influence on the Portrayal of Lilith in the Alphabet of Ben Sira," *Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*, 32 (2018) 112-130; also Luttikhuizen's discussion on how the Talmudic accounts and kabbalistic interpretation of Eve's demonic offspring set as backgrounds of German literature of Clemens Brentano (1778-1842) and Georg Munk (1877-1958), see Luttikhuizen, *Eve's Children*, 60-69.

[518] מָחֲלַת (pr. n. f.) Maḥălath, name of the mother of the queen of demons, v. אִגְּרֶת. Pes. 112^{b}; Num. R. s. 12. According to Rabbi Abba in Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:55a:8, Agrat daughter of Maḥalat (ואגרת בת מחלת). Maḥalat was the daughter of Ishmael and wife of Esau in Gen 28:9). According to rabbinic traditions, her daughter Agrat ruled over myriads of demonic powers. (Cf. Bemidbar Rabbah 12:3; Zohar 3:113b–114a; Baḥya ben Asher, on Genesis 4:22). See also Matt ed., *Zohar* 3:113b–114a

beings.[519] Whether we read the phrase "and these four women are the wives of Esau's servant" וד' נשים אלו נשיו של שרו של עשו literally or allegorically, Rabbeinu Bahya appears to have related the four mothers of demons to Esau, the eldest son of Isaac and Rebekah. Esau's wives are mentioned in Gen 26:34, Gen 28:9 and 36:2-3. At the age of forty, Esau married two Canaanite women: Judith (יהודִית), the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath (בשמת), the daughter of Elon the Hittite (Gen 26:34). This arrangement upset his parents (Gen 26:34, 27:46, 28:1). After losing his father's blessing and learning that Isaac did not please the Canaanite women, Esau went to his uncle Ishmael and married his cousin Mahalath (מחלת) as his third wife (Gen 28:6-9). Later the names of Esau's wives reappear in Genesis 36. However, the genealogy of Esau in Gen 36:2-3 provides different names of his Canaanite wives. They are Adah (עדה), the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah (אהליבמה), the daughter of Anah son of Zibeon the Hivite; and Basemath (בשמת), Ishmael's daughter and the sister of Nebaioth. While modern scholars generally agree that the different names represent different traditions,[520] Rabbeinu Bahya's interpretation suggests the female descendants of the Cainite genealogy, in the case of Naamah, were one of the impure origins of the Canaanite women who appear in the later passages of Genesis.

A more explicit reference to Naamah's relationship with demons can be found in the *Zohar*, a mystical Jewish text that interprets scripture from the thirteenth century. Unlike Gen 4:22, which suggests that Naamah was the daughter of Lamech and Zillah, the *Zohar* shows that Naamah was

[519] BT Ḥagigah 16a: "Our Rabbis taught: 'Six things have been said concerning the demons, three of which correspond to the ministering angels and three to human beings. Three correspond to human beings: they eat and drink, they are fruitful and multiply, and they die.'"

[520] See Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 336.

the daughter of Adam and a female spirit.[521] "For 130 years Adam copulated with female spirits until the arrival of Naamah."[522] Moreover, according to the *Zohar*, the sons of god in Gen 6:2 refer to Uzza (עז"א) and Azael (ועזא"ל).[523] Two fallen angels, who opposed the creation of Adam and Eve, fell from heaven.[524] They were attracted by the daughters of men, namely Naamah,[525] who was known for her beauty (ומגו שפירו).[526] Naamah gave birth to maleficent spirits and demons through the fallen angels. These demons spread over the world. Naamah not only seduced the fallen angels, also targeted human beings.[527] "Naamah generated demons by seducing men in their sleep."[528] In the night, Naamah and the maleficent spirits roamed the world, seeking out human beings to corrupt. They absorbed their "spirit of desire" (רוח תיאובתא), titillating them, turning them into casualties of ejaculation.[529] Wherever they found people sleeping alone in a house, the maleficent spirits hovered above them, grabbed them, clung to them, seized their desire, and bore offspring. Moreover, Naamah was "the mother of the demons" (נעמה אמא דשדין הות),[530] as one of her sons, Ashmedai, was the king of the demons.[531] She worked together with Lilith to inflict

[521] Daniel C. Matt trans. and comm., *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition. vol 1: Genesis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 64 fn. 480. Similar account is found in *Ber. Rab.* 20:11 without mentioning the name of the female spirit: Rabbi Simon said, "Throughout all 130 years that Adam separated himself from Eve, male spirits heated themselves from her and she gave birth, while female spirits heated themselves from Adam and gave birth, as is written: When he does wrong, I will chastise him with a human rod, with blows of the children of אדם (adam), namely, children of Adam."

[522] Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:9b, 19b

[523] Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:55a.6.

[524] Cf. 1 Enoch 6-8.

[525] Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:9b; 23a, 37a.

[526] Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:55a.6.

[527] Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:55a.6.

[528] Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:9b, 19b; 3:76b–77a.

[529] Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:55a.7, 10. The phrase בעלי קריין (ba'alei qerayin), "casualties of ejaculation," means literally "masters [owners] of mishaps," those to whom mishaps happen, those who succumb to nocturnal emission. Daniel C. Matt ed., "The Zohar (The Zohar: Pritzker Edition) vol 1: Genesis, 534-535.

[530] Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:9b.3, 1.19b.7, 1:55a.10

[531] Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:9b, 19b; 3:76b–77a. Another tradition claimed that Naamah was the wife of the demon Ashmadon if the demons Ashmadai and others were born by her. (compare Zohar Chadash Midrash Ha-neelam 19,2).

suffering on children. Since Naamah came from the Cainite genealogy,[532] "she was appointed together with Lilith (והיא אתמנת על ליליא / עם לילית)[533] to attack children with diphtheria, a disease that was originated in Lilith.[534] On the other hand, the *Sefer Ha-Yashar*, a midrash that covers biblical history from creation to the Judges, reports that Noah married another Naamah, a descendant of Seth, when he was nearly 500 years old (5:14-18):

> And the Lord said to Noah, take unto thee a wife and beget children, for I have seen your righteous before me in this generation. **Then Noah went and took a wife, and he chose Naamah the daughter of Enoch** (וילך נח ויקח אישה ויבחר את נעמה בת חנוך), and she was five hundred and eighty years old. And Noah was four hundred and ninety eight years old, when he took Naamah for a wife. And **Naamah conceived and gave birth a son, and he called his name Japheth** (ותהר נעמה ותלד בן ויקרא את שמו יפת), for Japheth is my God in the land. Then **she conceived again and bare a son, and he called his name Shem** (ותהר עוד ותלד בן ויקרא את שמו שם), for God has made me a remnant, to be kept alive in the midst of the earth. And Noah was five hundred and two years old when Naamah bare Shem, and the boys grew up and went in the ways of the Lord, in all that Methuselah and Noah their father taught them. (*Sefer Ha-Yashar*, Genesis Noah 1-2)

This passage does not mention Ham or explicitly state that he was born to Naamah, even though Ham, another son of Noah whose son was cursed according to the biblical account, appears

[532] Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:55a.7.

[533] Matt ed., *Zohar* 1.55a.8.

[534] See Matt ed., Zohar 1:19b, 33b; 2:264b, 267b.

later in this midrash. The omission of Ham's birth in Noah's genealogy through Naamah was probably to keep Naamah from being ethically contaminated by her birth. In addition, by retaining Naamah as Noah's wife but identifying her as the daughter of Enoch (Gen 5:18-24), a daughter from the Sethite genealogy instead of the Cainite, *Sefer Ha-Yashar* appeared to improve her lineage. This was done in response to the belief the Cainite Naamah "was too wicked a personage to be a fitting consort for Noah."[535] As the daughter of Enoch, the patriarch who "walked with God after he had sons and daughters" (Gen 5:22), Naamah was a more compatible wife with the righteous Noah.[536] The rabbinic interpretations of Naamah reveal the struggles in defining the origin and roles of Naamah as Noah's wife. Since Eve, Adah, and Zillah were fully assigned with husbands, Naamah was the only female biblical figure in the Primeval History whose husband was not mentioned. The mention of her name in various rabbinic interpretations suggests the curiosity about her identity and the enthusiasm to assign her as Noah's wife. This proposal, however, would have solved one textual problem for the rabbis but created another. While this proposal provides an identity for both Naamah and the nameless wife of Noah, it raises more serious theological questions: How could the righteous Noah, who "walked with God" (6:9), have married a wife from the Cainite genealogy, a descendant who was "cursed from the ground" (4:11)? Those who held

[535] see Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 82-85

[536] W.M. Clark argued that J reinterpreted the righteousness of Noah from the perspective of the election ideology of the early monarchy, emphasizing the prospective nature of this election. See W. Malcolm Clark , "The Righteousness of Noah," *VT* 21:3 (1971) 261-280; On the proposal of four possible interpretations of the syntax in Gen 6:9b, see U Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part II*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Varda Books, 1964), 48-50.; Takamitsu Muraoka's response to Cassuto's proposal, see Muraoka, "Hebrew Philological Notes," *Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute* 5 (1979), 88-104; Other interpretation proposal on Noah's righteousness, see A.N. Barnard, "Was Noah a Righteous Man? Studies in Texts: Genesis 6:8," *Theology* 74 (1971): 311–14; Scott Hafemann, "'Noah, the Preacher of (God's) Righteousness': The Argument from Scripture in 2 Peter 2:5 and 9," *CBQ* 76.2 (2014), 306-20; On the discussion of visual word-play of Noah's worthiness through the play of consonants between ḥn "grace" and nḥ "Noah" in Gen 6:8-9, see Jack M. Sasson, "Word-Play in Gen 6:8-9," *CBQ* 37, 165-66.

sympathetic views to the descendants of the Cainite genealogy identified Naamah in Gen 4:22 as Noah's wife, and highlighted the positive interpretation of her name *nʿm* (נעם) with her pleasant deeds (שהיו מעשיה נעימים). Those who held less sympathetic views to the Cainite descendants did not feel comfortable with this association, because Naamah, as a descendant from the Cainite descendant, would have been too wicked as a fitting consort for the righteous Noah. Some connected Naamah's name with her musical talent and suggested that she used music to draw people to idol worship. The mystical interpretations in *Zohar* even painted Naamah as a pure evil figure who used her beauty to seduce spirits and human beings. The *Sefer Ha-Yashar*, however, attempted to elevate her to the Sethite genealogy by referring to her as the daughter of Enoch, so that she would be more compatible to the righteous Noah. Overall, the dispute about Naamah's identity as Noah's wife seems to have been based on whether one chooses a positive or a negative connotation for the root of her name נעם, and whether one believes that her Cainite lineage should be completely separated from the Sethite. In the discussion of divine images and likeness through the gender themes in Gen 6:1-4, Puerto (2011) maintained that Gen 4:17-24 served to shed new light on the gender themes.[537] The sons who took control of beautiful women did not respect any social or institutional limits that regulated sexual relationship and chain of generations.[538] These warrior sons who desired beautiful women indicated that they abused of their power and brought destructive violence. The narrator who adopted the patriarchal logic argued that the beauty of the women awakened the desire of violent possession in men.[539] Following this logic, the women were

[537] Mercedes Navarro Puerto, "Divine Image and Likeness," in *Torah*, ed. Irmtraud Fischer et. al. (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 246.

[538] Puerto, "Divine Image and Likeness," 247.

[539] Puerto, "Divine Image and Likeness," 248.

changed from perceptive subjects (one who can see) to objects (one who are seen). They were degraded from their status of "daughters of gods" to "daughters of men."[540]

Gnostic Traditions (Norea)

Another discussion regarding Noah's wife can be found in the study of Gnosticism. Since the fourth century bishop Epiphanius of Salamis (d.403) identified the gnostic wife of Noah as Norea in his treatise "Against Gnostics" (*Pan*. 26.1), Norea has been regarded as an antagonist. However, the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices (NHC) in 1945 provided new insights into Norea as Noah's wife, advancing our understanding of this figure. Twelve leather-bound papyrus codices were found in a sealed jar that may have belonged to a nearby Pachomian monastery in the Upper Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi. They may have been buried after Saint Athanasius condemned the use of non-canonical books in his festal letter of 367. These rather well-preserved early Christian and gnostic texts are composed in Coptic, but they are probably translation from a lost Greek original. This is due to the errors, particularly in gendered suffixes, that likely occurred in the process of translation. The discovery of these texts significantly influenced modern scholarship's understanding of Norea. Her name is found in several manuscripts from the Nag Hammadi Codices: the *Nature of the Rulers* (NHC II 4),[541] *The Thought of Norea* (NHC IX 2), and *On the Origin of the World* (NHC II 5). Moreover, the abundance of feminine imagery in the ancient gnostic texts drew the attention of various scholars' to engage in a systematic study on gender issues in Gnosticism. Birger A. Pearson (1977) was among the first scholar to conduct a

[540] Puerto, "Divine Image and Likeness," 249.

