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AIMS AND SCOPE

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Notes for contributors can be found at the back of the journal.

Imagery of the Divine and the Human: On the Mythology of Genesis Rabba 8 §1[1]

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> Future ages will bring with them new and probably unimaginably great advances in this field of civilization and will increase man's likeness to God still more. But in the interests of our investigations, we will not forget that present-day man does not feel happy in his Godlike character.[2]

The opening passages of Genesis have served interpreters since antiquity as an infinite wellspring for metaphysical and homiletical discourse. Elaine Pagels' reflection on the gnostic Christian use of this text applies equally to rabbinic exegesis: ". . . [they] neither sought nor found any consensus concerning what the story meant but regarded Genesis 1-3 rather like a fugal melody upon which they continually improvised new variations. . . ."[3] This study endeavors to follow the melodic lines of that fugue specifically with regard to an exegetical motif-cluster deriving from the account of Adam and Eve's creation. The starting point will be the opening section of chapter 8 in *Midrash Genesis Rabba*.[4] The goal is threefold: (1) to elucidate the *surface meanings* of this literary unit; (2) to establish just how diffuse the themes used in this BR passage were in the literatures of antiquity; (3) to show that

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[2] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, translated and edited by James Strachey (NY: W. W. Norton, 1961) 39.

[3] Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988) 64.

[4] *Midrash Genesis Rabba* (henceforth, BR) is, with *Leviticus Rabba* (LvR), considered to be the earliest of the "Rabba" Midrashim. The Hebrew version used in this study is that produced by J. Theodor and H. Albeck, *Midraš Berʾešit Rabba* 1903–1919. 3 vols. Additions, Corrections, Indices and Introduction by Chanoch Albeck 1931–36 (second printing, Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 1965). Those who date it early place it between 375–425 C.E.; no one, to my knowledge, argues for a date later than the sixth century. As the Theodor-Albeck introductory discussions and appendices indicate, the 100 chapters derive from different stages of redaction. I am inclined to view the earliest sections as contemporaneous with the writing of the Yerushalmi, as many have argued on the basis of linguistic and external evidence. On BR's language, see M. Sokoloff, "The Hebrew of Genesis Rabba According to MS Vatican 30," (Hebrew) in *Leshonnenu* 33 (1969) 25–42, 135–149, 270–279. Also see his comments relating to the Palestinian-Amoraic character of manuscripts in the Introduction to *The Geniza Fragments of Bereshit Rabba* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1982).

the motifs found in this BR passage already circulated as a *mythological matrix* in nonrabbinic sources prior to BR rather than separately in isolated texts.

The immense scholarly literature treating the influence of Hellenism on late Second Temple-period Israelite thought or early Rabbinic Judaism need not be rehearsed here.[5] Since the beginning of the *Religionswissenschaft* movement of the early 19th century, scholars have delved into instances of mythological and ideological syncretism among rabbinic sages, church theologians, pagan cults, and members of various mystical or sectarian sects now viewed as external to normative Judaism. Immanuel Wolf's early 19th century assessment still rings true for many scholars approaching this field:

[A]lien views from outside have often exercised their influence on Judaism, for in the world of the spirit, no more than in the world of matter, do two bodies exist side by side without exercising a mutual influence. But those alien elements that Judaism has absorbed had to submit to the fundamental idea of Judaism in order to assimilate themselves to it and become one with it.[6]

Disparities among scholars persist as to what it means for a myth or concept to "submit to the fundamental idea of Judaism in order . . ." for it to be assimilated.[7] Ephraim Urbach and many like him generally argued that pagan motifs were demythologized in their rabbinic settings, thereby following quite closely the process of submission envisioned by Wolf.[8] Recently, Daniel Boyarin has argued the case one step further. With respect to the androgyne motif to be discussed in this essay, Boyarin maintains that "the very allusion to the surrounding culture signals resistance to it."[9] In contrast, Alexander Altmann and others viewed rabbinic adaptations of pagan and gnostic myths as direct borrowings with little, if any, significant

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[5] One can now refer to Lester L. Grabbe's annotated bibliographic discussion of the most influential studies in his work, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadiran,* 2 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) vol. I, 147–170. Grabbe notes the works of M. Avi-Yonah, S. M. Burstein, M. Goodman, M. Hengel, A. Momigliano, T. Rajak, V. Tcherikover, S. Lieberman, H. A. Fischel, M. Smith and others. An extraordinary historical overview has recently been provided by Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC–AD 337* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1993).

[6] Wolf's comments were made in an 1822 essay which appears in M. Meyer, ed., *Ideas of Jewish History* (NY: Behrman House, 1974) 143.

[7] This artificially distinguishes the *history of ideas* issue from that of more general hellenization, which relates to language, commerce, education, social and political structure, etc. Some have acknowledged the influence of Hellenism on all of these aspects of culture, while maintaining that the *ideas* of rabbinic Judaism developed quite separately or in resistance to ideological syncretism. See H. A. Fischel's discussion of how literary and philosophical paradigms were often adopted outright in rabbinic settings, while others underwent transformation: *Rabbinic Literature and Greco-Roman Philosophy: A Study of Epicurea and Rhetorica in Early Midrashic Writings* (Leiden: Brill, 1973).

[8] This approach dominates Ephriam Urbach's (originally in Hebrew) work *The Sages—Their Concepts and Beliefs,* 2 vols. translated by I. Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975); specific instances will be cited below.

[9] Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 43.

thematic alteration.[10] Then there are those scholars who have considered the influence of external sources to be minimal, even in instances where clear contemporaneous literary parallels can be identified.[11] Saul Lieberman argued vigorously that Greek philosophical ideas, outside of the realm of ethics, had minimal influence on rabbinic philosophical development.[12] Another approach to reading midrash has conceived of the integration of myth and rabbinic ideology as essential to the midrashic process. Seeing the "mythopoeic exegesis of Scripture" as a hermeneutic "mainspring of the concrete Jewish theological imagination,"[13] scholars have begun to push aside the question of polemics and syncretism and put in its place a concern for literary method and ideological evolution. In such studies the internal method (or hermeneutic) dominates as the subject of inquiry while the more common lines of socio-historical motivation are treated as ancillary.

The first argument put forth by Wolf, that proximity makes mutual influence inevitable, proves indefensible. With regard to ancient Israel one might point out that every surrounding culture from Mesopotamia to Egypt had some notion of afterlife, and yet this idea is altogether absent from the Torah and the pre-hellenistic prophetic writings. Moreover, except for brief passages in Job and Qohelet, diatribes against such beliefs are also missing. On the basis of Israel's proximity to the other nations it is difficult to understand how so central a religious doctrine fails to be reflected in Israelite literature either as an adaptation or in vociferous rejection. Examples of this sort abound. The lesson is that proximity does not serve as an argument for cultural interchanges; but perhaps more importantly, when such interchanges do occur, proximity should not be used as a catch-all explanation for syncretism.

The second part of Wolf's assertion, that Judaism absorbed alien elements only by means of a transforming Judaizing process, proves equally dubious. As noted, one of the goals of this paper is to show the antiquity of the myths in BR 8 §1, and in the process it will become evident that sometimes wholesale adoption takes place with little if any "Judaizing," while in other instances myths appear in fashions which make their origins altogether obscure. This is not a new thesis; however, our emphasis will be on the fact that myths and midrashic ideas traveled in matrices, thereby displaying the

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[10] The following articles by Alexander Altmann address this issue: "Gnostic Themes in Rabbinic Cosmology," in *Essays in Honour of the Very Rev. Dr. J. H. Hertz* (1942) 19–32; "The Gnostic Background of the Rabbinic Adam Legends." *JQR* 35 (1944/45) 371–391; "A Note on the Rabbinic Doctrine of Creation," *JJS* 7 (1956) 195–206; "*Homo Imago Dei* in Jewish and Christian Theology," *Journal of Religion* 48 (1968): 235–259. Specific instances will be cited below.

[11] In this camp is Susan Niditch, whose article "A Cosmic Adam: Man as Mediator in Rabbinic Literature," *JJS* 35,2 (1984) 137–146, will be addressed below.

[12] Saul Lieberman, "How Much Greek in Jewish Palestine?" in *Biblical and Other Studies,* edited by A. Altmann (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1963) 123–141.

[13] Michael Fishbane's study "'The Holy One Sits and Roars': Mythopoesis and the Midrashic Imagination," *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 1 (1991) 21.

extent to which entire clusters of ideas were adapted and adopted at various stages in the history of exegesis. Each pericope must be examined according to its own merits; generalities will prove deceiving.

The sources to be examined include gnostic and other mystery literatures. This draws attention to the awkward dichotomy drawn between "esoteric" and "exoteric" texts.[14] *Genesis Rabba* provides an excellent basis for discussing these questions for a number of reasons: (1) it contains numerous passages one is inclined to classify as esoteric on the basis of subject matter; (2) these passages include motifs which are similar, if not identical to those found in foreign literatures; (3) there is no doubt that there are polemical texts which fit the typical structure of anti-pagan and anti-gnostic diatribes found in other rabbinic compositions[15]; (4) while some passages appear to be adumbrations of later Jewish mystical sources not only in terms of subject, but also with respect to their epistemology,[16] BR contains the perplexing standard exhortations prohibiting the study of esoterica.[17] Despite the importance of this particular concern, here it will not be addressed directly. My intention is to place this study in print as a discussion of one of the pieces which must be considered in this larger issue of characterizing literary categories for the purposes of understanding the place of BR in rabbinic literature.