[541] See discussion in Antti Marjanen, "Rewritten Eve Traditions in the Nature of the Rulers (NHC II 4)," in *Ancient Christian Apocrypha*, ed. Outi Lehtipuu, Silke Petersen (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2022), 45-55.

thorough study on "The figure of Norea in Gnostic Literature."[542] In 1988, Karen L. King and other scholars published a groundbreaking collection of essays on various gender-related issues in gnostic texts. This collection, titled "Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism," explored the ways in which gnostic texts portray women and the role of women in gnostic communities.[543] Anne McGuire focused on Norea's virginity and the subversion of powers of in *Hypostasis of the Archons*,[544] and Pearson reexamined Norea's character.[545] Sergey Minov (2009) explained the historical background of Norea in his discussion of Noah and the Flood in Gnosticism.[546] In his study of the motifs that appear in various versions of the Babylonian angels Hārūt and Mārūt (Q 2:102), John C. Reeves (2015) sifted through various exegetical materials by early Muslim commentators and traditionists. These materials contained structural and contextual motifs of the Tale of Hārūt wa-Mārūt." Reeves further nuanced the discussion regarding the female figure whom the two angels attempted to seduce. He noted that this figure is very similar to the gnostic Norea and the midrash of Shemhazi and Azael.[547]

The gnostic wife of Noah appeared in many spellings from various gnostic sources: Noria (Haer. 26.1.5), Noraia (NHC II 5), Norea (NHC II 4), Nora, Noraita (*GR* 2.1.121), Nuraita (*GR*

[542] Birger A. Pearson, "The Figure of Norea in Gnostic Literature," in *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 3, 84-93.

[543] See editor's forward in Karen L. King ed., *Images of the feminine in Gnosticism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), xi-xviii.

[544] Anne McGuire, "Virginity and Subversion: Norea against the powers in the hypostasis of the archons," in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, 239-58; also Ross S. Kraemer, "Response to 'Virginity and Subversion: Norea Against the Powers in the Hypostasis of the Archons' by Anne McGuire," 259-264.

[545] Birger A. Pearson, "Revisiting Norea," in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, 265-275.

[546] Sergey Minov, "Noah and the Flood in Gnosticism," in *Noah and His Book(s)*, ed. Michael E. Stone et. al. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2010), 228-236.

[547] John C. Reeves, "Parascriptural Dimensions of the Tale of Harut wa-Marut," *JAOS* 135.4 (2015), 817-42.

2.1.121), Nhuraita (GR 18), Niriyah (Genizah fragment T.-S. K 1.162),[548] Horaia (*Pan*. 39.5.2–3), Orea (NHC II 4), or Oraia. [549] The earliest reference of Norea as the wife of Noah came from a Christian treatise written by Epiphanius of Salamis (d.403). In *Panarion* 26.1, the section "Against Gnostics," this fourth century bishop of Salamis gave a detail account about Noria (Νωρίαν), but opposed the notion that she was the wife of Noah. Epiphanius argued that Noria was a confusion of Greek legends and superstition to biblical text. Epiphanius saw that the Gnostics intentionally mixed "falsehood and truth by changing the mythological rigmarole and fiction of the Greeks from the Greek superstition's real meaning" (*Pan*. 26.1.3). She was called Noria "in order to create an illusion for their dupes by making their own alteration, with foreign names, of the things the Greeks recited in Greek, so that they too would translate Pyrrha's name by calling her Noria" (*Pan*. 26.1.4). Then Epiphanius explained the etymologies of her name.

> "Now since *nura* (νοῦρα) means 'fire' (πῦρ) in Syriac, not ancient Hebrew—the ancient Hebrew for 'fire' is *ʾesh* (ἠσὰθ)—it follows that they are making an ignorant, naive use of this name (*Pan*. 26.1. 6)."

According to Epiphanius, Norea's name is based on the Aramaic word *nōrâ* (נורא) meaning "fire." This name is derived from the mythological figure of Deucalion's wife Pyrrha (Πύρρα), whose personal name in Greek resembled the word for "fire" (πῦρ). This explanation illustrates

[548] Reimund Leicht read "Another spell to untie. A Good Word comes out from before God. It has broken laws of iron, and laws of copper, and laws of lead, [with which] **Niriyah, Noah's bride, brought [sin/corruption]**" (**איתת ניריה בלת נח חובת [ ]**שריא אחרנא מימר טוב נפיק מן קדם אלהא הוא הוא תבר חוקי פרזלא וחוקי נחשא וחוקי אברא דבה). See Reimund Leicht, "Gnostic Myth in Jewish Garb: Niriyah (Norea), Noah's Bride, " *JJS* LI.1 (2000), 133-40 (134).

[549] Detailed discussion in Bentley Layton, "The Hypostasis of the Archons, or The Reality of the Rulers," *HTR*, 67:4 (1974): 368-72; also Stichel, *Die Namen Noes, seines Bruders und seiner Frau*, 55-70.

why Norea's name associated with "fire". However, Epiphanius argued that "Noah's wife was neither Greeks' Pyrrha nor Gnostics' mythical Noria, but Barthenos" (*Pan*. 26.1. 6).[550] In the next section, Epiphanius gave a detailed account why Noria, the gnostic wife of Noah, was forbidden by her husband from entering the ark, though she often wanted to:

> (1.7) …The archon who made the world, they say, wanted to destroy her in the flood with all the rest. (1.8) **But they say that she sat down in the ark and burned it a first and a second time, and a third. And this is why the building of Noah's own ark took many years—it was burned many times by Noria** (Νωρία)**.** (1.9) For Noah was obedient to the archon, they say, but Noria revealed the powers on high and Barbelo the scion of the powers, who was the archon's opponent as the other powers are. And she let it be known that what has been stolen from the Mother on high by the archon who made the world, and by the other gods, demons and angels with him, must be gathered from the power in bodies, through the male and female emissions. (*Pan*. 26.1.7-9)

Epiphanius knew a book attributed to Noria, in which he described her as an unruly wife of Noah in the Gnostic account. Noria caused a significant deferral of the divine salvation plan by

[550] According to Epiphanius *Panarion* 26.1, the name of Noah's wife was neither Pyrrha from Greek mythology nor the gnostic Noria, but Barthenos (Βαρθενῶς). Her name probably meant the daughter of Enosh (בת–אנוש), one of the progenies from the Sethite genealogy (Gen 5:9-10). Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that Epiphanius mistakenly attributed the name of Noah's mother Betenos in *Jub*. 4:28 as Noah's wife. Other proposals attempted to connect this name with other origins. For instance, Stroumsa suggested that Barthenos (i.e. ba(r)teno in Aramaic or Syriac) is connected to the original form of the gnostic Barbelo without further explanation. Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 62. Utley, on the other hand, connected Barthenos with Parthenos. Utley "The One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife," 434 fn. 3.

acting against the advice that the archons, who had instructed Noah to build the ark. When Noah refused to let her on the ark, Noria burned it down three times in revenge. This act caused a significant delay in the construction of the ark. As the traitor of Gnosis, Noria claimed to have come from higher powers than the archons who created the world, whose chief representative was her dutiful husband Noah. In another account "of the Sethians" in *Pan*. 39.5.2-3, Epiphanius mentions a similar name "Horaia" (Ὡραία "pleasing, beautiful") as Seth's wife.[551] Philastrius (also Philaster or Filaster), the fourth century bishop of Brescia, highlighted that the Gnostics venerated Barbelo and Nora in *Catalogue of Heresies* (*Isti Barbelo uenerantur et Noram Videamus et Nicolaus Antiochenus*). According to Philastrius, this pagan religion was led by Nicholas of Antioch (*Div. Here.* 1.33.3). The identity of Noria as an unruly wife of Noah was more equivocal than Epiphanius suggested. Before Epiphanius, the second-century Greek Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons had already mentioned a woman named Norea as the sister-wife of Seth in his book *Adversus Haereses* (*Haer.*). According to Irenaeus, the Sethian Ophites considered Seth and Norea the ancestors of all mankind (*Haer*. 1.30.9). The fact that Norea was the sister-wife of Seth suggests that she came from the Sethite genealogy and was portrayed as a blessed figure because of her genealogy and her marriage.

The discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices (NHC) has broadened our understanding of Norea, as Norea's name is found in a few manuscripts from the NHC: the *Nature of the Rulers* (NHC II 4), *The Thought of Norea* (NHC IX 2),[552] and *On the Origin of the World* (NHC II 5).

[551] Discussion of the sources of this name, see Manolis Papoutsakis, "Ostriches into Sirens: Towards an Understanding of a Septuagint Crux," *Journal of Jewish Studies* LV.1 (2004): 25 fn.3.

[552] See introduction and translation of NHC IX 2 in James M. Robinson, *The Coptic Gnostic Library. A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, vol. v (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 87-99.

The *Nature of the Rulers* (NHC II 4) is the most important Gnostic work about Norea and her relation to the biblical flood narrative. It is a short document with 384 lines dated to the third century CE. This Coptic Gnostic document is an exegesis of Genesis 1-6 and expresses the Gnostic mythology of the divine creators of the cosmos and humanity. It appears to be a compilation from two or three sources, with editorial expansion by a Christian Gnostic.[553] The work begins with an introduction of two spiritual powers: the spirit of the power of truth and the authorities of the darkness represented by the chief spirit of the blind, Samael. After the creation of Adam and Eve and Cain's killing of his brother, the couple bore Seth and his younger sister Norea. Norea (also written as Orea) appears as the protagonist in the second section of the work. After Eve bore Norea, she proclaimed, "He has begotten for [me a] virgin (παραθένος) as an assistance [for] many generations of mankind, the virgin whom the forces did not defile" (NHC II 91.35-92.2). When humanity began to "multiply and improve" (NHC II 92.3), the rulers decided to cause a deluge and obliterate all living creatures. The ruler of the forces told Noah to build an ark and asked him and his children to hide in it, together with animals (NHC II 92.9-14). Then Norea came to Noah wanting to board the ark. After being denied the access, Norea blew upon the ark and caused it to consume by fire. Noah again made the ark for a second time (NHC II 92.9-18). After that, the rulers intervened and intended to rape her, just like they did to her mother Eve (NHC II 92.18-23). Norea, however, put up a powerful defense by arguing with them that they were confusing sexual knowledge with spiritual knowledge. Norea challenged them that they never "knew" her mother Eve, because Eve could only been "known" in a spiritual way (NHC II 92.23-25). She also proclaimed the superiority of her origins, "I am not your descendant; rather, it is from the world

[553] Discussion on this issue see Roger A. Bullard, *The Hypostasis of the Archons: The Coptic Text with Translation and Commentary* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1970), 3.

above that I come" *(*NHC II 92.25-27). Recognizing her own need for spiritual understanding, Norea then pleaded for help from "the God of the Entirety" (NHC II 92.32–93.2). The great angel Eleleth, a personification of spiritual sagacity, stood in the presence of Norea. Eleleth appeared and frightened the evil forces away. The narrative abruptly changed into the first-person account. Norea began to speak of what Eleleth had revealed to her. However, her name suddenly disappeared, and she was now known as Sophia, who is also called Pistis. Eleleth revealed Sophia's (Norea's) origin as a child of the spirit, and that she was superior to the archons and their universe. Moreover, Eleleth assured her descendants that they would be authentic knowers of the truth (NHC II 93.23-32; 96.19-31). Sabaoth, the son of Samael, repented after seeing what the great angel Eleleth's assurance of Sophia's supreme status. He sang praises to Sophia and her daughter Zoe (Life). Sophia brought him up from the forces of chaos, and established Sabaoth to charge the seventh heaven.

While both *Panarion* and the *Nature of the Rulers* are similar in the overarching plot regarding Norea setting fire to the ark after being refused by Noah, there are significant differences in their depiction of Norea's role. First, unlike Epiphanius's explanation of the gnostic account, which describes Norea as a rebellious wife who set the ark on fire multiple times, thus delaying the divine salvation plan, the extant source in Nag Hammadi does not mention Norea as Noah's wife. Instead, Norea, the younger sister of Seth, is considered a blessed figure for humanity because of her wisdom, compassion, and strength.[554] Earlier in Eve's proclamation (NHC II 92.3), Eve highlights Norea's pure origin, which the forces did not defile. She also predicts Norea's mission in the world to assist spiritual humanity. The extant source also does not mention the

[554] See also Birger A. Pearson, "The Figure of Norea in Gnostic Literature," 86.

relationship between Norea and Noah, nor does it mention her assistance in the building of the ark. Second, Epiphanius' gnostic account describes the ruler who instructed Noah to build the ark as a figure similar to the biblical God, who decided to destroy the world by a flood because of human sin. Noah's obedience to the archon was thus considered a righteous act. The NHC II 4 account, however, begins the narrative with two spiritual forces: Noah listening to the ruler to build the ark is considered a delusion by the unrighteous spiritual power. The ill intensions of the rulers become clear after Norea burns down the ark, as they intend to rape her, just as they defiled her mother Eve. Norea, however, is not threatened by the prospect of being raped by the rulers. Her greatest fear is that she will be separated from the pleroma, the fullness of the divine, which she belonged to. She then cries out to the great angel Eleleth for help. Third, Epiphanius' gnostic account portrays Norea's burning of the ark three time as an intervention to the divine salvation plan that caused a serious delay to the renewal of the world. In the NHC II 4 account, Norea's burning of the ark symbolizes the eschatological promise of liberation. It was not an act of revenge. Norea's refusal to submit to the evil rulers who intended to rape her suggests that true salvation comes from seeking spiritual truth, rather than submitting to the material world.[555] Norea revealed the ultimate spiritual truth of Christianity to the world. The positive portrayal of Norea becomes more noticeable in another short gnostic hymnal prose from Nag Hammadi, known as *The Thought of Norea* (NHC IX 2). This fifty-two- line poetic composition presents an ode and an expanded form of Norea's plea to the Father of All for deliverance from the power of the archons. This plea is reminiscent of Norea's (Sophia's) first-person account to the divine hierarchy in the latter part of

[555] According to Layton, the forces/armies are the figure Sabaoth. Sabaoth works against the Evil plan of the chief ruler, but in choosing Noah as his instrument, Sabaoth, like Noah, fails to recognize that only Nore-Orea offers to mankind the hope of salvation. Sabaoth thus occupied a moral and cognitive position halfway between evil and good,. Bentley Layton, "The Hypostasis of the Archons Part II," *HTR* 69 (1976), 62, n.99; Michael A. Williams, "Variety in Gnostic Perspectives on Gender," in *Images of the feminine in Gnosticism*, 11.