A few comments about my assumptions with regard to the text itself are relevant. Following Jacob Neusner's premise that midrashic works contain discrete literary units which were then combined to form a greater composition with structural integrity,[18] I will analyze here a single *petiḥta'* in *Genesis*

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[14] Jacob Jervell discusses this dichotomy with regard to the very texts to be considered here in *Imago Dei: Gen 1,26f. im Spätjudentum in der Gnoβis und in den pauliniβchen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) 72ff. I cannot adopt Jervell's assertion that there was a distinct "public" discourse regarding the interpretation of Gn 1:26-7 (meaning that which took place in the synagogue and with non-Israelites) and a distinct "Diskussion der Rabbinenschulen." The texts which provide "evidence" for the former are absolutely identical to the texts from which he derives the latter. His comprehensive study of the history of interpretation of Gn 1:26f, provides virtually every relevant text in rabbinic literature, Christianity and Gnosticism. "Theology" is presented in a summary fashion, however, with very few close readings of passages.

[15] See, for instance, the many references to BR in the text and notes of the study by Rosalie Gershenzon and Elieser Slomovic, "A Second Century Jewish-Gnostic Debate: Rabbi Jose ben Halafta and the Matrona," *JSJ* 16,1 (1985): 1–41. For a reinterpretation of this material with regard to the Matrona character, see Tal Ilan's "Matrona and Rabbi Jose: An Alternative Interpretation," *JSJ* 25,1 (1994) 18–51.

[16] See, for instance, BR 12 §1, as well as 8 §7. On the latter, see Michael Fishbane's study, "Some Forms of Divine Appearance in Ancient Jewish Thought," in *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism: Intellect in Quest of Understanding. Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox,* edited by Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs and Nahum M. Sarna (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 261–270.

[17] In BR 8 §2 we read: ". . . study what is permitted to you. You have no business with hidden things." See S. A. Loewenstamm's discussion, "What is Above, Below, Before and After," (Hebrew) in *Jubilee Volume for Y. Kaufmann* (Jerusalem, 1961) 112–121. Loewenstamm treats all of the classical texts related to this issue, including BR 8 §2.

[18] Neusner's studies touching upon this issue are many, but for Genesis Rabba more specifically see, *Comparative Midrash: The Plan and Program of Genesis and Leviticus Rabba* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985) and *Midrash as Literature* (NY: University Press of America, 1987).

Rabba, thereby attributing to it not only literary integrity, but also authorial intent. By authorial intent I mean to say that the *petiḥta'* is not a random anthology of passages, but that it was constructed with a purpose in mind.[19] The juxtapositioning of its parts also implies a meaning that none of the parts necessarily had when it was independent of the present context. I emphasize this aspect of the study because, except for one instance,[20] I am not aware of the motifs in this *petiḥta'* ever having been discussed together as a literary unit, despite the fact that this passage is commonly cited in scholarly literature. Literary and conceptual integrity also absolve me of the common practice of commenting on every other place the motifs found in this *petiḥta'* appear in rabbinic literature. However instructive such comparisons may potentially be, they may only be used here in passing so as to indicate from time to time just how conscientious the structuring of BR 8 §1 is. The fact remains that the re-mythologizing process central to the editors of BR may have been the same, irrelevant, or even unknown to the editors of other anthologies who borrowed this material from BR directly or from some other independent source. Until each of the contexts is studied independently, little can be said about their relative goals—and such a concern is not relevant to this particular essay.

The study is divided into six sections. Section One will provide a straightforward translation and analysis of the *petiḥta'*.[21] Section Two will consider

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[19] Whether the purpose be of the redactor of *Genesis Rabba,* or someone at an earlier stage in its development is of little consequence for this study. In contrast, see David Halperin's methodological note in *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1980) 7: "I distinguish the original meaning of a pericope from that given it by its context." Given the fact that meaning is so dependent upon context, I am not sure how one can ever be certain of an "original meaning," unless of course, one can be certain of knowing exactly which context is original. And even then, how do we know that a literary context is not subsequent to an oral context? In yet starker contrast, see Boyarin, *Carnal Israel,* "Introduction," 12ff. Boyarin's philosophy of reading is discussed in even greater detail in *Intertextuality and Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). This is not the place for considering Boyarin's "rubric of cultural poetics."

[20] Susan Niditch, "A Cosmic Adam." A consideration of her interpretation follows.

[21] For considerations of this literary structure, see the following studies: J. Theodor, "Zur Composition der aggadischen Homilien," *MGWJ* 28 (1879) 97–113, 164–75, 271–78, 337–50, 408–18, 455–62; and 29 (1880) 19–23; and 30 (1881) 500–510; P. Bloch, "Studien zur Aggadah," *MGWJ* 34 (1885) 166–84, 210–24, 257–69, 385–404; and 45 (1886) 165–87, 389–405; S. Maybaum, *Die ältesten Pasen in der Entwicklung der jüdischen Predigt* (Berlin, 1903); L. Baeck, "Zwei Beispiele midraschischer Predigt," *MGWJ* (1925) 258–71; J. Mann, *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue* (1940) reprinted with an important Prolegomenon by B. Z. Wacholder (NY: Ktav, 1971); a number of important works by J. Heinemann: "The Petiaḥtaot in the Aggadic Midrasim—their Origin and Role," (Hebrew) in *Papers of the Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (1965) II, 43–47; "Public Homilies during the Talmudic Period," (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1971) 7–28; "The Proem in the Aggadic midrashim— A Form-Critical Study," in *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 22 (1971) 100–122; "The Structure and Divisions of Midraš Berešit Rabba," (Hebrew) in *Bar Ilan Annual: Memorial to H. M. Shapiro* 9 (1972) 279–289; and finally by Heinemann, "The Amoraim of Eretz Yisrael as Crafters of Homilies: An Analysis of Two Proems," in HaSifrut 25 (1977) 69–79. M. Bregman, "Circular Proems and Poems, 'Zo hi' shene'mar b'Ruaḥ haQodesh,'" in *Studies in Aggadah, Targum and Jewish Liturgy in Memory of Joseph Heinemann,* edited by E. Fleischer and J. J. Petuchowski (Jerusalem, 1981) 34–51. Peter Schäfer, "Die Peticha—ein Proömium?" *Kairos 3* (1970) 216–219. Richard S. Sarason's "The Petihtot in Leviticus Rabba," *JJS* 32,1–2 (1982) 557–567.

in greater depth the Androgyne-Golem Motif. Section Three will discuss passages of relevance in the *Corpus Hermeticum-Poimandres,* a discussion which will lead to a broader consideration of thematically related Gnostic Sources (Section Four). Section Five will consider the Golem motif in the light of relevant Christian and Rabbinic Sources. The final section (Six) will provide a summary of the evidence.

I.   Analysis of the *Petiḥta* BR 8 §1

The opening *petiḥta* of BR 8 has seven units of discourse here broken down into 20 lines for easy reference. The literary structure is classical in its format with no structural aberrations of significance. The following translation will be analyzed unit by unit. For the reader's convenience, each passage will be reproduced when it is considered in detail for easy reference.[22]

8 §1a *God said, Let us make ²Adam²³ [in our image, just like our appearance].* (Gn 1:26)

    A) R. Yohanan commenced: *Before and after you hedged me [You lay Your hand upon me.]* (Ps 139:5)

    B) R. Yohanan said: If a man is meritorious, he enjoys two worlds, as it says, *Before and after you hedged me.*

    C) But if he is not meritorious, he is destined to provide a complete accounting [of his misconduct], as it is said: *You lay Your hand upon me.*

8 §1b

    D) R. Yirmiyah b. Lazar said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the first *²adam* (man), he created him androgynous, as it says, *Male and female he created them.* (Gn 5:2)

8 §1c

    E) Shmuel bar Nahman said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the first *²adam* (man), he created him two-faced and then he split him and provided each side with a back.

    F) [They] objected to him [saying] isn't it written *He took one of his ribs?* (Gn 2:21)

    G) He responded to them: [צלע means He took] from his side, just as you understand *and for the other side [of the Tabernacle].* (Ex 26:20)

8 §1d

    H) R. Tanhum in the name of R. Banayah and R. Berkhiah in the name of R. Lazar: He created him as a *golem*[24] and he was extended from one end of the world to the other, just as it is written: Your eyes have seen my golem. (Ps 139:16)

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[22] I have benefited from two complete translations of BR, that done by H. Freedman in the Soncino edition of *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis,* 2 vols. ([1938] 3rd edition, London: Soncino press, 1983), and the more recent rendition and notation produced by Jacob Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah: The Judaic Commentary of the Book of Genesis, A New American Translation,* 3 vols. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).

[23] There is some ambiguity within the text itself as to whether אדם (*²adam*) is a proper name or indicative of the species. The problem was recognized by Ibn Ezra in his comments on Gn 2:8. "The determining article of *ha²adam* has a meaning. There is also found 'the Mennasehite Tribe [. . .]. And this can also be this way because the name is derived from [the word] *ha²adamah,* and so it can be either a noun or an adjective."

[24] This term will be left untranslated with discussion to follow. For a summary of the philological research, see M. Idel *Golem* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990) Appendix, 296–305.