The Nature of the Rulers.[556] The third text, *On the Origin of the World* (NHC II 5), does not portray Norea as protagonist. This gnostic treatise, however, mentions the *First Book of Noraia* (ϩN̄ ⲧⲯⲟⲣⲡ ⲛ̄ⲃⲓⲃⲗⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲛⲱⲣⲁⲓⲁ) and an account of Oraia in the section regarding the seven heavens of chaos. This manuscript confirms Epiphanius' claim that a book ascribed to this figure circulated among the Gnostics (*Pan.* 26.1.3-9). It remains unclear whether *The Nature of the Rulers* or *The Thought of Norea* is related to the *First Book of Noraia.* The Mandaean Ginza Rabba manuscript, like the NHC, also portrays Norea in a positive light.[557] The Mandaeans were a gnostic sect from the southwestern Mesopotamian regions around the second century CE.[558] The Ginza Rabba (GR) is a compilation of various oral teachings and written texts, which includes literature on a wide variety of topics, such as liturgy and hymns, theological texts, didactic texts, religious and secular poetry.[559] Noah's wife, Nuraita (נוראיתא),[560] is mentioned in the second book of the Mandaean history of creation. This manuscript is a fusion between four ages of the world history and the biblical creation narrative. Adam and Eve were both the first Mandaeans and the ancestors of all humanity. Nu (Noah) and Nuraita appeared in the third age:

[556] On discussion of Sophia in two gnostic writings, the Apocryphon of John and the Letter of Peter to Philip, see Gerard. P. Luttikhuizen, "Gnostic Interpreters (Gnostic Revisions of Genesis Stories), Chapter I" in EPRINTS-BOOK-TITLE (Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Groningen, 2005), 1-4.

[557] Edmondo Lupieri, "The Mandaeans and the Myth of Their Origins," 127; M. Lidzbarski trans., *Ginza: Der Schatz Oder Das Grosse Buch der Mandaer* (Leipzig: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1925), 46.

[558] Background of Mandaean Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley, *The Mandaeans: Ancient Texts and Modern People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3-4.

[559] Charles G. Häberl, introduction to the new edition in *The Great Treasure or Great Book, commonly called "The Book of Adam," the Mandaeans' Work of Highest Authority*, by J. Heinrich Petermann (Piscataway, NJ.: Gorgias Press, 2007).

[560] The נורroot with the feminine emphatic form ta. Pearson, "The Figure of Norea in Gnostic Literature," 93.

> When twenty-five ages (generations) pass, the world will be destroyed by water. Mankind will be separated from their bodies through a separation caused by water. For it has been written down for that age that the bodies have to die by water and the souls ascend to the light, **except for Nu, the man, and Nuraita, his wife, and Sum (Shem), Iam (Ham), and Iapit (Japheth), the sons of Nu, who will be saved from death by water. From them the world again has to be reawakened**. (*GR* 2.1.121).

Like the biblical wife of Noah, Nuraita (also spelled Nuraitha or Nhuraita) is perceived as a blessed figure who survived the flood together with her family members. The same name Nuraita appears in the eighteenth book as the wife of Sum (Shem),[561] and in the sixth book as the wife of Dinanukt, the Utnapishtim-like figure in Gilgamesh.[562] In the *Acts of Archelaus,* an anti-Manichaean polemical text composed in Greek in the fourth century, Nuraita is described as "a beautiful (ὡραία) and well-dressed virgin, of great elegance," who opposes the evil archons (Acta Archelai 9.1).[563] Some understood this name as a form of Manichaean personal name "Orea" (*Acta Archelai* 9) and connected it with Uraeus, the fire-breathing snake of Egyptian mythology. The positive image of Norea captured the attention of various scholars. Pearson argued that the Semitic etymology of Norea's name is derived from the biblical Naamah (נערה "pleasing, lovely"),[564] the

[561] *GR* 18 contained the chronology of the world: "Šum, son of Nu, and Nuraita his wife, of this masiqta (lit. ceremony of the death), a forgiver of sins may there be for them." Edmundo Lupieri, *The Mandaeans The Last Gnostics* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 239.

[562] Both Lidzbarski and Nasoraia suggested that Dinaukht was reminiscent of the Babylonian Noah, Utnapistim. See Lidzbarski trans., *Ginza: Der Schatz Oder Das Grosse Buch der Mandaer*, 46, Brikha H.S. Nasoraia, *The Mandaean Rivers Scroll (Diwan Nahrawatha): An Analysis* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2022), 81 fn.156, and Pearson, "The Figure of Norea in Gnostic Literature," 86-87.

[563] Minov, *Noah and His Book*, 234-235

[564] Pearson, "The Figure of Norea in Gnostic Literature," 92.

sister of Tubal-Cain (Gen 4:22), whom certain rabbinic sources identified as Noah's wife. According to Pearson, one of her names in Greek, Horaia (Ὡραία as "pleasing, beautiful"), was equivalent to the Hebrew meaning of her name. From this name the mixed form Norea (Νωρία) subsequently derived. The change of her name was appropriated in Greek-speaking Jewish communities, as Ὡραία was attested as a personal name amongst the Jews of the Diaspore.[565] Rabbinic exegetical traditions often related Naamah to the "daughters of men" in Gen 6:1-4, in which this female protagonist attracted the amorous attentions of angelic beings.[566] The Gnostics later picked up this tradition and reinterpreted it in a typically gnostic way, but they did not elaborate on how this reinterpretation took place.

In light of Pearson's research, Guy G. Stroumsa (1984) argued that the overarching narrative of Norea in NHC II 4 and certain motifs resemble the Midrash of Shemhazai and Azael. [567] Stroumsa found NHC II 4 to be substantiating evidence of Pearson's proposal of the connection between Norea and Naamah. Norea, Eve's unblemished daughter, was targeted by the evil ruler for defilement, just as her mother had been. Norea thus called the holy angel Eleleth for help. In the midrash, the fallen angel Shemhazai was attracted to a certain maiden and he tried to seduce her. The maiden pronounced the Tetragrammaton, which Shemhazai had revealed to her, and she ascended to heaven, whereupon God turned her into a star. The maiden was named Esterah or Istahar.[568] Moreover, in Jub. 4:11, Seth's sister is called Azura; in *Bib. Ant.* she is called Noaba.

[565] Pearson showed that in *CIJ* ed. Frey. no.1509, an epitaph of a girl named Ὡραία. Ibid.

[566] Pearson, "The Figure of Norea in Gnostic Literature,"91.

[567] Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 56-58.

[568] See the discussion of manuscripts and spelling difference in four extant mss. of Esterah/Istahar: אסתירא, אסטירה, איסטהר, איסטירה in J. T. Milik ed., *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4*, with the collaboration of Matthew Black (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 323.

Stroumsa argued that this name might have undergone a phonetic change from Noaba to Noama/Naama. In the *Death of Adam*, Seth's sister was called Esterah. Stroumsa argues that the similarities between the early Jewish Esterah/Ishtar, the rabbinic Naamah, and the gnostic Norea are not coincidence. He points out that they all share the same cosmological structure and are all identified as Seth's sister.[569] Stroumsa summarized various identities of Naamah in the Jewish traditions: She was Noah's Cainite wife, Noah's pure/Sethite wife, Seth's sister, or Seth's sister-wife. The various names and identities connecting Norea and Naamah reveal an ambivalent attitude toward this female figure. One major struggle is to consider the Cainite Naamah as Noah's wife because of the presumption that Noah's genealogy should have been passed down through pure seeds in the renewed human history after the flood.[570] In a more recent discussion of women's involvement in Hekhalot rituals, Rebecca Lesses (2013) cited the Midrash of Shemhazai and Azael as an example and argued for innocent Esterah who neither attempted to seduce the angels to sin nor gave in to Shemhazai's enticement.[571] Instead, Esterah insisted that Shemhazai teach her the divine name that he recited when he wanted to ascend to heaven. Esterah recited it immediately to escape from him. Her act was eventually rewarded for her refusal to sin, when God placed her among the Pleiades as an example of good behavior.[572]

Manolis Papoutsakis (2004) traced how early interpretations of Naamah's musical talent transformed her into a seductive siren. He showed that three Aramaic versions of Gen 4:22

[569] Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 56 fn.84.

[570] Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 58-59.

[571] Rebecca Lesses, "Women and Gender in the Hekhalot Literature," in *Hekhalot Literature in Context. Between Byzantium and Babylonia*, ed. Raʿanan Boustan, Martha Himmelfarb, and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 302-03.

[572] On the discussion of narrative versions that are close to Esterah in the Midrash of Shemhazai and Azael in Ṭabari's commentary on Q 2:102, see Lesses, "Women and Gender in the Hekhalot Literature," 305-08.

expanded the roles of Naamah as the mistress (מרת in *Tg. Ps.-J.*), the creator (בריא in *Fr.-Tg.*), and the inventor (בדיה in *Neof.*) of *qinin* (קינין "melody") and songs.[573] Papoutsakis argued that Klein and Sokoloff imposed the connotation of the Hebrew cognate *qynyn* קינין ("dirge") to the more neutral meaning of *qinin* "melody" in Aramaic. The Targumim's interpretation of *qinin* ("melody") as an alluring or sweet song lends credence to the theory that Naamah was involved in the enticement of "the sons of God."[574] Papoutsakis thus proposed that the Aramaic versions consciously ascribed Naamah's qualities to the Greek σειρῆνες "sirens," the Homeric songstresses who sat in a meadow and lured passing sailors to their death with their sweet song (Odyssey XII).[575] In addition, the Greek word σειρῆνες "sirens" was translated in six LXX passages (Isa 13:21, 34:13, 43:20; Job 30:29; Jer 27(50):39, and Mic 1:8).[576] This LXX translation appears as a construct chain *bĕnôt yaʿănâ* (בנות יענה "ostriches") in the MT from the above passages. The Hebrew word *yʿnh* (יענה) "ostrich" corresponds to the Aramaic term *nʿmʾ* (נעמא) for "ostrich," which is a homonym to the name of Tubal-Cain's sister (Gen 4:22; cf. נעמא in *Tg. Ps.-J.*).[577] Naamah the Siren was subsequently associated with ostriches by means of paronomasia, i.e. an intentional word play associating Naamah in Genesis with the Aramaic word for ostrich.[578] Furthermore, the co-existence of the Hebrew term *bĕnôt yaʿănâ* (בנות יענה "ostriches") and *lîlît* (לילית "Lilith," a *hapax legomenon* in Isa 34:13-14) strengthened the pair between Naamah and Lilith.[579] This is based on the LXX translation of the Hebrew word *lîlît* (לילית "Lilith") as ὀνοκένταυροι, a compound of ὄνος ("ass") and κενταυρος ("centaur") denoting "hybrid

[573] Papoutsakis, "Ostriches into Sirens," 27-28.
[574] Papoutsakis, "Ostriches into Sirens," 29.
[575] See discussion in Papoutsakis, "Ostriches into Sirens," 28-29.
[576] Papoutsakis, "Ostriches into Sirens," 29.
[577] See discussion in Papoutsakis, "Ostriches into Sirens," 30-32.
[578] Papoutsakis, "Ostriches into Sirens," 31.
[579] See discussion in Papoutsakis, "Ostriches into Sirens," 32-34.

creatures."[580] As half-bird and half-woman, these hybrid creatures could have prompted similar notions about Lilith, who is often seen as an apposite rendering of לילית *lîlît* (לילית "Lilith") to Naamah the Siren, not only in function but also in bodily form. In 2 Baruch 10:8, the plural form Liliths and Sirens are summoned together: "I will summon the Sirens (*syryns*) from the sea; And you, Liliths (*llytʾ*), come from the desert.[581] Another parallel is found in *Zohar* 1:19b, the medieval compilation of earlier tradition. In this passage, the roaring Naamah emerges from the sea and seduces men. This passage is reminiscent of the great sea monsters God created, namely the demonic couple Samael and Lilith.[582]

John C. Reeves (2005) sifted through various Islamic exegetical traditions to find the structural and contextual motifs of Hārūt and Mārūt (Q 2:102) and its relation to the midrash of Shemhazi and Azael. Among the ten exemplars of this tale,[583] Five of which (Mujāhid, ʿAlī, al-Suddī, al-Maqdisī, and al-Thaʿlabī) contain motifs of the angels who attempted to seduce a woman. This woman used the name or words the angel taught her to ascend to heaven.[584] All these versions attributed the downfall of the angels to their overwhelming infatuation with a beautiful woman Zuhara, literally "shining star," or "Venus."[585] The woman was virtuous and desperate to evade their attention. She managed to hoodwink the enamored angels to disclose her the mechanism—the correct articulation of the ineffable or most powerful name of god —by which she escaped

[580] Papoutsakis, "Ostriches into Sirens," 32 fn.29.