8 §1e

> I) R. Yehoshua b. R. Nehemiah and R. Judah b. R. Simon in R. Lazar's name, [said]: He created him the fullness of the whole world.[25]
>
> J) From east to west, from where [do we know this?], as it says, *ʾaḥor and qedem you created me.*
>
> K) North to south, from where [do we know this?], as it says, *From one end of the heaven until the other end of the heaven.* (Dt 4:32)
>
> L) And from what verse [do we learn] that [he also extended laterally] in the space of the world? Scripture teaches: *And you place Your hand upon me.* {Just as you say, *Remove your hand from me.* (Job 13:21)}

8 §1f

> M) R. Lazar said: [The word אחור means] he was last of the creations of the last day, and [the word קדם means] he was first of the creations of the last day.
>
> N) This is the opinion of R. Lazar, for R. Lazar reasoned [that the verse] *let the earth bring forth a living soul* (Gn 1:24) refers to the soul of the first man.
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> O) R. Shimon b. Laqish said: [The word אחור means] he was last of the creations of the last day, and [the word קדם means] he was first of the creations of the first day.
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> P) This is the opinion of R. Shimon b. Laqish, for R. Shimon b. Laqish reasoned [that the verse] *the spirit of God hovered* (Gn 1:2) refers to the spirit of the first man. Just as you say, *the spirit of God will rest upon him.* (Is 11:2)

8 §1g

> Q) Rav Nahman said: [The word אחור means] he was last of all the creations, and [the word קדם means] he was first of those punished.
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> R) R. Shmuel b. R. Tanhum. Even his praising [of God] was nothing other than last, as it is written, *Halleluyah. Praise the Lord from the heavens. . . .* and then the whole Psalm (148:1-11) until *Establishing an order that shall never change* (v.6); and after that, *Praise the Lord, O you who are on earth* etc. (v.7) And after that, *all kings and peoples of the earth, all princes of the earth and its judges.* (v.11)
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> S) R. Simlai said: Since his praise was after that of the beasts and fowl, so it was that his creation was only after beasts and fowl.
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> T) First [Scripture] says *God said: Let the waters swarm,* and after all [the other creatures], *Let us make man.*

8 §1a: The words *before and after* of the expository verse[26] are understood temporally as referents to this world and the world to come. Having forgone the spatial nuance, the *darshan* construes צרתני as similar to יצרת אותי resulting in the reading, "You have *created me* for two worlds." The root צור does occur twice in Scripture with this meaning.[27] It may also be the case that the exegete has Gn 2:7 in mind, וייצר יהוה אלהים את האדם when he cites the Psalm verse. BR 14 §3 and §5 relate to Gn 2:7 as indicative of "two formations," treating the former as "this world" and the latter as "the world to come"; but this link is not necessary for 8 §1 to be coherent. The fact that Gn 1 and Gn 2 have distinct instances of the creation of the first human initiates this interpretation. Rather than seeing a conflict in the amalgamated texts, the two instances of creation are transformed into the two worlds in which the human can (potentially) live. The sage employs the second part of the Psalm verse (*You lay Your hand upon me*) to show the interre-

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[25] Freedman, (Soncino), translates, "He created him filling the whole world." See the discussion below.

[26] I will use this term to indicate the verse which is taken from elsewhere in Scripture to "expound" the meaning of the lemma.

[27] Ex 32:4, I Kg 7:15, but both of these instances may be the results of scribal errors, for the roots are generally not of the same connotation.

lationship of the two worlds and the execution of judgment. The placement of God's hand conveys the concept of chastisement;[28] if a man is meritorious, he enjoys both worlds, and if he is not, the hand of judgment is placed upon him to prevent his passage into the world to come.[29]

8 §1b

  D) R. Yirmiyah b. Lazar said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the first *'adam* (man), he created him androgynous, as it says, *Male and female he created them.* (Gn 5:2)

8 §1c

  E) R. Shmuel bar Nahman said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the first *'adam* (man), he created him two-faced and then he split him and provided each side with a back.

  F) [They] objected to him [saying] isn't it written *He took one of his ribs?* (Gn 2:21)

  G) He responded to them: [צלע means He took] from his side, just as you understand *and for the other side [of the Tabernacle].* (Ex 26:20)

8 §1b-c: The surface meaning of these two units is accessible enough. Though the link is not explicit, it is clear that the expository verse is being interpreted to relate to the two sides—or types—of human beings. The end of Gn 5:2 is just as important as the opening section: ויקרא את שמם אדם ביום הבראם *And He called their name* 'Adam, *on the day that He created them.* The verse indicates the creation of *male and female,* but it actually only speaks of the creation of one being, *'Adam,* who is portrayed by the exegete as one creature with two sexes.[30] Thus, the words *before and after* of the expository verse stand for the two "sides" (i.e., sexes) of the first human being as it was originally created. We will consider the problem posed by the plural pronominal suffix below.

R. Shmuel bar Nahman's exposition (8 §1c) appears to parallel that of R. Yirmiyah (8 §1b). The differences are subtle: whereas R. Yirmiyah spoke of a single being which had both sexes, R. Shmuel describes two beings created as one. Whether the image of two-headedness or simply one head with two faces is implied, is ultimately insignificant. Both §1b and §1c address the same problem in the lemma. The *darshan* was troubled by the plural form of *let us make* because it implies multiple creators. By describing the first human being—who was created in the image and according to the likeness of its creator—as both male and female, the *darshan* is implying that God Himself is in some way, both male and female. When using the plural phrases *let us* and *our image and our likeness,* God was speaking as one being who is of two genders—male and female. Scripture preserves the speech of

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[28] Cf. Rashi and the other traditional commentators.

[29] Many rabbinic texts treat the interrelationship of death, punishment and the potential promise of eternal life. The talmudic material in both the Bavli and· Yerushalmi on the Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1 are most noteworthy. BR contains many parallels on these issues.

[30] For other sources, see Louis Ginzburg's *The Legends of the Jews,* 7 vols. [1913] translated by Henrietta Szold (Seventh printing. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968) V,88 n.42.

the one, creator God who addressed its two sides. Thus, God is conceived of as an androgyne in that God contains both sexes.[31]

In this way the *darshan* is able to justify the plural language of the phrase and also address two other problems. If masculine man was created in God's image, how is it that we have man and woman? Does woman too reflect God's image? The answer is clearly affirmative. Originally, the word ʾAdam referred to this being which was both genders—exactly in the image of God. The second problem relates to the fact that man and woman are no longer embodied in one being. This too the *darshan* solves. R. Shmuel provides an explanation which is wanting in 8 §1b. God simply split Adam in half and provided backs. Section 1c may originally have been identical in form to 8 §1c(E), but the redactor includes an objection to this explanation. Because the objection takes place in Aramaic, we may conclude that it represents another stratum of textual dialogue.[32] The grievance is based on Gn 2:21 where a separate act of creation for woman is explicitly described; a rib (צלע), extracted from man's body, is turned into the first woman. R. Shmuel's resolution is based on a simple (though very clever) exegetical move which calls upon Ex 26:20 to prove that צלע should be understood to mean *side* in Gn 2:21 and not *rib*.[33] Consequently, woman was created by being separated from the primeval ʾ*Adam's* side, which is perfectly in line with the speculation that they were created "two-faced." The original interpretation remains viable despite this challenge.

Why did the *darshan* need both §b and §c; would not one passage have been enough? The *darshan* is following the structure of Genesis itself which contains two creation stories, that of Gn 1 and that of Gn 2. Both stories entail the creation of male and female.[34] Thus, the sage does not need both the first and second stories to bring about the creation of man and woman. By including two variations on the androgyne theme—each with distinct

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[31] I do not believe this mitigates the "maleness" of the deity. Gnostic texts will make it evident that a deity may contain both sexes, but be dominantly one or the other. Likewise, medieval Jewish sources (especially Kabbalistic) will follow this convention.

[32] The Talmud (bBer 61a) uses Ps 139:5 as the prooftext for the phrase, דו פרצופי ברא הקב"ה באדם הראשון which Epstein (Soncino English edition) apologetically translates, "God created two countenances in the first man." In his note, Epstein explains, "and out of one of them Eve was created." The BR text reads דיפרוסופון בראו בשעה שברא הקב"ה אדם הראשון.

[33] This is the correct connotation of the term in Exodus. All of the Targumim use the root סטר in their translations of that verse. See M. C. Horowitz, "The Image of God in Man—is Woman Included?" *HTR* 72,3–4 (1979): 176–206. Horowitz writes (186): "The term 'rib' (*ẓelʿa*) is sometimes rendered as 'side' in accordance with Exod 26:20, sometimes 'face,' and sometimes 'tail' (Ber. 61a)." Horowitz's "sometimes rendered" is not accurate with regard to the usage of the term or the dialectic of the talmudic text. צלע has three connotations in Scripture: rib, side (of either a structure, vessel or place), an exterior or side room of a building. The uses of צלע for "face" and "tail" are unique to the talmudic-midrashic renderings and clearly result from the use of Ps 139:5.

[34] Regardless of the philological issues which will arise regarding Gn 1:26–28 below, the command "be fertile and increase" would be without sense if both male and female were not, in some form, extant. See Jeremy Cohen's thorough discussion of this in *"Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It": The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

goals—the editor parallels the biblical text implying that its two chapters also have distinct goals. The second creation narrative of Gn 2 was necessary to resolve the separateness of males and females in light of their unified creation. Thus, the inclusion of these two comments on the one theme not only parallels the biblical account which had two stages of development in the anthropology, but it fends off any charge that two separate beings are created in the two biblical chapters.[35]

The androgyne theme is well known throughout the ancient literatures of the Mediterranean and Near East. Its purpose in ancient cosmological myths are manifold. A consideration of external and internal influences on the sages is important in order to establish the exegetical and mythological significance of the image in BR. After elucidating the surface meaning of the remaining sections, the theme will be considered in greater depth.

8 §1d

H) R. Tanhum in the name of R. Banayah and R. Berkhiah in the name of R. Lazar: He created him as a *golem* and he was extended from one end of the world to the other, just as it is written: *Your eyes have seen my "golem."* (Ps 139:16)

8 §1e

I) R. Yehoshua b. R. Nehemiah and R. Judah b. R. Simon in R. Lazar's name, [said]: He created him the fullness of the whole world.

J) From east to west, from where [do we know this?], as it says, *'ahor and qedem you created me.*

K) North to south, from where [do we know this?], as it says, From one end of the heaven until the other end of the heaven. (Dt 4:32)

L) And from what verse [do we learn] that [he also extended laterally] in the space of the world? Scripture teaches: *And you place Your hand upon me.* {Just as you say, *Remove your hand from me.* (Job 13:21)}

8 §1d-e: Whereas in the previous sections (§1b and c) the exegete emphasized the duality of the human and divine nature in terms of sexuality, sections (d) and (e) stress the actual spatial likeness. Since God fills the expanse of the universe, that created in God's image must also have been created in such a way as to fill the entire world.[36] An explicit link to the expository verse is not made in 8 §1d. However, the proof-text, Ps 139:16, is taken from the same Psalm as the expository verse. It is not uncommon for a *darshan* to call upon the environs of an expository verse to serve his exegetical goals. The very next section is thematically similar to this passage, and it quite specifically spells out by means of verse citations—including the expository verse—just how man's extension is derived from Scripture itself. I believe these proofs serve the editor's goals for both segments.

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[35] See David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* ([1956] reprinted, New York: Arno Press, 1973), 441f., who notes that "the two accounts of man's creation in chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis must have called for a harmonization from the moment the canon was treated as a faultless whole." Boyarin indicates this reasoning as well, applying it equally to Philo; cf. *Carnal Israel*, 44.

[36] For a very different reading, see Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 109, who argues that "Adams übergroße Herrlichkeit bedeutete natürlich, daß nur er und nicht Eva gottebenbildlich geschaffen wurde; denn er wurde ja allein geschaffen, und nur von him wird berichtet, daß er בצלם geschaffen wurde."

Ephriam Urbach does not link the meaning of this passage to God's appearance, but in *The Sages* a close variation on this theme is included. Urbach writes that "the connection between Adam's size and his identification *as a god* is explained."[37] As is somewhat typical of his method, Urbach inflates this particular passage's message by ascribing to its intent the meaning of a different section within the chapter; there the angels mistake Adam for God Himself (BR 8 §9).[38] There is irony in Urbach's explanation of the passage. Would he have thought that the angels mistook Adam *for some other god?* Surely not. In BR 8 §9 the whole point is that *ʾadam* resembled the one God so closely that even the angels could not distinguish the two.[39] Such interpretations abound in Urbach's writings because he seeks to avoid attributing any mythological implication to midrashic passages. On the one hand, Urbach acknowledges that the sages "absorbed remnants of the myths about the creation of man that were current in their neighborhood" from Iranian, Gnostic and more mainstream Christian groups; but on the other hand, he claims that they "voided them of their mythological content."[40] The discussion which follows should demonstrate the inaccuracy of this claim.[41] More important, however, is the recognition that resemblence is here meant in terms of corporeal extension and appearance. This is not the "spiritualized" likeness of Philo (to be noted below), or the "anti-anthropomorphic" euphemisms modern scholars read into rabbinic texts. There is nothing compelling us to shy away from the very simple conclusion implied by this material.

Section (1e) does derive the notion of Adam's enormous extension from biblical citations. The directions of east and west are implicit in the expository verse itself: the root קדם regularly has the meaning of "east" in approximately fifty verses of Scripture. The juxtaposition of אחור allows for its

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[37] Urbach, *The Sages* 230. My emphasis.

[38] Altmann does not deal with this passage directly, but treats the concept of *ʾadam's* immense size paralleling that of God's as it appears in other sources, specifically relevant to Gn 3:22, *Behold, the man has become like one of us.* . . ., where the diminution of *ʾadam* is the important theme. "The Gnostic Background," 381. Incidentally, Rashi may be the first to link this passage to the concept of diminution in his commentary to this pericope.

[39] See Jacob Neusner's discussion of this passage and theme in general in *The Incarnation of God. The Character of Divinity in Formative Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) and in a spin-off article, "Is the God of Judaism Incarnate?" *Religious Studies* 24 (1988) 229.

[40] Urbach, *The Sages,* 230; and also see 37 where Urbach claims that when it came to the divine names, rabbinic thought "implicitly nullifies all mythological exegesis," and that the sages "acquired their supramythological and supranatural conception of the Deity" from the Bible.

[41] See Moshe Idel's critique of this approach in *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* 33. "The main stumbling block, however, is not the huge quantity of material but the fact that it has been treated to date in a peculiar way; the mythical elements inherent in its conceptual structure were neglected by scholarly analyses that commonly preferred a nonmythical reconstruction consonant with the theological inclinations prevalent in the rationalistic approaches to Judaism of the Wissenschaft des Judentums. Without a new understanding of the mystical, mythical, and theurgic motifs and concepts or the broader intellectual structures found in the ancient and early medieval Jewish literatures, Kabbalah is doomed to remain a medieval revolution that enigmatically exploded in the bosom of 'nonmythical' rabbinic centers."

meaning of "west." Undoubtedly, this is the exegetical foothold of the entire passage and it will become more essential in the final exegetical move of the pericope. But so far we only have linear extension. To demonstrate planer extension (two dimensions) the rabbis call upon Dt 4:32, which really must be considered beyond the limited citation provided in the text. The midrashic understanding of this verse[42] can be paraphrased as follows:

> You have but to inquire about the very first days of creation which were before you (i.e., before the existence of the human being as it now is), to the day when God created *Adam* upon the earth, from one end of the heaven to the other end of the heaven; has there ever been such an enormous thing (i.e., man) created since? Has anyone heard of anything like it (i.e., that first man)?

The prooftext does not require the alteration of a single phoneme to result in this reading.

Finally, the third dimension of extension is understood from the second part of the expository verse. *ʾAdam* apparently extends directly to God's abode because God's hand can simply rest upon him. Theodor notes that instead of understanding כפך to mean God's hand, the prooftext might be interpreted to construe כיפה as the heavenly cover itself. The relevance of the Job 13:21 (8§1e(L) in Theodor-Albeck, bracketed) is somewhat dubious. Theodor notes that it has more thematic relevance to passages which follow in this *Parasha,* specifically with reference to the diminution of man. Since the Job verse talks about God's hand being withdrawn from *ʾadam,* it may represent the time when *ʾadam* was no longer so large that God's hand could simply rest upon him. The brackets in Theodor's text indicate its questionable placement, but it certainly doesn't change the fundamental meaning of the passage. By juxtaposing the expository verse and the other prooftexts, the sages are able to show that the enormity of the first man is revealed in Scripture itself, while it is theologically implicit in the verse, *Let us make man in our image.*

The *golem* is described without ambiguity as מוטל מסוף העולם ועד סופו, "extending from one end of the world to the other." However, the description which reaches us in the name of R. Lazar (1e,I), מלא כל העולם בראו is considerably more difficult. Mirkin points the text in a fashion reminiscent of Isaiah 6:3 which is preferable given the syntax of the sentence.[43] The only other possibility would be to make the verb a stative, מְלָא כל העולם, i.e., "He created him, full of the whole world." The significance of this phrase will be considered after describing the prominence of similar concepts in external sources.[44]

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[42] JPS translation: *You have but to inquire about bygone ages that came before you, ever since God created man on earth, from one end of heaven to the other: has anything as grand as this ever happened, or has its like ever been known?*

[43] Moshe Aryeh Mirkin, *Midraš Rabba: Berʾešit Rabba,* 11 vols. (Tel Aviv: Yavneh, 1977–1982) ad loc.

[44] I do not believe the following idiom found in *ʾAvot dʾRabbi Natan* (ARN) has any relevance here: ששה אלו נקראו מלאים הקב"ה נקרא מלא שנאמר הלא את השמים ואת הארץ אני מלא (ירמ' כג:כד) יהושע נקרא מלא וגו'. Adam is not one of the six.

Susan Niditch endeavors to elucidate the themes of §b-e of the *petiḥta'* independently of any externally prompted polemics.[45] She criticizes L. Ginzberg's assertion that the concept of Adam as "a gigantic monster without any intelligence" derives from Gnostic sources.[46] She concludes that this portrayal of Adam "owes *nothing* to that of the gnostics and, more importantly, that descriptions of him have great relevance for understanding the Rabbinic world-view itself, quite apart from any anti-gnostic polemic."[47] Niditch argues that the "world-spanner" Adam is a

temporal and ethical mediator of certain human possibilities. Being male and female, he is an embodiment of sexual possibilities, a symbol of the ultimate wholeness of humankind. He emerges also as an incarnation of the wholeness of the physical cosmos and a statement of man's relatedness to the universe.[48]

Being a world-spanner means, for Niditch, that the first man was "a symbolic bridge between oppositions of this world and the world-to-come, worthiness and unworthiness, man and woman, and now the most all-encompassing opposition, man and the cosmos." Looking back at the opening section of the *petiḥta',* Niditch summarizes the concerns of the exegete as the resolution of paradoxes:

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[45] Susan Niditch, "Cosmic Adam" Niditch refers to both Urbach's *The Sages,* and Altmann's "The Gnostic Background," however I could not find a direct reference to this pericope in either of these works. Urbach does not speak of man being created a *golem,* though he does relate to the next section, i.e., the immense proportions (*The Sages,* 229). The same is true of Altmann. Both consider the notion that *'adam* was created large and that God decreased his stature.