[581] Papoutsakis, "Ostriches into Sirens," 33; Kugel highlights that the Syriac plural form "Liliths" in 2 Baruch 10:8 is apparently in keeping with the plural form in the LXX of Isa 34:14 and 1QIsa, which is not reflected in the MT. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible*, 114.

[582] See discussion in Matt ed., *Zohar* 1:13a and 1:19b, esp. 91, 148-150.

[583] The ten exemplars of the "Tale of Hārūt wa Mārūt" include Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, Mujāhid, Ibn ʿUmar, Ibn ʿAbbās, ʿAlī, al-Suddī, Rabīʿ, al-Maqdisī, al-Thaʿlabī, and Kisāʾī.

[584] John C. Reeves, "Parascriptural Dimensions of the Tale of Harut wa-Marut," *JAOS* 135.4 (2015), 823-824.

[585] Reeves, "Parascriptural Dimensions of the Tale of Harut wa-Marut," 826.

from their clutches. This very means was adopted by Hārūt and Mārūt to reascend to heavenly abode every evening after their daily labor. According to Reeves, these motifs are reflexes of the disgraced heavenly watchers Shemhazi and Azael that can be detected both in the Bible and in the Qurʾan.[586] In addition, Reeves compared the identities of the female protagonist, Norea, in various Jewish and Christian materials.[587] Reeves proposed that the Greek Norea/Noraia, Aramaic Nīrya (Nūrya?), and Mandaic Nhūraitā were transliterated reflexes of the "luminous" or astral female character, which was found in older mythological narratives the Islamic "tale of Hārūt and Mārūt" and the Jewish "midrash of Shemhazai and Azael." Each of these names could have been tied to a learned word play on the middle weak Semitic stem that yielded the Aramaic words for "light" *nhwrʾ* (נהורא) and "fire" *nwrʾ* (נורא) and their incandescent and/or combustible qualities were prominently displayed in the varying plotlines of the story.[588] Moreover, in the Armenian *Death of Adam*,[589] Seth's sister whose name Estʿera was also related to the "star" imagery (or the notions of "brightness, combustibility") which constituted the central motif of this overarching legend.[590]

The above discussion shows that the gnostic Norea is consistently presented as a blessed figure in the *Nature of the Rulers*, *the Thought of Norea*, the Mandaean Nhuraita, and the Manichean Nuraita according to the *Acts of Archelaus*, regardless of her connection to Noah. The positive image of Norea in extant gnostic sources contrasts sharply with Epiphanius's gnostic

[586] Reeves, "Parascriptural Dimensions of the Tale of Harut wa-Marut," 827-28.

[587] Reeves, "Parascriptural Dimensions of the Tale of Harut wa-Marut," 834-39.

[588] Reeves, "Parascriptural Dimensions of the Tale of Harut wa-Marut," 839.

[589] On the discussion of the mixed traditions identified in the *Death of Adam*, see Michael Stone, "The Death of Adam: An Armenian Adam Book," *HTR* 59.3 (1966), 283-291.

[590] Reeves, "Parascriptural Dimensions of the Tale of Harut wa-Marut," 839.

account, which portrays her as a spiteful figure and a symbol of idolatry worship.[591] In the study of women in early Christianity, various scholars have noted that heretical women were often used as literary devices for rhetorical constructions of orthodox and heretical identities.[592] Epiphanius solidly opposed to women in positions of authority in the church, he believed that women were weak-willed.[593] It seems clear that Epiphanius mistakenly called Barthenos as Noah's wife, without an explanation of its source.[594] He also imprecisely presented the gnostic Norea as a heretical woman who set fire to Noah's ark with an ill-intention instead of preventing a universal disaster for all human beings. In the discussion of female imagery in the gnostic texts, Anne McGuire (1998) demonstrated that the mythological figures of Norea and the archons in the *Nature of the Rulers* are important gender themes to exemplify confrontation and subversion.[595] McGuire also showed how Norea's confrontation with the world ruler provides a pattern for the subversion of (male) archon power, making her an influential figure who became an empowering model for human liberation.

Christian Traditions (Haykal)

> Of all the children of Seth only Methuselah, Lamech and Noah, those three patriarchs, remained upon the glorious mountain, for the rest had turned away

[591] Reeves proposed that Epiphanius has reversed the allegiances, perhaps in an attempt to harmonize the divergent profiles of the Norea entity. Reeves, "Parascriptural Dimensions of the Tale of Harut wa-Marut," 835.

[592] See the seminal article by Virginia Burrus, The "Heretical Woman as Symbol in Alexander, Athanasius, Epiphanius and Jerome" *Harvard Theological Review* 84 (1991), 229-248.

[593] Bonnie G. Smith, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 448.

[594] See also Margaret Barker, *The Mother of the Lord, Volume: The Lady in the Temple* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012), 305-06.

[595] McGuire, "Virginity and Subversion," 239-258.

> towards the camp of the children of Cain. When Noah saw that sin had waxed great in his generation he kept himself in celibacy for 500 years. Then God spoke to him and said: "**Take for yourself as wife Haykal, the daughter of Namos daughter of Enoch, Methuselahs brother** (*Cave* 14:1-3).[596]

The Syriac *Cave of Treasures* named Noah's wife Haykal (Hykl),[597] which literally means "palace, temple."[598] Like Luluwa, Hykl, is found in the Arabic *Book of the Roles* (*Kitab al-Magāll*).[599] In this work, she is the daughter of Abaraz, one of the children of the family of Enosh.[600] Both writings assign Noah's wife (Haykal/Hykl) to the Sethite's lineage. The *Cave* is likely another response to the controversies surrounding Naamah, who comes from the impure Cainite genealogy proposed in the rabbinic tradition, other than the *Sefer Ha-Yashar*. The different parentage concerning Haykal in these translations is probably an attempt to avoid the age gap issues between Haykal and Noah, as there are three generations between Haykal as the daughter of Enosh (Gen 5:9-10). Assigning Haykal as the granddaughter of Enoch (Gen 5:23-26) further legitimizes her, not only narrowing the age gap between her and Noah as his wife, but also her legitimate role to pass down pure seed and to avoid the accusation of an incestuous marriage.

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[596] Toepel, "The Cave of Treasures," 550; see also Budge, *Book of the Cave of Treasures*, 23.

[597] On its manuscripts and versions, see Toepel, "The Cave of Treasures," 531-34.

[598] J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 103; M. Jastrow *Sefer Millim*, 345.

[599] Other spelling variants include Haical, Haicala, Haikal, Hancel, Haykêl, and Haykol found in Utley, "The One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife," 431 no.34-39. Discussion of this name related to the Islamic traditions. See Ilan, "Biblical Women's Names in the Apocryphal Traditions," 18 fn. 61.

[600] S. C. Malan *The Book of Adam and Eve: also called The conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan : a book of the early Eastern Church, translated from the Ethiopic, with notes from the Kufale, Talmud, Midrashim, and other Eastern works* (London: Williams and Norgate), 143; August Dillman, *Das Christliche Adambuch des Morgenlandes* (Göttingen: Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1853), 98.

Islamic Traditions

Similar to the Bible, Noah's wife is not mentioned by name in the Qurʾan. However, both Noah's wife and Lot's wife are deemed prototypes of disbelievers in Q 66.10. At-Taḥrīm, literally "banning," or "prohibition," is the sixty-sixth surah of the Qurʾan. Q 66:1-5 deal with a specific crisis in the Prophet Muhammad's household. Q 66:6-7 speak of the certainty of hell, a warning to the believers and a divinely ordained requital for the unbelievers. Q 66:8 calls on the believers to repent so that God will forgive their bad deeds and admit them to paradise on the day when the Prophet and those who believe will not be humiliated. Q 66:9 says the Prophet stands steadfast against unbelievers and hypocrites. The wives of Noah and Lot appear in 66:10 as examples of disbelief being the consorts of righteous prophets:

> Allah cites an example for those who disbelieve: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot, who were (respectively) under two of our righteous servants, yet they (the husbands) were betrayed by them (the wives) so that they (the husbands) were of no avail to them (the wives) against Allah and it was said, "Enter the fire along with those who enter!"

This surah does not explain what the two wives have done to be regarded as disbelievers. Both prophets were considered righteous servants of God and they could not help them in the final reckoning before God. The wives were eventually punished to death and became the "lesson of warning."[601] Their examples as disbelievers are followed by two examples of those who believe:

[601] Stowasser, *Women in the Qurʾan,* 39-40

the wife of Pharaoh and Mary (Q 66:10-12).[602] Mary's devout obedience was invoked elsewhere as paragon of faith, following the example of the wife of Pharaoh as another believing woman, both of which contrast to the wives of Noah and Lot as unbelieving women in Q 66.[603] While Q.66:10 does not indicate how Noah's wife died, later interpretations suggested that she died during the flood. Amina Wadud (1999) argued that the Qurʾan did not portray the women in this surah as universal "examples." They represented the non-gender-specific examples to distinguish between "those who believe" and "those who disbelieve." In this regard, it was an individual responsibility towards one's salvation, regardless of gender. No one could attain salvation because of an affiliation with another who strived for good—no matter how intimate they were.[604] Georgina L. Jardim (2014) argued that women in Q66 were examples of the larger narrative about the qurʾanic depiction of women in the mujādilah, "the pleading woman" or "she who disputed," in Q58 as examples of belief or unbelief/rejection:[605]

> Q66 presents examples of righteous conduct by the wife of Pharaoh (66.11) and Mary (66.12), over and against the unrighteous actions of the wives of Noah and Lot (66.10). These are juxtaposed with gender discourse in the adjustment of divorce procedures in Q65 that promote even-handedness and care among partners, which may be viewed against a backdrop of pre-Islamic divorce practices.

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[602] Discussion on Mary above all women in Q 66, see Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qurʾan and Its Biblical Subtext-Routledge* (Routledge Studies in the Qurʾan, 2010), 139-140.

[603] 158 Deconstructing the Qurʾan's Paradigmatic Women

[604] See discussion in Amina Wadud, *Qurʾan and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33-34.

[605] Georgina L. Jardim, *Recovering the Female Voice in Islamic Scripture: Women and Silence* (New York: Routledge 2014), 178

These two wives were unable to be saved by their righteous husbands. They suffered violent deaths, while their husbands saved themselves and their communities, who were deemed righteous. These female examples were not only considered in terms of qurʾanic moral transformation, but they became signifiers of Islamic doctrines and theocratic policy.[606] Jardim argued that the mujādilah in the Qurʾan should be read from a non-confessional point of view as a way to arouse concern about the impact on discrimination on women's lives. Mujādilah should also be deemed as a sign that performed divine justice and authorized women to reiterate the performance in the community.[607]

ʿAmzurah

According to Ṭabarī's *Annales*, Noah married ʿAmzurah,[608] a descendant of Cain:

> When Lamech's son Noah was 500 years old, **he married ʿAmzurah**, the daughter of Barakil b. Mehujael b. Enoch b. Cain b. Adam. She bore him his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They were Noah's children.[609]

We are also told, in some accounts, that Noah's wife was among those who boarded the ark:

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[606] Jardim, *Recovering the Female Voice*, 38-39.

[607] Jardim, *Recovering the Female Voice*, 207.

[608] cf. ʿEmzārā in Jub 4:33 suggested that she was the matriarch of Sarah. Other spelling variants in various *Jubilees* translations: Ĕmzârâ (Eth); Zarah (Arm); ʾmyzrʾ (Syr); ʾmzrʿ (Heb-Toledot Adam; Arb Midrash 68); Mzrʿ (Heb-Damascus manuscript); Mgbyʿ (Heb-Munich manuscript); Amora (Arb-Kisāʾī) in Lipscomb, "A Tradition from the Book of Jubilees in Armenian," 152.

[609] Rosenthal, *The History of al- Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 347 [178].

According to Bishr b. Muʿādh Yazīd b. Zurayʿ-Saʿīd- Qatādah: It was mentioned to us that only **Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives**, a total of eight, were all together in the ark (*Annales I*, 195).[610]

According to al-Qāsim—al-Ḥusayn—Ḥajjāj—Ibn Jurayj: I was told that **Noah carried** along his three sons and three wives of his sons **and his own wife**; the men with their spouses thus numbered eight. The names of his sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham attacked his wife (sexually) in the ark,[611] so Noah prayed that his seed be altered, and **he produced the blacks** (*Annales I*, 196).[612]

The first account basically followed the biblical narrative of Noah going out of the ark with his family (cf. Gen 8:18-19). The second account, however, placed Noah's wife after the three wives of his sons. This arrangement is not found in any biblical narrative.[613] In addition, the second account also relates the act of Ham with his skin color.[614] Another explanation given by Ḥārith further elaborated the skin color of Noah's sons:

According to al-Harith-Ibn Sad-Hisham-his father-Abu Salih -Ibn ʿAbbas: Born to Noah were Shem, whose descendants were reddish-white; **Ham, whose**

[610] Rosenthal, *The History of al- Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 365 [195].