[46] Ginzberg's comment can be found in *Legends,* V, 79, n.22.

[47] Niditch, "Cosmic Adam," 139, my italics. There is by now a very large literature on the issue of the Gnostic-Rabbinic interchange (or polemic). The following is an incomplete listing of works which relate either to the general debate or BR in particular. See Birger A. Pearson's overview of the scholarship in his essay, "Jewish Sources in Gnostic Literature," in M. Stone, ed., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period. Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum,* Section II. (Assen/Philadelphia: Van Gorcum/Fortress Press, 1984) 443–481, and the extensive bibliography listed there. Also see his discussion in "Jewish Elements in Gnosticism and the Development of Gnostic Self-Definition" in E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten, Alan Mendelson, editors, *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition,* 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) 151–160. And likewise by Pearson, "Jewish Haggadic Traditions on the 'Testimony of Truth' from Nag Hammadi." in *Ex Orbe Religionum: Studia Geo Widengren* (Leiden: Brill, 1972): 457–470. These articles and others of relevance have been collected in Pearson's book, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1990). Pearson does argue that gnosticism takes its origin from within Judaism. Also supporting this position is G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (Leiden: Brill, 1984). Raising questions with respect to the methodology of comparisons, see I. Gruenwald, "Jewish Sources for the Gnostic Texts from Nag Hammadi," in *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies* 3 (Jerusalem, 1977): 45–56, where Gruenwald claims that some attributions concerning Jewish origins to Nag Hammadi (NH) texts are erroneous. Also by Gruenwald, "The Problem of Anti-Gnostic Polemic in Rabbinic Literature," in *Studies in Gnosticism* (1981); *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1980). Also E. M. Yamauchi, "Jewish Gnosticism?" in *Studies in Gnosticism* (1981): 467–497. Showing polemics in the Talmud see Herbert Basser's insightful article, "Allusions to Christian and Gnostic Practices in Talmudic Tradition," *JSJ* 12,1 (1981): 87–105. Other works of importance will be cited below.

[48] Niditch, "Cosmic Adam," 142.

Good and evil . . . are not shown to be independent, externalized forces, but the front and back of man. Adam thus becomes an important symbol of wholeness, unity, and continuity. The paradox of his good and bad nature explains how he can be of one world or of two worlds. In this way, he holds in tension potential contradictions in the nature of being and provides a link in the chain between the present and the future, this world and the next. [. . .] In Gen. Rab. 8:1, the undeniable yet explicable is that human beings are complex moral entities and that no person is completely good or evil.[49]

Niditch's introduction to the androgyny theme is as follows:

While the role of the first man in the midrash above involves a metaphysical conflict within men, the next midrash in the proem deals with tension in the structure of society. [. . .] Relations between men and women are a particular source of tension in cultures such as Rabbinic Judaism, in which most of the political and economic power resides with the men.[50]

For Niditch, the androgyny theme allowed the sages to resolve "the tension between male and female, the tempted and the temptress, by insisting that maleness and femaleness were characteristic of the first man himself."[51] In more general terms, this *petiḥta'* "belongs to a larger symbol system which reflects the Rabbis' sense of themselves, their conflicts, and their problems. The image of the world-spanner contributes to, and creates, a certain view of the world's order and helps those for whom it was meaningful to deal with the 'ambiguities, puzzles, paradoxes' of existence."[52]

Those familiar with Freud's concern for reconciliation as "a universal motive,"[53] may sense in Niditch's interpretation an application of Freud's own approach to the history of religion. It may be the case that this *petiḥta'*, at a subliminal level, exposes "the mythological notion asserted by Plato, that even the orgiastic impulse was an attempt to overcome the duality of the sexes and restore their original unity."[54] At a psychohistorical level, Niditch may offer us some insight into a rabbinic attempt to struggle with the nature of the irreconcilable, and perhaps she does not even go far enough in extending the full implications of such an approach.[55]

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[49] Niditch, "Cosmic Adam," 140.

[50] Niditch, "Cosmic Adam," 140-1.

[51] Niditch, "Cosmic Adam," 141.

[52] Niditch, "Cosmic Adam," 139, using the language of Clifford Geertz, see n.12.

[53] The issue arises in many of Freud's writings. See the discussion in Philip Rieff's study, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1959) 267.

[54] This is Rieff's description in *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist,* 267, specifically with the androgyne motif of the *Symposium* in mind. Rieff adds that Freud treats "the interior movement toward reunion as regressive." Rieff instructs that according to Freud, "every such reconciliation merely evades the permanent conflict between self and not-self. The permanence of conflict is Freud's leading theme, and part of his hostility to religion stems from an awareness that religion somewhere assumes a fixed point—in Christianity, the figure of Christ—at which conflict is resolved. In contrast, Freud maintains an intractable dualism; self and world remain antagonists, and every form of reconciliation must fail."

[55] By this I mean that she does not treat the tension of *Eros* and *Thanatos*—to use the Freudian terms—which one might also read into the tension drawn between the opening pericope and the bifurcation of man and woman; also one might see within the theme of first and last which is central (g) the playing out of an irreconcilible duality of being the most pleasing and the least pleasing to God. Yet more examples could be cited.

Thus, in the abstract, isolated from its cultural context, I suppose the androgyny theme in (1b-c) might be construed as addressing the perplexing problem of the union of opposites as it was articulated in ancient (as well as more recent) literatures and cultures.[56] However, the problems of social or cultural tension between men and women, or the ethical *complexio oppositorum* which results from the human/divine relationship, are not part of the BR-author's conceptual blueprint.[57] The fact that "the healing image of the androgyne which evokes the essential wholeness of mankind"[58] was not part of the rabbinic (overt or covert) agenda becomes especially evident when one considers how often sources in antiquity call for the reunification of opposites. Reconciliation of apparent dualism is central to the soteriology of Christianity, Gnosticism and the Qumran Sect's theology. It has echoes in rabbinic Judaism as well. Often, it is manifest in the personification of an ideal or in the hypostasization of paradox in a person or history itself. But I do. not believe this theme provides the frame for the conceptual edifice this *petihta'* comes to be. To demonstrate this, those options the sages chose not to follow in this passage shall be considered. This slight digression will make yet clearer the ideological and exegetical purposes of this *petihta'*. The divine image which dictates the human image must be kept in mind. The divine image is not plagued by the human tensions, but instead, represents a remarkable union of the opposites while maintaining an individual identity. Tension exists in the human only in that it cannot endure the dichotomy present in the divine.

Acting out unification (or reunification) through a great array of rites was common in ancient cultures. Some cultures instituted transvestal rites at the time of marriage, whereas other cultures included "initiatory subincision(s)" to symbolically give a male initiate a female organ.[59] Surely less extreme, but equally expressive of the desire for an ideal reunification, are those traces of the theme found in early Christianity which may reveal Jewish practices and attitudes as well. When Paul writes in Galatians 3:28, *There is neither Jew nor*

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[56] See Mircea Eliade's discussion of the *coincidentia oppositorum* theme as it pertains to the ancient and more modern world in *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne,* translated by J. M. Cohen (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965); also published as *The Two and the One* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977)). I do not believe Niditch makes reference to Eliade or anyone else's consideration of this dominant theme in ancient philosophy. Incidentally, if this were what the sages meant by using the androgyne image, then the sages were quite close to the Gnostic conception, at least as Jacques Ménard describes it in "Normative Self-Definition in Gnosticism," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition,* 3 vols., edited by E. P. Sanders, A. Baumgarten and A. Mendelson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) I, 139: "For the Gnostics, the perfect celestial world is Oneness, androgyny: if the material world is a counterfeit of it, this is because it is the product of Sophia alone who endeavoured to produce a world similar to the higher one without her male consort."

[57] Let me again clarify that such notions may be functional at a subliminal level (if we wish to extend a Freudian perspective to the process of writing), but Niditch has not altered us to a discussion between subliminal and conscious literary perspectives or imagery.

[58] Niditch, "Cosmic Adam," 146.

[59] See Eliade's analysis in *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne,* 111–12. Also see Baumann, *Das doppelte Geschlecht: Ethnologische Studien zur Bisexualität in Ritus und Mythos* (Berlin: Reimer, 1955) 45–59.

Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for yet are all one in Christ Jesus, he appears to be invoking the image of the unity of the primal man, as it is to return in the end of days.[60] Likewise in Paul's writings (Romans 12:4f.) there appears the image of all believers being *one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another,* as if limbs on one body.[61]

Eliade notes how the theology of Maximus the Confessor attributed the original splitting of the sexes to the primal sin. Reunification of man spiritually (and therefore, physically) according to this theory, "will be followed by the eschatological reunion of the circle of earth with Paradise. Christ has anticipated this final reintegration," for he *"unified the sexes in his own nature,* for in the Resurrection he was 'neither man nor woman, though he was born and died a man.'"[62]

The theme of unification is not conveyed by the androgyne myth or body-related images alone. For Paul it is carried over into other metaphorical expressions, such as the "clothing" of oneself in the garb of Christ, which by its nature, involves removing one's original "clothes." The act is symbolic not only of a metamorphosis of character, but also of a spiritual unification.[63] *2 Enoch,* perhaps antedating the Pauline documents, may contain a precedent for this notion as well in the A recension 22:8-10. Enoch's transformation involves the removal of his old clothes and the acquisition of clothes of glory. This act causes him to "become like one of his glorious

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[60] Or, as we are to become. The verse may reflect Hebrew purity rituals, as claimed by Alan F. Segal in *Paul the Convert* (New Haven: Yale University, 1990) 137f. On this verse and others conveying a similar sentiment in Pauline writings, see Wayne A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity." *History of Religions* 13,3 (1974) 166 and on the Pauline concept of women, 197ff.