[611] Cf. Prohibition to have intercourse in the ark is mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud. See Sanhedrin 108b; Jack P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood*, 144.

[612] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 365 [196].

[613] Regarding the theological implications of the order boarding and getting out of the ark in rabbinic traditions, see Grypeou and Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity*, 163-64.

[614] A more recent discussion related to skin color and the curse of Ham, see Haroon Bashir, "Black Excellence and the Curse of Ham: Debating Race and Slavery in the Islamic Tradition," *ReOrient* 5.1 (2019): 92-116.

descendants were black with hardly any whiteness; and Japheth, whose descendants were reddish-brown. **Canaan—the one who drowned—was called Yam by the Arabs.** [615] He occurs in the saying: Our paternal uncle Yam—he was balmy. **They all had the same mother** (*Annales I*, 199). [616]

However, Noah's wife is omitted in other accounts without explanation:

He brought in his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives, **as well as six people who believed in him, thus altogether ten individuals, Noah, his sons, and their wives**. Then he brought in the animals, as God had ordered him. His son Yām, who was an unbeliever, remained behind [*Annales I*, 190].[617]

According to Ibn Wakīʿ and al-Ḥasan b. ʿArafah—Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Abī Ghaniyyah—his father—al-Ḥakam, commenting on: "But only a few believed with him," as follows: **Noah, his three sons, and his four daughters-in-law** (*Annales I*, 195).[618]

[615] See discussion in Gordon D. Newby, "The Drowned Son: Midrash and Midrash Making in the Qurʾan and Tafsīr," in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions: Papers Presented at the Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies, Center for Judaic Studies, University of Denver*, ed. Stephen David Ricks (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1986), 19-31.

[616] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 368 [199].

[617] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 360 [190]. Similar account in Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 366 [196].

[618] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 365 [195]; See also discussion in Ilan, "Biblical Women," 20.

> According to al-Ḥārith-ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (b. Abān)-Sufyān-al-Aʿmash, commenting on: "And only a few believed with him," as follows: They were seven: **Noah, three daughters-in-law, and three sons of his** (*Annales I*, 195-96).[619]

Three other accounts state that eighty men boarded the ark, and women were completely excluded (*Annales I*, 195).[620] However, whenever women are mentioned, the three wives of Noah's sons are consistently included in the list, but the wife of Noah is sometimes omitted. In annotation about the different numbers on the ark, William M. Brinner (2002) highlighted that the number of people on the ark range from seven (without counting Noah's wife), or eight (including her), to eighty (supposedly including the pious children of Seth). The absence of Noah's wife in some of the accounts, without an explanation, probably suggests an ambivalent attitude toward this controversial figure in the Islamic interpretive traditions. The depiction of Noah's ark without Noah's wife is not uncommon in Islamicate illustrated miniature.[621]

[619] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 365 [195-96].

[620] Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī. Vol. 1*, 364-65 [195].

[621] Noah's Ark in the David Collection: https://www.davidmus.dk/islamic-art/miniature-paintings/item/256 (accessed on Jun 17, 2023)



Figure 31. The Absence of Noah's Wife. Majma al-tawarikh, Herat, The David Collection 8/2005, early 15th century CE.



Figure 32. The Absence of Noah's Wife. Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Diez A fol. 3), 16th century CE.

Waliyya

Al-Kisāʾī is the first to name Noah's wife Waliyya in his book *Tales of the Prophets* (*Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*).[622] The origin of these names is unclear. According to this narrative, God commanded Gabriel to descend to Noah and gave him the mission of apostleship to his people. Noah went to the people of Cain, who worshipped idols. Noah called them to worship God, but he encountered enormous resistance during this mission. Noah later married the first followers who believed in him:

> It is said that **the first person to believe in him was a woman called Amorah, whom Noah married** and who bore him three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, and three daughters Hasura, Mayshura and Mahbuda. **Then another woman from among his people, called Waliyya bint-Mahwil, believed in him. He married her** and she bore him two sons, Japheth and Canaan; **but she proved a hypocrite and reverted to her old religion**.[623]

The two wives of Noah is a unique source that probably reflects a harmonization of the contrasting images of her found both the Bible and the Qurʾan.[624] In another *Tales of the Prophets* given by al-Rabghūzī (completed in 1310), Lot's two wives are Wāhila and Wāʿila:

[622] Spelling variants of her name include Wahêla, Waîla, Wâ'îla, Wa'ileh, and Walíya. See Utley, "The One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife," 437-38 no. 99-103; H.E. Boeschoten, J. O'Kane eds., *Al-Rabghuzi's the Stories of the prophets: Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ*: *An Eastern Turkish version*, vol. 2, second edition (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 669.

[623] Muḥammad ibn'Abd Allāh al-Kisāʾī, *Tales of the Prophets = Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ*, translated by Wheeler M. Thackston (S.l: Great Books of the Islamic World, 1997), 95.

[624] See also discussion in Stowasser, *Women in the Qurʾan*, 41.

> The prophet Lot was the son of Abraham's paternal uncle. He lived in Jordan in Abraham's time; Abraham lived in Palestine. The distance between the Ruined Cities was a journey of one day and night. **Lot's wife was an unbeliever called Wāhila** (f.56v19-20). [625]
>
> Lot brought a camel. **He had two wives who were named Wāʿila and Wāhila**, and three daughters: Zuʿūla, Arthama and Baqnā. (f.58r7-8)[626]

The *Tale* reveals that the treachery of Noah's wife and Lot's wife was not due to adultery, but rather their lack of respect for Noah:[627]

> Ibn Abbas said: No prophet's wife was treacherous by corruption: **the treachery of Noah's wife was that she told her people he was mad**; the treachery of Lot's wife was that she pointed out the guest.[628]

Ibn Kathir, a fourteenth century Arab historian, exegete, and historian during the Mamluk era in Syria,[629] highlighted the fate of Noah's wife and one of Noah's son who is not mentioned in the Bible:

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[625] Boeschoten and O'Kane eds., *Al-Rabghuzi's the Stories of the prophets*, 119.

[626] Boeschoten and O'Kane eds., *Al-Rabghuzi's the Stories of the prophets*, 121.

[627] Stowasser, *Women in the Qurʾan*, 40.

[628] Kisāʾī, *Tales of the Prophets*, 103.

[629] See Carol Bakhos, "Genesis, the Qurʾan and Islamic Interpretation," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Craig A. Evans, et. al. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 619 fn. 36; also Stowasser, *Women in the Qurʾan*, 144-45 fn.7 and 17.

Noah's wife was not a believer with him, so she did not join him; neither did one of Noah's sons, who was secretly a disbeliever but had pretended faith in front of Noah. Likewise most of the people were disbelievers and did not go on board.

The wife of Noah, who was the mother to his sons Ham, Sam, Yafuth, and Yam (or Kanʿan as the *People of the Book* call him) who was drowned, and Aʾber said they have died before the flood, or that **she has been drowned like the others, for she was one of those whom the word has gone forth because of her disbelief**.[630]

Medieval Plays

Uxor

The contrasting depictions of Noah's wife are attested in four complete surviving Middle English mystery cycles, namely the York cycle,[631] the Chester cycle, the Wakefield or Towneley cycle,[632] and the N-town cycle,[633] between the thirteenth and the sixteenth century.[634] Mystery cycles are collections of short plays, known as pageants, which were performed according to

[630] Ibn Kathīr, *Stories of the Prophets*, translated by Mohammad Hilmi Al-Ahmad, new edition revised and corrected by Sh. Farhat (Beirut: Dar Al-kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2005), 100.

[631] London, British Library, MS. Add. 35290. For a wider comparison between the York play and the Towneley manuscript, see Diana Wyatt, "Arks Crafts and Authorities: Textual and Contextual Evidence for North-Eastern English Noah Plays," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 43 (2013), 48-68.

[632] The Huntington Library, Towneley Cycle, mss HM 1.

[633] The N-Town play manuscript in British Library (MS. Cotton Vespasian D.VIII.): http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Vespasian_D_VIII (Access Jun 16, 2023)

[634] Each cycle is being named for the locality where it was performed. As for the N-Town play, evidence suggests that the cycle was not peculiar to one city or community but traveled from town to town, thus suggested the abbreviation "N."

biblical chronology from the creation, the story of Adam and Eve, to the life of Jesus Christ, and ends with the Last Judgement.[635] The term "mystery" is a play on words. It denotes on the one hand religious truth or rites based on its Latin *mystērium*, and on the other hand occupation as a craft, trade, or a guild such as merchants in Middle English. While the original playwrights of these cycles are much in dispute, all are connected with a Christian festival, the feast of Corpus Christi.[636] In general, these mystery cycles were also called the Corpus Christi cycles, as they were performed during the feast of Corpus Christi in early summer to draw attention to the life of Christ and his redemption for all mankind. These play cycles were derived from liturgical dramas that were based on events of the Bible or the life of a saint dated as early as the tenth century.[637] After Pope Innocent III issued a papal edict forbidding clergy from acting on a public stage in the early thirteenth century, liturgical plays began to be performed outside of church. Organization of these plays had shifted from clergies to professional trade guilds. Traditionally, an individual trade guild such as butchers, fishermen, carpenters took charge of a particular piece of pageant. For instance, shipwrights portrayed the Noah story, bakers presented the Last Supper, the shepherds performed

[635] Important studies on the Towneley plays, see Frank W. Cady, "The Wakefield Group in Towneley," Journal of JEGP English and German Philology 11 (1912) 244-262; Millicent Carey, *The Wakefield Group in the Towneley Cycle. A Study to Determine the Conventional and Original Elements in Four Plays Commonly Attributed to the Wakefield Author* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1930); A.C. Cawley, The Wakefield Pageants in the Towneley Cycle (Manchester, Eng: Manchester University Press, 1958). A more recent Towneley plays edition, see Garrett P. J. Epp ed., *The Towneley Plays* (Kalamazoo, MI.: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2017), 1-20.

[636] Corpus Christi was first proposed by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), in order to celebrate the joy of Eucharist in the real presence of Christ within the bread and wine. The feast was celebrated for the first time in 1247. By 1264 Corpus Christi was added to the religious calendar by order of Pope Urban IV on input of Aquinas. By 1317 its celebration had spread to the whole Roman Catholic Church. This Christian festival was celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, about two months after Easter, mainly in France, Germany, England and Spain. The plays continued after the Reformation until the feast of Corpus Christi was abolished in England in 1548; See Barbara R. Walters, Vincent Corrigan, Peter T. Ricketts, *The Feast of Corpus Christi* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2006), 31-32.

[637] David C. Fowler, *The Bible in Early English Literature*. Fourth Edition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018), 16.

the Gift of the Magi. The purpose of this arrangement was to relate a biblical narrative to a particular profession. These pageants were usually performed by a combination of professionals and amateurs on wagons that were equipped with extravagant theatrical sets. The wagons were paraded through the city streets from one playing station to another during the festival times. The scripts of these pageants were written in vernacular languages in highly elaborate stanzas instead of in traditional Latin that were performed in churches. While the majority of these plays were based on the Bible, other elements from either Christian or folk traditions, or humorous aspects of social life were added to the scripts. The juxtaposition of dramatized daily life issues and religious farce made these play cycles fascinating to both their contemporary and present-day audiences.[638] By the end of the fourteenth and the early fifteenth centuries, mystery cycles became extremely popular in Northern England. Every mystery cycle featured the flood narrative in its own way, but all focused on the protagonists Noah and Uxor, Noah's wife in Latin.[639] Other than the N-town cycle depicting Uxor as a model of obedient Christian woman who followed her husband's decision, the York, Chester, and Wakefield cycles presented Uxor as a rebellious wife and a troublemaker. Not only had Uxor refuse to subordinate to her husband's instructions to board the ark, she also insulted and even physically struck her husband. All three plays show that Uxor was either beaten up or being dragged to the ark by her sons. This humorous, truculent character made Noah's wife a widely known character. Uxor's rebellion eventually became acceptable, at least within the drama.

[638] The genre however, was banned, following the Reformation and the establishment of the Church of England in 1534. They were completely suppressed in 1569.

[639] The York mystery cycle is the most complete cycle which comprises 48 pageants. The Chester cycle contains 24 pageants, the Wakefield cycle has 32, and N-Town plays has 42 pageants.