[61] See Segal, *Paul the Convert,* 251, noting that the verse relates to opponents "form[ing] one body in Christ." Similarly see 1 Corinthians 12:13, *For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit;* and the following verses through 12:27, as well as 6:15–17. And also, from the so-called Pauline school, Ephesians 4:12, for a very graphic notion of coming together *"for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.* See Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament.* 2 vols., translated by Kendrick Grobel (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951/55) I, 164–183 for the general phenomenon of Gnostic motifs in NT, especially 177–179 for allusions to the body of Christ and the unity of believers in that body.

[62] Eliade, *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne,* 104 (my emphasis), quoting Scot Erigena's citations of Maximus the Confessor. See Eliade, 106, for other Christian sources which convey the same idea.

[63] Galatians 3:27, and on the concept of "putting on" Christ, or "taking off" the old for the new as reflected in writings from the Pauline school, *Colossians* 2:11, *Colossians* 3:9, Ephesians 4:22. See Wayne A. Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne," 183f. Similarly, see the *Gospel of Philip,* in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English.* (3rd ed.) edited by James M. Robinson (NY: Harper & Row, 1988) 155 (II,3, 75:20ff.). [References to this work will appear as follows: Robinson, *NH* page number (inside parentheses will be the codex and tractate numbers, the section and verse).] "The living water is a body. It is necessary that we put on the living man. Therefore, when he is about to go down into the water, he unclothes himself, in order that he may put on the living man." In this document, even the merging of man and woman represents the unifying of opposites, "strength complemented by weakness." (76:6) See Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord,* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1985), 87–106, for a discussion of "The Investiture with the Name," discussing Samaritan, Jewish, Christian and Gnostic sources on the concept of dressing oneself with God's name.

ones, and there was no observable difference" between him and the celestial beings. The same notion is related by the angels themselves in BR when Adam is compared to God in BR 8.[64]

Believers will also be transformed in their image through their belief and encounter with God. In early Christian writings, one changes into Christ's likeness, the ultimate form of unification and transformation.[65] In Ephesians the imagery of spiritual unification in one body is articulated quite clearly:

For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing *in his flesh* the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might *create in himself one new man* in place of the two, so making peace, and might *reconcile us both to God in one body* through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. (2:14-16)

Here the unification process functions at the spiritual level (between Gentiles and Jews), but is manifest in the physical singularity of Christ's body.[66] The creation of "one new man" in the place of two, speaks directly to the principle of reconciliation.

None of these unification or transformation themes surfaces in this *petiḥta²;* nowhere is the androgynous *²adam* provided as the ideal embodiment of opposites to which all people return in the world to come. Given the thematic presence of the afterlife and sin in the first section—as well as in sections yet to come—there would have been plenty of opportunity to incorporate the reunification myth as it was relevant to soteriology. Thus, while the theme of *²adam* as a spatial or ethical mediator *might* have been included in the symbolic content of this mythological image, I do not believe it was envisioned by the authors. If anything, our *petiḥta²* emphasizes the permanence of our bifurcation, our inability to automatically run this life on into eternity, and the permanent disunity of our existence which derives from primal events.

Finally, a word about Niditch's claim that the BR portrayal of Adam "owes nothing to that of the gnostics." There is currently no way to prove with certainty a direct or even an indirect flow via any particular avenue, literary or oral. However, in the discussion to follow, I hope to demonstrate tht the mythological matrix of BR 8 §1 was so widespread that the likelihood of each source arriving at its position independently is highly unlikely. I will choose not to phrase the question as, Who owes what to whom? but rather, Was this *cluster* of ideas part of the ancient world's mythological baggage or not? And if we can answer affirmatively to this question, then we will seek to establish how the individual sources used the cluster to

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[64] See below for a discussion of this motif, and on this issue in general, see Segal, *Paul the Convert,* 48.

[65] See Jervell, *Imago Dei,* 276ff. See Segal, *Paul the Convert,* 60ff. This issue is especially important in mystical or magical sources where the goal is unification with the deity. See Idel's survey of the subject in *Kabbalah,* especially chapter 3.

[66] Also see Ephesians 4:24.

achieve their desired effect. Put differently, the evidence will suggest that no one developed this particular mythological matrix in a vacuum. The fact that we cannot go beyond that should not give us the confidence to rule out any given direction of influence.

8 §1f

> M) R. Lazar said: [The word אחור means] he was last of the creations of the last day, and [the word קדם means] he was first of the creations of the last day.
>
> N) This is the opinion of R. Lazar, for R. Lazar reasoned [that the verse] *let the earth bring forth a living soul* (Gn 1:24) refers to the soul of the first man.
>
> O) R. Shimon b. Laqish said: [The word אחור means] he was last of the creations of the last day, and [the word קדם means] he was first of the creations of the first day.
>
> P) This is the opinion of R. Shimon b. Laqish, for R. Shimon b. Laqish reasoned [that the verse] *the spirit of God hovered* (Gn 1:2) refers to the spirit of the first man. Just as you say, *the spirit of God will rest upon him* (Is 11:2).

8 §1f: At almost the mid-point of the *petiḥta'*, there appears to be a significant thematic shift in the unit. Until now, the midrash has been concerned with the issue of בצלמו כדמותנו and used the words אחור וקדם from the expository verse to relate to the first human's physical appearance.[67] Starting with (§1f) the redactor considers the meanings of אחור וקדם in a temporal sense. The rhetorical structure of (§1f) is perfectly symmetrical. First, the redactor provides a statement in the name of the sage; then the reasoning is provided with identical formulaic introductions for each sage.

R. Lazar (1f, M-N) maintains that these words, when understood as meaning *first* and *last,* can help explain the bifurcation of body and soul which is evident in Scripture. Implicitly operative in the entire discussion is Gn 2:7: *The Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life* (נשמת חיים), *and man became a living being* (נפש חיה). The verse very specifically describes how the body was created, but there is no explicit accounting for the soul's genesis. R. Lazar directs our attention to Gn 1:24 where we have the words נפש חיה (*living soul*) unattached to any specific creature.[68] He concludes that the נפש חיה created in Gn 1:24 must be identical to the נפש היה of Gn 2:7.

Resh Laqish (1f, O-P) also takes the words אחור וקדם temporally, but he extends the time parameters to the entire six days of creation itself. Wishing to establish that the soul was in existence from the very first day of creation, he identifies the רוח of Gn 1:2 as that of the first man. Scholars have questioned this reading in favor of another. The manuscripts Paris, Oxford 1, Munich, and *Yalqut Shimoni* all have זו רוחו של משיח; printed editions and MS Oxford 2 have מלך משיח. . . . These phrases are in place of זו רוחו הראשון שלאדם as it appears in T-A (London). Those who have preferred these readings point to the explicitly messianic flavor of the Isaiah proof

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[67] With the exception of (§1a).

[68] Read according to R. Lazar, we would translate, "Let the earth bring forth a *living soul.*" Compare BR 14 §5–7.

text: *But a shoot shall grow out of the stump of Jesse, a twig shall sprout from his stock. The spirit of the Lord shall alight upon him: a spirit of wisdom and insight . . .* etc. Susan Niditch comes down strongly on the side of the emendation (following Mirkin's reading). Her reasoning is as follows:

> [The Theodor reading] cannot be the best, for the quotation from Is 11:2 cited as a proof-text has clear messianic implications. The less radical reading, "the first man," may be due to a slip of the scribe's eye to the previous interpretation of first/last based on Gen 1:24. On the other hand, it may be due to unease in the tradition about parallels with the Christian identification of Adam and Messiah and with the notion of this messiah's being "first" and "last."[69]

Clearly Niditch feels obliged to explain why it is that the passage would have been changed. A scribal error is always a possibility. She also suggests that the emendation might have been done intentionally to avoid any identification of Adam with the Messiah.[70] But Niditch does not bring to the reader's attention BR 2 §4 (T-A, 17.2) where we also read in the name of Resh Laqish: ורוח אלהים מרחפת זה רוחו שלמשיח היך מה דאת אמר ונחה עליו רוח יי' וגו'.[71] Here the messianic interpretation is explicit and there are no other manuscript traditions offering a significantly different reading (save for the occurrence of מלך משיח). In the 2 §4 passage there is no relationship between the *ruaḥ* of Gn 1:2 and Adam's soul.[72] In fact, the whole passage is irrelevant to the creation of man. Moreover, if there were an "unease in the tradition about parallels" with the Christian notion of the primal-Jesus as Messiah, this would certainly have been the place for an emendation. The entire passage relates to the history of foreign conquerors and the ultimate salvation of the Israelite nation via repentance; a prime issue for ideological confrontation between Christians and Jews.

Niditch supports her decision totally on the theme in the Isaiah verse and not on the contextual unity of the passage. As she would have it, the addresses by R. Lazar and Resh Laqish do not relate one to another. This, of course, does not take into consideration the structural unity established by the editorial segues within each section and the perfect symmetry between them. Theodor feels that the London version (which is behind this translation) is the correct version and given the current evidence, I am inclined to follow him on this. He speculates that the "Messiah" interpretation made its way into other manuscripts based on later interpretations which erroneously drew from the earlier pericope in BR already mentioned. Theodor also

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[69] Niditch, "Cosmic Adam," 144 n.2.

[70] Niditch provides no parallel evidence suggesting that this was a rabbinic concern, and I know of no Jewish text which actually ever makes this equation.

[71] *"The spirit of God hovers,* this is the spirit of the Messiah, as [Scripture] says: *And the spirit of God rested upon him."*

[72] See Theodor for other parallels. In LvR 14 §1 the lemma is identical to that of BR, even the expository verse used as a proof-text is identical, but the passage reads "Messiah." This would suggest that the tradition recorded in BR 2 §4 was carried over to LvR without differentiating the contexts.

notes that other later texts also read exactly as this BR manuscript.[73] But more important than all of these elements is the *internal symmetry* of one reading over another. I would argue that even if the two readings derive from the same pericope in 2 §4, the editor of BR made a conscious choice to juxtapose the R. Lazar passage with the R. Shimon interpretation. They are addressing the same issue but with slightly different results. They both provide proof-texts for only half of the exegetical argument. Moreover, the editor had them address the same issue, namely, the soul of Adam. This, more than anything else, should move us to opt for the current London reading. The incorporation of a messianic element in this passage is forcing the domination of a theme which is fundamentally irrelevant to this entire *petihta'* unit.[74]

On the surface, Resh Laqish's argument accomplishes the same thing as that of R. Lazar. Since the process is not otherwise described, he determines when it was that the soul of the first man came into existence. However, his explanation does not involve earth as did R. Lazar's. What is clear between both arguments is that the creation of the soul precedes the creation of the body. This is directly contrary to the Gnostic sources which shall be considered below.[75] There the archons will forge the corporeal, but only later will a soul be supplied by the supreme god. Whether or not there is a direct address here is very difficult to say due to the oblique character of the discussion. What is certain is that both sages find it important to establish the creation of the soul as having preempted the corporeal aspect of man.[76] And this mythological trend fits in with the tenor of the entire unit.

8 §1g

    Q) Rav Nahman said: [The word אחור means] he was last of all the creations, and [the word קדם means] he was first of those punished.

    R) R. Shmuel b. R. Tanhum. Even his praising [of God] was nothing other than last, as it is written, *Halleluyah. Praise the Lord from the heavens. . . .* and then the whole Psalm (148:1-11) until *Establishing an order that shall never change* (v.6); and after that, *Praise the Lord, O*

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[73] E.g., *Midrash Tehilim,* Ps 139, preserves "this is the soul of the first man," Buber edition, Vilna, 529.

[74] Below we will discuss the concept of Jesus as the primal-man, which the sages sought to counteract by negating the principle of a unique mediator figure. F. I. Andersen, in his commentary to *2 Enoch* (Slavonic), Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha,* 25 (continuation of note (h) on 24, notes that "according to the Pseudo-Clement Homily III 20:2, the *Kerygmata Petrou* (a Jewish Christian gnostic work) represents the pre-existent redeemer as spending the ages 'changing his form at the same time as his name' until he becomes incarnate in Jesus. . . ." We have already noted above the questionable date of this source; its relevance is therefore uncertain.

[75] See the text from the *Hypostasis of the Archons,* Robinson, *NH* 163.

[76] Marmorstein, *Essays in Anthropomorphism,* 21–22, discusses this passage briefly, believing that the argument may be similar to that of Philo's who "attempts to connect the beginning and the conclusion of creation, the physical with the spiritual, the creation of the body and the spirit of Adam." It is dubious that the ideas were exactly the same. I believe the corporeality and anthropomorphic character upheld by this midrashic passage would have been shocking to Philo.

you who are on earth" etc. (v.7) And after that, *all kings and peoples of the earth, all princes of the earth and its judges.* (v.11)

S)   R. Simlai said: Since his praise was after that of the beasts and fowl, so it was that his creation was only after beasts and fowl.

T)   First [Scripture] says *God said: Let the waters swarm,* and after all [the other creatures], *Let us make man.*

8 §1g: In (Q) the redactor adds another variation on the אחור וקדם theme. Freedman interprets the adverbial clause with respect to the receiving of commandments: R. Nahman means to say that Adam was the first of the created beings to receive an injunction.[77] The symmetry is then fulfilled when he is likewise the first to transgress a commandment so as to require punishment.

Both (Q) and (R) reflect the same pessimism regarding Adam's destiny. Using all of Psalm 148, the sage demonstrates that while all the other beings were praising God, man lapsed behind. Both passages reflect upon his flawed character; likewise, both throw the reader back to the opening section which established that only man's own merit would determine his future path. In short, the *petiḥta'* starts by noting the potential for immortality, but ends by exposing how Adam squandered what might have been his. Despite the potential for success given to him by God in accordance with God's own image, Adam failed on his own.

The logic of R. Simlai's comment in 8 §1g(S) is not easily deciphered. The plain meaning of the assertion would have us think that Adam was created last, because he praised last. Surely this is paradoxical in that he couldn't have praised until he was actually created. The passage only works if we assume a primordial existence not only for *'adam,* but for other creatures as well. Or perhaps the phrase has to be taken as foreshadowing. It was foreknown that his praise of God would come last because he was to be created last. Essential to this final phrase is the fact that man came after the animals. The order reflected in the Psalm which relates to praising, also rings true of the order of the creation in Genesis. It is via this order that the redactor is able to close the entire *petiḥta'* with the citation of the lemma.

Noting that the expository verse was not worked into the narrative of sections (1b-d), Neusner suspects that these sections were "inserted, added at some point at which the discipline of the base/intersecting verse construction did not apply."[78] To assert this, Neusner must assume that an "original" *petiḥta'* was composed of only those sections which focused upon the expository verse, namely sections (a) and (e-g). The themes of these sections would run as follows:

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[77] Freedman (Soncino), 55 n.5; however, I don't believe the themes of bBer 61a are at all relevant as he suggests.

[78] For "base/intersecting verse construction" I have been using the term *petiḥta',* when there is a lemma expounded via an expository verse. Neusner, *Genesis Rabba,* 75.

1a)   Man is created for two worlds and his entry is based on merit.

1e)   Man was created as the fullness of the world.

1f)   In some respects, man was created first and last; his soul first, his body last.

1g)   Man was the last created, the first punished; the last created, the last to praise.

The very passages Neusner removes to unveil the "original" *petiḥta'* are those very sections which make the argument of the *petiḥta'*. His assessment of the literary unit may point to the fact that the current *petiḥta''s* development is the result of a redactor having merged two already discrete literary units.[79] But this does not undermine the character of the choices made by the redactor. Had man not resembled God so very closely, the impact of losing immorality on the basis of human failings would have been much weaker.

Treating the literary unit as having been imbued with integrity by the redactor, we approach the "thematic shift" at about the mid-point of the *petiḥta'* (§1f, from a spatial to a temporal use of the expository verse), as only a shift on the surface. The redactor, still aware of the creation-in-God's-image issue, needed to treat one more concept. The particular adaptation of the expository verse in R. Lazar and R. Shimon's midrashim allowed the redactor to use the "first/last" dichotomy in the concluding transitional pericopae. In short, the redactor's goal appears to be a comprehensive treatment of man's image as it reflects God's image; consequently, time, space and physical appearance are all elucidated.

Having exposed the basic ideas of the *petiḥta'*, the mythological contexts which may have contributed to its composition can be investigated more thoroughly.

II.   The Androgyne of Immense Proportions

Two concerns have occupied the exegesis on Gn 1:26 up until now: (1) the plurality of the expression, *let us make man,* and (2) the actual sense of how *in our image, just like our appearance* was applied to the image of the first human being. In the first five sections of the *petiḥta',* the literary and ideological unity is easily detected.[80] As we would expect of the *petiḥta'* rubric, the expository verse has been central to every step of the exegesis either directly or indirectly, with but one exception, namely, the *golem* passage. However,

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[79] On the existence of thematic anthologies prior to the redaction of the surviving midrashim, see P. S. Alexander's hypothesis in "Pre-Emptive Exegesis: Genesis Rabba's Reading of the Story of Creation," *JJS* 43 (1992), where he discusses the issue of "irrelevant pericopae," 232f.

[80] This is the case even as we accept Neusner's assessment that the current unit is the amalgamation of previously existing discrete literary passages.

even this exegetical move did not disturb the flow of the passage for two reasons. First, as noted, the use of a prooftext from the same Psalm (148) was seen as an extension of the *petiḥta'* verse. Secondly, the section immediately following this one makes explicit the principle of massive extension and demonstrates it through a series of Scriptural citations, two of which are derived from the expository verse itself.

Given the tight structure of the passage, one might wonder why the redactor was not satisfied with §1e without also including §1d if they convey the same fundamental concept. A solution lies in positing that the term *golem* entails mythological meanings which he did not wish to forgo.[81] In addition, §1e does add something new to the *petiḥta'*. We have already noted that the concept מלא כל העולם בראו is either different from that implied by the *golem* passage, or serves as a definition of the term. This will require separate elucidation. But the closeness of the two made it possible to support the separate sections with one prooftext.

A great deal has been written on the history of the *golem* which resounds in many permutations throughout the mystical traditions of Judaism. Gershom Scholem returned to the theme repeatedly, refining and revising his original speculations.[82] Most recently, Moshe Idel, like Scholem, has written on the theme, tracing its evolution through Jewish history.[83] Perhaps because it was the interest of both authors to treat the motif diachronically, only brief passages of their studies relate to the appearance of this theme in the Midrash. Neither Scholem nor Idel draws any comparisons between BR 8 §1 with the Gnostic literature of Nag Hammadi. Consequently, our goal in the following discussion will be to consider the mythic implications of the *golem* image as it appeared in Nag Hammadi, the New Testament, and other pre-rabbinic sources, so as to establish the presence of inter-cultural influence—or the lack thereof.