While Noah's play in the Chester, York, and Towneley cycles shared a large controlling pattern,[640] there are differences in how they depict the confrontations between Uxor and Noah. In particular, Uxor's responses to the drowning of the world can be further differentiated in these plays. The Chester play portrays Uxor a mixed character. Uxor helps Noah to bring timber for the construction of the ark after he tells her about the divine command (lines 65-68). She turns down Noah's first request to board the ark when it is finished (lines 97-101), but helps her husband to bring various kinds of animals to the ark. The Chester play then develops a unique plot about Uxor with her friends, the gossips, who gathered together with a pot of ale (lines 229-30). After the animals are loaded on board, Uxor turns down her husband's request the second time to board the ark, because she hopes to bring all her friends with her. She thinks that if she does not board, her friends might not be dead. Her love for her friends led her to decide not to embark on the ark. Her refusal displeased Noah, who then complains to God about her being crabbed and never meek. After hearing her friends' fear of drowning and having a final drink before the flood comes, Uxor is dragged into ark by her sons. In the Chester play, Uxor is the only character in this dramatized flood narrative to have had daily ties with the people are were soon to be drowned. The close bond between Uxor and her gossiping friends highlights the human relevance to the flood. Through this vernacular religious performance, this mystery flood play heightens the contrasts between doctrinal correctness and human resistance to divine cruelty. Uxor's resistance to submit to both Noah and divine mandate for the sake of other people's lives punctures the theological dilemma.[641] While Uxor's role was supposed to be a subplot, she raised unanswerable questions that related human concerns to divine salvation. Her struggles in the Chester play made her a popular character.

[640] Richard J. Daniels, "Uxor Noah: A Raven or a Dove," *The Chaucer Review* 14:1 (1979): 23-24.

[641] Jane Tolmie, "Mrs Noah and Didactic Abuses," *Early Theatre* 5:1 (2002): 14.

The York play divided the Noah narrative into two pageants: the shipwrights were responsible for the building of the ark, while the fishers and mariners for the flood. The former pageant featured dialogues between God and Noah, while Uxor appeared only in the latter pageant after the ark was loaded with animals. Her motivation for not entering the ark was more complex than that of the Chester Uxor. She appeared to be traumatized by the news of the upcoming global disaster. She worried about the changes that needed to be made, so she asked her husband to try other ways instead of boarding the ark. At the same time, she also showed her anger towards Noah for keeping her in the dark about the ark the whole time when he was building it.[642] She accused him of being absent from home most of the time, going out early and coming home late, and leaving her sitting at home all day (lines 113-26). Similar to the Chester play, Uxor in the York play showed her compassion for those who were soon to be drowned; she lamented losing her friends in the flood (lines 151-52). Noah, however, was unaffected by the deaths around him. Unlike the biblical depiction of Noah as being righteous and blameless in his time (Gen 6:9; also Eze 14:14; Heb 11:7; 2 Pe 2:5), both Chester and York plays brought the audience to focus on the universal flood from the perspectives of the drowned. Uxor's refusal to board in both plays resulted from her anger at Noah being indifferent to all the deaths around him while urging her to focus on her own life over the lives of the others.

[642] See Wilfred Young, "Noah and His Wife: A Note on Three English Miracle Plays," *Hermathena* 90 (1957): 24-25.

The Wakefield play, on the other hand, sets the family strife between Noah and Uxor as the background of the story.[643] Uxor's refusal to board the ark was perhaps the most distinctive feature of all the Noah's play cycles. The couple's marital discord escalated from verbal arguments to physical confrontations. In this play, after Noah received God's instructions for building and loading the ark, he went home to tell his wife all that had happened. However, Uxor confronted to Noah by telling him that the family had no food to eat while he was focused on the ark building (lines 191-98). She accused Noah of being an example of a bad husband (lines 200-16). In order to quiet her, Noah turned to a threat of violence (line 217). She immediately dared him to strike her, and so he did (lines 219-20). Uxor's second rebellion took place when Noah finished the ark and asked his wife to step aboard (lines 289-97). Uxor refused and he finally told her the coming flood (lines 301-13), which frightened her (lines 314-16). However, instead of joining her husband, Uxor decided to sit on a hill and spin (lines 337-43). Noah continued to persuade her to board, but she kept refusing him. After being turned down repeatedly, Noah became frustrated, he threatened to lash her with a whip if she would not enter, but she refused again and so he beat her (lines 378-87). After the fight, the couple reconciled. Uxor eventually embarked on the ark (lines 409-14).

The stubbornness of Noah's wife was peculiar to English drama traditions, in comparison to the medieval French drama *Mistére du Viel Testament* ("*Mystery of the Old Testament*") and earlier English non-dramatic literature.[644] Carey (1930) argued that the image of Noah's wife as a

[643] The Wakefield/Towneley play is usually attributed to the "Wakefield Master," a title assigned to an anonymous playwright of this cycle by the literary historian Gayley. While the identity and dates of the Wakefield Master are unknown, the author's apparent grasp of the biblical scriptures and understanding of his audience's religious convictions suggest that the author was possibly a highly educated cleric, or a friar from a nearby monastery at Woodkirk, four miles north of Wakefield.

[644] Anna Jean Mill, "Noah's Wife Again," *PMLA* 56:3 (1941): 613.

rebellious woman was a gradual development in dramatic sensibility. This rebellious image of her is based on Ṭabarī's reference to Noah's wife, who was an infidel.[645] Katherine Garvin (1934) discussed a possibly early depiction of Noah's wife's stubbornness in an illustration found in the tenth-century *Cædmon Manuscript* Junius XI.[646] Garvin cited an observation by Sir Israel Gollancz regarding an illustration of Noah's ark. "On the (lower) right hand, one of the woman, whom we may assume to be Noah's wife, seems to be unwilling to mount the ladder, and is expostulating with one of the three sons."[647]



Figure 33. Noah's Ark. The Cædmon Manuscript MS. Junius 11, Bodleian Library, ca. 11th century CE.

[645] Millicent Carey, *The Wakefield Group*, 76.

[646] Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Junius 11: https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/d5e3a9fc-abaa-4649-ae48-be207ce8da15/ (accessed on Jun 17, 2023).

[647] Katherine Garvin, "A Note on Noah's Wife," *Modern Language Notes*, 49:2 (1934) :89-90.

Anna J. Mill (1941) illustrated the close association between the devil (*Iblis*) attaching the ass, the last animal entered the ark, and the recalcitrance of Noah's wife in the Islamic tradition.[648] Wilfred Young (1957) suggested that the confrontation between the couple revealed that Noah immediately lost his dignity after God revealed the salvation plan to him.[649] According to Richard J. Daniel (1979), the harmony between Noah and Uxor was greater in the Towneley play than in the Chester and York plays because the Wakefield Master forced Noah to engage in a far more rigorous dialectic between the divine and human.[650] In her study of the affect and the audience of the *Queen Mary Psalter*, Anne Rudloff Stanton (2001) compared Noah's wife in the *Queen Mary Psalter* with Uxor in mystery plays.[651] An fragment of a mystery play at Newcastle-on-Tyne written in the fifteenth century contains an episode regarding the temptation of Noah's wife.[652] The combination of Eve and the Uxor Noah episodes served as an unsubtle warning against the weakness and curiosity of women, who were too easily led astray by the devil. While female characters were crucial in the *Queen Mary Psalter* manuscript, they were often construed either as negative or as positive characters. They were being judged for their curiosity and disobedience, which included the parallels of Eve's downfall and the temptation of Noah's wife, but were honored as mothers.[653] Jane Tolmie (2002) argued that the inclusion of Noah's wife's as resisting voice in these play cycles exposed the realities of the medieval societies.[654] Each of Uxor's response to boarding the ark in the mystery play cycle shifted the audience' attention to a female

[648] Anna Jean Mill, "Noah's Wife Again," 615-616.

[649] Young, "Noah and His Wife," 27.

[650] Daniels, "Uxor Noah," 29.

[651] See Anne Rudloff Stanton, *The Queen Mary Psalter: A Study of Affect and Audience* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 88-90.

[652] Stanton, *The Queen Mary Psalter*, 88.

[653] Stanton, *The Queen Mary Psalter*, 90.

[654] Tolmie, "Mrs Noah and Didactic Abuses," 11.

response to a male exercising his control over the female body. Uxor's resistance represented female confrontations to the foreground issues such as female subjectivity, recognition of female earning power, and domestic violence.[655] In these plays, Noah kept her out of his life and counsels, and his orthodox response did not address those who were being excluded in the divine salvation plan. This is particularly explicit in the York play.[656] In addition, the verbal confrontation between Uxor and Noah revealed that the value of Uxor's labor had been downplayed and regulated by Noah's chastisement of her wayward tongues in the Towneley play.[657] Noah's wife being beaten or dragged onto the ark in York, Chester, and Towneley plays signified the acceptance of physical control to maintain a subordinate social and political status for women.[658] Noah's emphasis on the discipline and obedience of Uxor would have reflected the common state of marital discord of the play's audience. In her study of speech and gender in late medieval English literature and art, Sandy Bardsley (2016) articulated that evil speech given by women was more often highlighted and vehemently presented in comparison to the admonition to men.[659] One of the earliest progenitors of the loud woman character was Uxor in these English mystery play cycles.[660] While early Christian traditions continued to depict Noah's wife as virtuous and humble, European folk legends from the seventh century onwards,[661] and Islamic traditions throughout the Middle Ages associated Noah's wife with the devil. By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, her reluctance

[655] Tolmie, "Mrs Noah and Didactic Abuses," 12-13.

[656] Tolmie, "Mrs Noah and Didactic Abuses," 13.

[657] Tolmie, "Mrs Noah and Didactic Abuses," 15-16, 25-30; cf. Philip Zarrilli, "Destruction to Consecrtion: Covenant in the Chester 'Noah' Play," *Theatre Journal* 31:2 (1979): 207.

[658] Tolmie, "Mrs Noah and Didactic Abuses," 17-20.

[659] Sandy Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues: Speech and Gender in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 47.

[660] See discussion in Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*, 58-64.

[661] Garvin, "A Note on Noah's Wife," 88.

had had evolved into outright rebellion, as evidenced by the illustrations of her in the Ramsey Psalter and *Queen Mary Psalter*, which depict her as a defiant and rebellious figure.[662]

Tytea

During the same period in southern Europe, Giovanni Nanni (1432–1502), better known as Joannes Annius of Viterbo, forged a collection of historical accounts titled *Antiquitatum Variarum Volumina XVII*.[663]. This Italian Dominican friar who was later appointed Sacri Palatii Magister by Alexander VI, claimed to have rediscovered a number of lost works. Annius incorporated seventeen commentaries of various authors discussing the sacred history of the Bible along with his commentaries, and published them in Rome in 1498 by Eucharius Silber. This collection, often known as the *Antiquities* of Annius, presented a new version of world history to readers. Annius amalgamated biblical Noah with classical myths to construct the origin of Etruscan civilization. Throughout his writing, Annius presented himself as a compiler who had lightly edited those lost works. In fact, Annius did not just fabricate a collection of forged ancient texts; he also produced pseudo-history in this medieval compilation.[664] While Annius's *Antiquities* was soon called into questions, even before his death,[665] his work was immediately popular after its first

[662] Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*, 58.

[663] The now called Pseudo-Berosus, Book XV of Annius' De Comentariis Antiquitatum, Annius presented a genealogy that Annius claimed to have come across a Latin translation of the annals of Chaldaean Berosus and a revised Manetho's list of Egyptian pharaohs. See discussion in Frederic Clark, *The First Pagan Historian: the Fortunes of a Fraud from Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 182-3.

[664] Clark, *The First Pagan Historian*, 185.

[665] The fact that it was false, and transparently false to some even in Annius's time, should not have surprised the contemporaries of Voltaire. As D. C. Allen remarked, Annius had told Europeans what they wanted to hear about the past. Don Cameron Allen, *The Legend of Noah: Renaissance Rationalism in Art, Science, and Letters* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), 114; Walter Stephens, "When Pope Noah Ruled the Etruscans: Annius of Viterbo and His Forged 'Antiquities.'" *MLN* 119.1 (2004): 203.

publication. From 1498 until 1612, there were at least eighteen editions of the *Antiquities* in Latin, some with commentaries and some without.[666] Annius's *Antiquities* received even wider acclaim after the French poet and historian Jean Lemaire de Belges (ca.1473-ca.1525) called it the "Deflorations de Berose."[667] This forged historical collection was translated into Italian and French, and was published in Lyon, Paris, Antwerp, Burgos, Basel, and Wittenberg.[668] It stimulated many authors in Europe to use Annius's new perspectives to reimagine their national identities through a global account of origins.

A prominent feature in Annius's *Antiquities* is his frequent citations of Jewish sources. Annius not only cited Hebrew and Aramaic words, but also discussed Hebrew philology in technical details. While nameless primordial women were not Annius's training, his discussions of proper names reflected his philological efforts.[669] By doing this, Annius invoked Jewish authority in his commentary, and at times advertised his close connection with Talmudists, one of whom was named Rabbi Samuel, or "Samuel the Talmudist, and his colleagues." Given the very limited contact between Jews and Christians during the fifteenth century, only a handful of Christians could have mastered the Hebrew language.[670] Even the Christian Hebraists Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522) exhibited great difficulty understanding Talmudic materials, let alone discussing their details. Moreover, the *Antiquities* was published two decades before Daniel

[666] Stephens, "When Pope Noah Ruled the Etruscans," 204

[667] Allen, *The Legend of Noah*, 61.

[668] They were published not only in Italy, but at Lyon, Paris, Antwerp, Burgos, Basel and Wittenberg. Stephens, "When Pope Noah Ruled the Etruscans," 204.

[669] See Anthony Grafton, "Annius of Viterbo as a Student of the Jews: The Sources of His Information," in *Literary Forgery in Early Modern Europe, 1450–1800*, ed. Walter Stephens, Earle A. Havens, and Janet E. Gomez (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), 147-69.

[670] Grafton, "Annius of Viterbo as a Student of the Jews," 158.

Bomberg's first printing of the complete Babylonian Talmud. It is not surprising that Annius's Jewish sources in the *Antiquities* had been called into question. Walter E. Stephens (1979) argued that the names for places with Hebrew origins discussed in *Antiquities* were neither accurate nor Annius's own.[671] In a recent investigation of Annius's *Antiquities*, Anthony Grafton (2018) showed that in several instances Annius revealed that his knowledge of Hebrew proper names had been drawn from Jerome's little book on the interpretations of Hebrew names.[672] In addition, Graften investigated the translations and teaching of the Jewish convert Flavius Mithridates (originally Guglielmo Moncado), the son of a rabbi who later became an adviser and interpreter to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94), an Italian Renaissance philosopher. Graften argued that Flavius Mithridates could have been the inspiration for Annius's shadowy friend Samuel, due to the striking parallels between Mithridates' teachings and Annius's account.[673]

While the authenticity of Annius's *Antiquities* was soon called into question, one of Annius's admirers, Richard Lynche, closely followed Annius's account of Berosus and wrote *An Historical Treatise of the Travels of Noah into Europe* in 1601.[674] Lynche's work began by introducing Noah as the first world patriarch and prince, surnamed Gallus, who was a good giant.[675] Unlike the other heart-hardened giants in Enos, the good giant Noah and his household feared God and had good manners. God instructed him to build an ark to help his family survive

[671] Walter E. Stephens, "Berosus Chaldaeus: Counterfeit and Fictive Editors of the Early Sixteenth Century" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1979), 176–94.

[672] See Grafton, "Annius of Viterbo as a Student of the Jews," 152-55.

[673] See Grafton, "Annius of Viterbo as a Student of the Jews," 159-60.

[674] Utley proposes that Lynche's work is a translation from an Italian version. Utley, "One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife," 448.

[675] Stephens 1984 proposed that this notion might have come from Nicholas of Lyra in his comments on Gen 7:21-23. See further discussions of Noah being a giant in Walter E. Stephens, "'De Historia Gigantum': Theological Anthropology before Rabelais." *Traditio* 40 (1984): 43-89, esp. 81-82.

the flood. Noah brought his wife Tytea (or Titea, Aretia), Sem, Cham, and Japheth, and their wives Pandera, Noela, and Noegla, into the ark. When the waters of the flood subsided, the ark rested on a high hill named Gordicus in Armenia. Noah and his wife Tytea begat thirty children after the flood. They were the giant Tuyscon, Prometheus, Iapetus, Macrus, the sixteen titans, who were all giants; also Cranus, Granaus, Oceanus, and Tipheus. The daughters included Araxa, surnamed the Great, Regina, Pandora, Crana, and Thetis. Noah resided in Armenia and instructed his children theology and sacrificial rites. Noah's descendants later became priests and churchmen of Scythia and Armenia. They built many cities in the name of Noah and his wife Titea to revere them. When the population grew, the patriarch of the new world, Noah, surnamed Janus,[676] appointed his sons to fill the earth. Sem, surnamed Melchisedech, moved to Jerusalem and lived until the time of Abraham. Japheth was allotted Europe. He went with fourteenth rulers of his generation. Cham, Noah's least favorite son due to his participation in magic art, also called Zoroas, and his bad manners, was assigned the other third part of the world. After twenty years, Noah began to divide kingdoms and made his first voyage to Europe to divide the kingdoms of Italy, Spain, France, and Alemania. As the people on earth continued to multiply, Noah commanded his children to erect governments and departments, and set sail on his second voyage with his wife Titea. He disembarked near Rome and walked to found a new city called Vetulonia, later became Etruria and Viterbo. Noah became known in Etruscan as Janus. The old couple was greatly honored by their children in Europe, particularly in Spain.[677] Noah, the good patriarch, died at age nine

[676] This Noah has an identical name with the Roman deity Janus who has many sons and grandsons, giants all of them, swarmed out across Europe and other parts of the world and became the founders of many a nation of city.

[677] Later study shows that his project was funded by Spanish Vidal-Naquet, Pierre, and Janet Lloyd. "Atlantis and the Nations." Critical Inquiry 18, no. 2 (1992): 300–326; Ephraim Nissan, "Revisitng Francis Lee Utley's 1941 Study 'The One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife'." in Oliviu Felecan et.al. ed. *Unconventional Anthroponyms* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 460.

hundred fifty years old. People all over the whole world were in great sorrow, especially Alemanians and Italians, who celebrated his life with the most honorable ceremonies.

Noah's Wife in Images

Noah's wife on Roman Coins

The earliest depiction of Noah's wife can be found in a number of bronze coins from Apamea in Asia Minor (modern Turkey), which are dated to the late second and early third century.[678] These coins were minted under various emperors, including Septimus Severus (r. 193-211), Macrinus (r. 217-218),[679] Alexander Severus (r. 222-235), Gordianus III (r. 238-244), Philip the Arab (r. 244-249),[680] and Trebnianus Gallus (r. 251-253).[681] The obverse side of the coin features the emperor's name and image, which vary with the minting date, but the core features remain constant. On the reverse side of the coins, Noah and his wife are depicted twice. On the

[678] See discussions in Jeffrey Spier ed., *Picturing the Bible: the Earliest Christian Art with Contributions by Mary Charles-Murray* [et al.] (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 171; Joan Aruz, Ronald Wallenfels, *Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 490; Joan Goodnick Westenholz ed., *Images of Inspiration: The Old Testament in Early Christian Art* (Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem, 2000), 44-45; Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Mosaic Pavements: Themes, Issues, and Trends: Selected Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 68-72; Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953- 1968), II 119-120 III fig.700; Sir George Francis Hill, *A Handbook of Greek and Roman Coins* (Macmillan and Company Limited, 1899), 169-171; Estēe Dvorjetski, "The Synagogue-Church at Gerasa in Jordan. A Contribution to the Study of Ancient Synagogues," ZDPV 121 (2005) 2, 156-157; Bailey, *Noah: the Person and the Story*, 70.

[679] See "Catalogue The Gilbert Steinberg Collection of Roman Coins, 16th November 1994," Lot 870, 95: https://www.arsclassicacoins.com/catalogues/the-gilbert-steinberg-collection-of-roman-coins-16th-november-1994/ (Accessed on Jun 17, 2023).

[680] See British Museum Coin: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1885-0606-284 (Accessed on Jun 17, 2023); BMC Greek (Phrygia) / *Catalogue of the Greek coins of Phrygia* 182, 101.

[681] Westenholz ed., *Images of Inspiration*, 45.

right, the couple stand inside the ark, which floats upon the wave.[682] Noah's name, inscribed in Greek as ΝΩΕ (*Nōe*) (Gen 6:14), appears in the middle of the chest-shaped ark.[683] On the top left of the ark, the dove is shown returning from its second expedition with an olive branch in its claws (cf. Gen 8:10-11). On the left side of the coin, Noah and his wife are shown again, standing on the dry land with their hands raised upwards in prayer. Below is written ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ, "of the Apameans." The same composition, with minor variants, appears on a number of similar coins from Apamea. The depiction of two key episodes from the story of the flood on these Roman coins is no coincidence. The Greek epithet for the city Apamea is κιβωτός (*kibōtós*) "box."[684] The very same word is used for the ark in the LXX translation of Gen 6:14. The choice of Noah's ark may have served as a pun on the city's name. Moreover, according to local Jewish traditions,[685] Mount Ararat, the resting place of the ark after the waters of the flood receded, was located in the vicinity of Apamea. This biblical theme thus became both symbolically and economically important to the people of the city.

[682] A similar image showing Noah and his wife together in the ark is found in Bonanno Pisano's 1186 bronze door relief in Monreale cathedral and the mid-fifteenth century *Book of Hours*. See discussion in Andreina Contessa, "Noah's Ark on the Two Mountains of Ararat: The Iconography of the Cycle of Noah in the Ripoll and Roda Bibles," in *Word & Image* 20.4 (2004), 257-70 (262 fig. 8); also Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (MS. Auct. D. inf. 2. 11. f. 59v): https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/c070934c-79ca-426c-a115-aee7d810579e/surfaces/5a029a8b-95cf-417b-a0bf-f1e5590bce3f/ (Accessed on Jun 17, 2023).

[683] See discussion of chest-shaped ark in Shelley Wachsmann, "The Curious Case of Noah's…Box?" *Biblical Archaeology Society* 47.2 (2021), 56-59.

[684] Spier ed., *Picturing the Bible*, 171.

[685] See "The Jewish Community at Apamea" in Paul R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 85-103.



Figure 34. Noah's Wife on Roman Coin. British Museum 1885,0606.284, 3rd century CE.



Figure 35. Noah's Wife on Roman Coin under Macrinus (r. 217-218). The Gilbert Steinberg Collection of Roman Coins, 16th November 1994, 3rd century CE.

Noah's wife on Sarcophagus

Another early image of Noah's wife was found in a sandstone sarcophagus discovered near the Abbey of Saint Matthias, Trier, in 1780. It dated to the early fourth century.[686] The sarcophagus depicts Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, for a total of eight people, standing in the chest-shaped ark. In front of them are the figures of nine creatures, including birds and land animals.[687] A dove is returning with the olive branch. The style and material of the sarcophagus suggest that it was made locally in Gallic, rather than imported from Rome.[688] No other similar sarcophagus is known. The unusual complex composition, which includes all eight individuals of the flood account in Genesis, resonates with 1 Pe 3:20-21, "in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you." The depiction of Noah's ark on a sarcophagus was probably seen as a symbol of redemption and eternal salvation.



Figure 36. Noah's Family in the Ark. Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Trier (1987.20), 4th century CE.

[686] Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier: Sarkophag mit Relief der Arche Noah (1987.20): https://rlp.museum-digital.de/object/5747 (Accessed on Jun 17, 2023)

[687] On the discussion of the animals depicted on the sarcophagus, see J. M. C. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973), 295-6, 403.

[688] Spier, *Picturing the Bible*, 208; also Hachlili, *Ancient Mosaic Pavements*, 70-71.

Noah's Wife Named Phiapphara

Noah's wife Phiapphara (writing variants: Phiapphara / Ph(r)earph(th)ara)[689] appeared in Ælfric of Eynsham's Anglo-Saxon translation of *Heptateuch* (*Cotton Claudius B. IV* fol. 17r).[690] The lower illustration shows Noah and Ham standing on either side of the mainmast, holding a piece of wood with both hands to build the ark. Noah's wife, veiled and inscribed "Phiapphara," is holding a basket with one hand and picking grapes from vines with another. Shem, flanked by Noah, like Phiapphara, is depicted collecting grapes, as are the two persons standing under the vines on both sides of the ark. They are probably Japhet on the right and a daughter-in-law on the left. Other than Noah's wife, the annotator also writes Shem's wife as "Parsia," Ham's wife as "Cataphua," and Japhet's wife as "Fura" in the earlier folio (f.14) of the *Cotton Claudius B. IV*.[691] This Old English text (Kentish) with Latin commentaries and titles was written between the second quarter of the eleventh century and the second half of the twelfth century. Excerpts from Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*, Jerome's translation of Eusebius's *De situ et nominibus locorum Hebraicorum*, and Jerome's *Liber quæstionum hebraicarum in Genesim* were added during the twelvth century.

[689] According to Utley, the names are taken from Josephus, pseudo-Methodius, and others. The the writing variants are due to on the conjectured Greek ancestor of Middle English form. See Utley, "One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife," 435 no. 64-64.

[690] British Library (Cotton MS Claudius B IV): http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Claudius_B_IV (accessed on Jun 17, 2023).

[691] More about theological implications of the flood narrative through Genesis A and the Old English Hexateuch, see Milton McC. Gatch, "Noah's Raven in Genesis A and the Illustrated Old English Hexateuch," Gesta 14:2 (1975): 3-15.



Figure 37. Noah's Wife Phiapphara. Cotton MS Claudius B IV (f. 17r), British Library, 11th-12th century CE.

Noah's wife as Phiapphara was in fact more popularly known as Phuarphara in other sources (also with writing variants: Puafara/ Puaphara / Phuarphara / Phuarfara).[692] The origin of her name is based on the *Historia Scholastica*, [693] a biblical paraphrase written in medieval Latin by Petrus Comestor (d.1178). Also known as the "medieval popular Bible," Comestor drew on biblical and other sources, including the works of classical scholars and church fathers to present a universal history from the medieval European perspective. Since Comestor, Noah's wife Phuarphara was frequently borrowed in later works, which included the mid-fourteenth century

[692] See footnotes in Utley, "One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife," 435-436 no. 67-68 and 70-74.

[693] Petrus Comestor, *Historia Scholastica: Liber Genesis* 33, in Migne ed., *Patrologia Latina* CXCVIII (1855), col. 1084. See also the discussion in Utley, "One Hundred and Three Names of Noah's Wife," 435 fn. 6.

Egerton Genesis (Egerton MS 1894, f.2v and f.3r.).[694] This richly decorated picture book shows various beautifully illustrated cycles from the book of Genesis, from creation to Joseph narrative, with short captions in Ango-Norman French based on Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*.[695] The first one of the flood narrative (f.2v.) shows Noah being commanded to build an ark. On the left is a figure with a nimbus, indicating the divine command to Noah (cf. Gen 6:11-22). Noah is standing in the middle holding an axe. Beside him is his wife, with her name inscribed "Puarphara." Both of them are shown standing together to receive the divine command. Puarphara holds three pegs in her hand, indicating her participation to build the ark with her husband. The illustration on the right shows Noah building of Ark. A young son of Noah is carrying a basket of pegs on his head; Noah, seated beside the partially built ark on trestles, prepares a piece of wood for the ark building.



Figure 38. Noah's Wife Puarphara. Egerton MS 1894 (f.2v), British Library, 14th century CE.

[694] British Library (Egerton MS 1894): http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Egerton_MS_1894 (accessed on Jun 17, 2023).

[695] See also Mary C. Joslin and Carolyn J. Watson, *The Egerton Genesis* (London: British Library, 2001), 40, 43.

The second illustration of Noah's narrative in *Egerton Genesis* (f.3r.) shows Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japhet carrying animals into the ark. The wives of Noah's sons are on board taking care of the animals. Noah, carrying a ram on his back and leaning on a staff, is also approaching the ark, accompanied by his wife, Puarphara, who is carrying a small bull. A similar spelling of her name, Phuarfara, is found in an Old French mystery play of the fifteenth century. Utley cited that Israel Gollancz's (1863-1930) proposal regarding the origin of Phiaphara.[696] In *Caedmonian Manuscript* (1927, lxvii), Gollanez suggested that this name was closely allied to Beersheba (באר שבע). But instead of Beersheba, "well of seven," Phiaphara could have been a Greek adaptation of *phrear (dia) phthora* (φρέαρ (δια) φθορᾶς) "the well of destruction" or "the abyss, hell," translating from Hebrew *bĕʾēr šaḥath* (באר שחת) "the lowest pit" in Psalm 55:24.[697] Contrasting with Beersheba, this form betokened a changed attitude with regard to the character of Noah's wife as the shrew in mystery plays. While Gollanez's proposal fits better with the later interpretation of Noah's wife in mystery play, the image of her links to the pit clearly contradicts the biblical image of her both in *Cotton Claudius B. IV* and in *Egerton Genesis.* However, Gollanez's proposal might also reflect that the contrasting images of Noah's wife Phiapphara, namely the "well of seven (abundance)" and the "well of pit (destruction)," might had been passed down in a parallel manner through various religious or folk traditions during the medieval periods.

[696] See Utley, "One Hundred Three Names of Noah's Wife," 435 fn. 2.

[697] See also Utley's discussion of Gollanez another proposal of Noah's wife as Beersheba in Utley, "One Hundred Three Names of Noah's Wife," 428-29 fn. 6-7.



Figure 39. Noah's Ark. Egerton MS 1894 (f.3r), British Library, 14th century CE.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the diverse and contrasting images of Noah's wife, from cultural references of the flood before the Bible, to the interpretations of her in Jewish, Gnostic, Christian, and Islamic traditions, and the depictions of her in medieval art and mystery plays between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. The identity of Noah's wife has drawn a vast interest in understanding the biblical origin of human history. The many names and exceptionally rich reception history of this biblical figure reflect her importance as the ancestress of the new beginning of human history. The flood narrative's placement after the Cainite genealogy (Gen

4:17-25), the Sethite genealogy (Gen 5), and the "daughters of men" (Gen 6:1-4) passage suggests that the wealth of names and the contrasting images of Noah's wife reflect a vital concern about her being a rightful and compatible spouse of Noah in the interpretation history.

CHAPTER 6: GIVING VOICE TO THE VOICELESS

The many names and contrasting images of primordial women reflect both the strong enthusiasm for including women in traditional biblical interpretations and the trepidation of embracing them in religious discussions. The mixed feelings toward Cain's wife (Gen 4:17), Adah and Zillah (Gen 4:19-22), and Noah's wife (Gen 6-8) in the history of interpretations represent the epitome of countless women's life experiences across cultures and ethnicities. In contrast to the biblical narrator, who omitted these women's existence, early Jewish and Christian writers were committed to including primordial women in their discussion of these women's identities and roles in the Primeval History. The inclusion of these women in frescos, coins, sarcophagi, stained glass windows, illustrated manuscripts, late medieval plays, sermons, and folklore studies confirms the growth of interest in them over time. To modern readers, however, the many names assigned to Cain's wife and Noah's wife, and the interchanging roles of Adah and Zillah based on biblical onomastics confound their understanding of these most neglected biblical women. Unlike many biblical protagonists whose existence and deeds are explicitly justified or condemned by the biblical narrator,[698] our understanding of these voiceless women of the Bible, who are only known for their motherhood, is primarily based on later interpretations. The gender-biased perspectives of early writers, which have been extensively discussed in biblical scholarship, have led modern and gender-conscious readers to challenge the reliability of their prejudiced and unreflective interpretations of these women. Inspired by Grung's study on gender justice in Muslim and

[698] Some of the examples are Noah in Gen 6:8; Abram in Gen 12:1-3; Joseph in Gen 39:21; Moses in Exod 33: 17-23; Saul in 1 Sam 16:14-15, and Daniel in Dan 1:8-21.

Christian readings of canonical texts, I propose that these contrasting interpretations that are embedded in the hegemonic discourse, summon modern readers to:

1. Reassess the interpretation sources from gender justice perspectives.
2. Participate in their reinterpretations.

Reassessment of Ancient Sources

Various scholars have highlighted the moral and genetic purity as theological concerns for the inclusion of primordial women in early writings. However, this concern for purity also reflects the fear that women could contaminate the righteous seed of Israel. This evaluation is informed by three earlier analyses. First, this fear is reflected in *Jubilees* writers' great concern with genetic and ethnic purities through women to sustain a family's genealogy and to keep the holy seed of Israel. As Halpern-Amaru and Vanderkam have demonstrated in their studies, the writers' emphasis on matrilineal moral quality and lineage purity appears to be essential for the inclusion of women in the *Jubilees*' genealogy. Additionally, the fear of being condemned as illegitimate prompted early church fathers and Christian Byzantine historians to adopt *Jubilees*' genealogy to vindicate the legitimate identity of Jesus as a direct descendant of Abraham from Seth. As Sergey Minov identified in his study, the Syriac-speaking Christians felt compelled to include women in biblical genealogies in the *Cave of Treasures* to validate the legitimate identity of Mary as another direct descendant of Abraham from Seth and Adam.

Second, this fear is reflected in the separation between the Cainite and the Sethite genealogies. Although the biblical narrator did not ethically judge the descendants of Cain, the unremittingly negative references to Cain in the New Testament (Heb 11: 4, 1 John 3: 12, and Jude

11) effectively cast Cain as a destined adversary. These negative references to Cain governed all later interpretations of him, including the destiny of his nameless wife and his progeny. As Rhonda J. Burnette-Bletsch highlighted, the reverse order of the biblical narrative in Genesis 4 and 5 found in *Bib. Ant.* heightened the contrast between the two genealogies. The absence of embarrassing biblical incidents further suggested the utmost concern for keeping a pure lineage. Moreover, the unique name of Noah's wife in some Christian traditions as Haykal (literally "palace, temple,") and her identity as a descendant from the Sethite genealogy appear to be an attempt to avoid associating her with the Cainite genealogy. While the Cainite Naamah was a prevalent candidate as Noah's wife among the rabbinic interpretations, *Sefer Ha-Yasha* advanced her to a Sethite and as the daughter of Enoch in Gen 5:22 further exemplified the anxiety of contaminating sacred seed through a woman.

Third, this fear is reflected in some rabbinic and Christian interpretations recounting Adam's order to Cain and Abel to marry the other twin sister instead of their own. Marrying one's own sister does not seem to be an issue in early Jewish writings. However, as Florentino G. Martínez and Lieve M. Teugels highlighted, the increasing moral and theological concerns about incest appear to have contributed to the contrasting roles of Cain's wife in rabbinic interpretations. Similar concerns are found in the recurrent sister-wife motifs in the later passages of Genesis (12:10-13:1, 20:1-18 and 26:1-13). T. Alexander (1992) articulated the moral and theological concerns raised by scholars regarding the three sister-wife incidents, [699] specifically the Pentateuchal laws that explicitly prohibit incest with a sister (Lev 18:9: 20:17, Deut 27:22).

[699] T. Alexander "Are the Wife/Sister Incidents of Genesis Literary Compositional Variants?" *Vetus Testamentum* 42.2 (1992), 145–153 (147-48). E.A. Speiser, on the other hand, argued that the recurrent motifs alluded ancient Hurrian institution of a wife who was also invested with the status of a sister. In other words, the

The above discussion has demonstrated that the increasing concerns about losing a religious or clan's identity through an illegitimate woman would have contributed to the development of contrasting images of a voiceless woman in biblical reception history. This reassessment reveals that gender injustice is not only embedded in biblical texts and male-dominated genealogies, but also in early interpretations of biblical women, which presume a singular role for them in life. Therefore, reassessing ancient sources from gender justice perspectives is a vital step to raising modern readers' awareness of gender and power dynamics in biblical narratives and early interpretations. This step also empowers readers to challenge the conventional assumption that early interpretations in Abrahamic religious traditions are more faithful to the original text than later ones.

Participation in Reinterpretation

The aesthetic quality of the Bible lies in its incomparable eloquence, which evokes the reader to reconsider its meaning. Far from being a purely dictatorial literature, the Bible is a work of art that invites the reader to participate in its meaning-making. The contrasting interpretations of these voiceless primordial women summon gender-conscious readers to envision biblical interpretations that dispense divine justice for **all** human beings, not only for the protagonists highlighted by the biblical narrators and early writers. This study has shown that voiceless biblical women were repeatedly interpreted through the deeds and narratives of their spouses in order to reinforce a patriarchal worldview that demands women to submit to their husbands for the *greater* good. This *greater* theological worldview is often illustrated at the expense of a woman's dignity

motif of marrying one's sister or half-sister reflects a historical-social institution, but not the concern about an incestuous marriage. See E.A. Speiser, "The Wife-Sister Motif in the Patriarchal Narratives," in *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 15-28.

by demonizing her role and identity. However, as Grung highlighted, the interpretation of canonical scriptures within religious communities is both a matter of how a tradition is transmitted and how the tradition evolves.[700] As modern readers living in increasingly gender-conscious societies, we are not only called to reassess the representations of the past, but also to participate in shaping the representations of the future. By participating in giving voices to these voiceless biblical women, modern readers subvert patriarchal religious cultures' expected norms and acknowledge the existence of these women. The experiences of countless biblical women who have been silenced and demonized in religious history are shared by many modern readers in the Abrahamic religious traditions. Giving voice to the voiceless therefore becomes an embodied act, bringing both the neglected biblical woman and the voice giver into our collective consciousness.

Biblical scholars and theologians who focus on gender analysis in religious studies have proposed a variety of constructive approaches to rereading and reinterpreting canonical scriptures. Inspired by Judith Butler's groundbreaking work, *Gender Trouble* (1990), Aysha A. Hidayatullah (2014) proposed that we should treat sexual categories as dynamic and interdependent.[701] One way to treat men and women as mutually constitutive subjects is to approach male-female relations within the broader context of human relationships of dependency. By reimagining difference through interdependence, we may be able to move beyond the limitations of the male-female equality models based on either sameness or oppressive complementarity. Most importantly,

[700] Grung, *Gender Justice in Muslim-Christian Readings*, 44.

[701] See discussion in Aysha A. Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 186-192 (189).

through submission to God, human beings can become agents responsible for enacting God's will on earth, regardless of their gender and roles in the family.[702]

One way to honor past contributions to the interpretation of primordial women is to synthesize the more complex roles of ancient goddesses into discussions of primordial women's roles and identities. This approach can revive cultural references to women before the Bible and broaden modern readers' understanding of ancient women who have been confined by patriarchal religious worldview for too long. Additionally, reinterpreting primordial women through art, poetry,[703] short stories,[704] or liturgy can help gender-conscious readers make meaning across religious boundaries. It can also nurture more gender-balanced biblical interpretations for future generations and establish shared agency for achieving gender justice in Abrahamic faith communities. Thus, giving voice to voiceless women in the Bible becomes a celebration of their indelible mark on the world. These neglected and anonymous women will no longer be seen as shadows in biblical history. Instead, they will become an affirmation of those who seek justice, women's rights, and good governance for future societies.

[702] Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of the Qurʾan*, 191.

[703] See for instance Anat Koplowitz-Breier, "Commemorating the Nameless Wives of the Bible: Midrashic Poems by Contemporary American-Jewish Women." *Religions* 11.7 (2020): 365 (19 pages); Linda Gregerson, "Noah's Wife," *Poetry* 173.2 (1998): 162-63.

[704] See Emily Schultz, "Noah's Wife," *Prairie Schooner* 88.3 (2014): 78-81.

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