In this *petiḥta'* the sages were drawing upon common mythological motifs which had entered Jewish literary works centuries before the composition of BR. Moreover, that the particular myths of this *petiḥta'* were specifically employed in conjunction with one another, is also documentable in pre-rabbinic sources—Jewish, pagan and Gnostic. What I hope to derive from the comparisons which follow is that there was no attempt to *demythologize* themes in this *petiḥta'*. More generally the passage appears to be void of any polemic. Indeed, if there is an agenda beyond the theme, it may be that our

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[81] Besides this passage, the *golem* theme occurs in BR 14 §8, 21 §3, and 24 §2.

[82] Gershom Scholem's first major contribution on the subject was "Die Vorstellung vom Golem im ihren tellurischen und magischen Beziehungen," *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 22 (1953). An English version appears in *On the Kabalah and Its Symbolism* (NY: Schocken, 1965): 158–204. A later Hebrew version was prepared by Joseph ben Shelomo under Scholem's supervision, with additions. I will refer to the English version unless otherwise stated.

[83] Moshe Idel, *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990).

editor wished to demonstrate that the hermeneutic principles of rabbinic exegesis could produce the very ideas others were deriving in mystical contexts.[84]

The androgyne myth is commonly found among the ancient cultures of the Mediterranean and Near East.[85] For instance, at both Cyprus and Carthage, ancient artifacts depict the creator goddess with beard or phallus, but otherwise, distinctively female features (breasts and feminine attire). Recently, B. Groneberg has questioned whether the combination of masculine and feminine characteristics in representations of Ishtar should lead us to conclude that Inanna/Ishtar was conceived of as an androgyne. After considering the literary and archaeological depictions, Groneberg concludes that the Inanna/Ishtar is a female god; maleness, or more specifically, male depictions (e.g., beard, warrior costumes, etc.) were employed to indicate that she possessed certain powers. It was a matter of the cultural language of the time that the symbolism of some powers was linked to maleness while the symbolism of other powers was depicted in femaleness. As such, the symbolic representation should not be confused with the essential gender of the deity.[86]

A consideration of Groneberg's arguments and those of the scholars refuted in her study would take us too far afield. However, the significance of her challenge in the Mesopotamian context should not be ignored. On the one hand, I feel quite confident that BR—and the other sources to be cited—all understood the androgyne to be an actual being with both sexes, not a being of one sex who manifests characteristics of the other. On the other hand, material to be reviewed in Philo and among the gnostics could be taken to indicate a sex-less being (on account of its incorporeality) who is described with masculine and feminine terms in a symbolic manner. This renders the hellenistic material irrelevant, for there the androgyne starts out in the realm of the spiritual, incorporeal, and is indicative of an ideal existence which is never manifest in the corporeal world. There is no controversy regarding the original depictions of the hermaphrodite even in Greek literature; it was indeed, a "real-life," corporeal being rather than a symbolic

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[84] In this way Niditch is right in not seeing the *petiḥta'* as a polemical answer to any specific gnostic diatribe, but since the particular adaptation of motifs found in BR is paralleled in earlier non-Jewish sources, syncretism cannot be denied.

[85] See the now classic survey of the subject by H. Baumann, *Das doppelte Geschlecht*. Also see Eliade, *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne*, 78–124. Of interest also is Erich Neumann's treatment of the androgyne as related to the Great Mother-*Uroboros* myth in *The Origins and History of Consciousness* ([1949] Princeton University Press, 1973). In contrast, the ubiquity of the androgyne image has been questioned by many, especially with regard to ancient Mesopotamia. Jean Bottéro writes that in ancient Mesopotamia "there does not seem to have been any interest in the androgynous figure, which was unknown, and in mythology and theology we have not the slightest certain example of homosexual relations between gods"; *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (University of Chicago Press, 1992) 192. See the following note for more on this issue.

[86] B. Groneberg, "Die sumerisch-akkadische Inanna/Istar: Hermaphroditos?" *Die Welt des Orient* 17 (1986) 44.

depiction. Thus, the difference between the bearded-breasted Inanna/Ishtar on a Sumerian or Akkadian relief, and the androgynous archon Pistis-Sophia in the writings of Nag Hammadi can be articulated as follows: As there is no certain depiction of an androgyne, human or otherwise, in ancient Mesopotamian literature, there can be no certainty as to the range of this image's implications. In contrast, any depiction of an androgyne in the hellenistic world must be seen as a conscious adaptation of an otherwise uncontroversial image. Whether that adaptation is symbolic or literal must be considered in a case by case manner. What is certain is that any post-Hellenistic adaptation has a very literal androgyne as an antecedent.[87]

There is one other important distinction to be made. The symbolic androgyne (typical of hellenistic-religious adaptations), despite the fact that it is conceptually one being of two sexes, often appears to be classified dominantly as one gender or the other. As many passages among the Nag Hammadi texts make so clear, a given deity may be androgynous (and therefore able to procreate by itself) even though it is identified as a male or female god. This is very much the case with Sophia and Yaldabaoth, both of whom will be discussed below.[88] In such cases, the "male-dominance" or "female-dominance" of a given androgyne indicates something about the characteristics the authors sought to emphasize. The distinction with the rabbinic material—whose androgyne is not symbolic, but indeed, corporeal—is not affected by this rhetoric.

Having already noted the presense of a true androgyne in hellenistic literature, it is appropriate to turn to the passage in Plato's *Symposium* (189a-190a) which many scholars cite as the earliest literary rendition of this myth. Some have argued that the androgyne image in BR 8 §1 is derived quite directly from this source.[89] Wayne Meeks suggests that the vocabulary itself

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[87] It is unnecessary to entertain the issue of whether the androgyne was part of an ancient biblical motif which was passed down silently over the generations. At present, there is no evidence of such a tradition. See Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses* (NY: Fawcett Columbine, 1992) who comments repeatedly on the desexualization of Israel's God and gender roles. This said, I believe we must remain open to the notion that the deity is in fact both sexes, but still dominated by one sex (as it will turn out, maleness). The fact that this is paradox should not exclude it from our consideration.

[88] See the discussion of Sophia's female-dominance in Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley's *Female Fault and Fulfilment [sic] in Gnosticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986) 131–2. Also see Jervell's extensive treatment of the sexuality issue in section 3 (122ff.) on Gnosticism in *Imago Dei*.

[89] Some examples: Altmann, "*Homo Imago Dei*," 244: "There is here certainly a connection with the androgynous motif in Plato's *Symposium*. . . ." Ginzberg cites Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelica* 585c–585d, Gifford edition, Oxford 1903) as the first to draw a connection between the myth of androgyny and the *Symposium*, cf. Ginzberg *Legends*, V,88 n.42. Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospel* ([1979] NY: Vintage Books Edition, 1981) 67, attributes this passage to "Plato's myth of androgyny" without citing the source, and then produces a strange rendition of the midrashic passage, which she claims to take from W. Meeks (see next note for reference); however, I found no such rendition in Meeks. Also see M. C. Horowitz, "The Image of God in Man—is Woman Included?" 184–5, who relates that this passage has "some resemblance to the speech of Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium*."

(*androgynous,* and in the next section, *dyprosopon*), demonstrates a direct aware-
ness of the terminology in the Platonic dialogue.[90] The latter word, coming
from διπροσωπον, Meeks believes to be dependent upon προσωπα   δυ
(*Symposium* 189e). The legend and description of the hermaphrodite in the
Platonic dialogue is as follows:

> . . . for in the beginning we were nothing like we are now. For one thing, the race was divided into
> three; that is to say, besides the two sexes, male and female, which we have at present, there was a
> third which partook of the nature of both, and for which we still have a name, though the creature
> itself is forgotten. For though "hermaphrodite" is only used nowadays as a term of contempt, there
> really was a man-woman in those days, a being which was half male and half female.
>   And secondly, gentlemen, each of these beings was globular in shape, with rounded back and
> sides, four arms and four legs, and two faces, both the same, on a cylindrical neck, and one head,
> with one face one side and onto the other, and four ears and two lots of privates, and all the other
> parts to match.
>   [. . .] The three sexes . . . arose as follows. The males were descended from the Sun, the females
> from the Earth, and the hermaphrodites from the Moon, which partakes of either sex.[91]

Apparently the hermaphrodites were audacious, and because of their ex-
ceptional strength, energy and mobility (four legs!), they attempted to "scale
the heights of heaven and set upon the gods." (190b) Zeus devised a solu-
tion to weaken them without destroying them. He proposed to "cut them
all in half." He then appealed to Apollo to complete the surgical procedure,
so he "turned their faces back to front, and, pulling in the skin all the way
round, he stretched it over what we now call the belly . . . and tied up the
one remaining opening so as to form what we call the navel." (190e) The
separate halves of the bisected hermaphrodites suffered severely from this
bisection, as Aristophanes relates, for in constantly seeking reunion they
came to neglect many of life's necessities. Slowly the bisections began to die
off from hunger and utter loneliness. To prevent this, Zeus changed the
position of their genitals so that they might be inclined to mate, which
would be the closest they could come to reunification; hence, procreation
resulted. Aristophanes then sees homosexuality as having been the natural
tendency of those males and females who were not derived from the her-
maphrodite, but who were created as integral beings from the start. The
desire for sexual union with members of the opposite sex is the result of
the bisectioning of the original hermaphrodites.

There can be little doubt that this image of the hermaphrodite is the same
as the image of the two-faced creature described by R. Shmuel.[92] However,

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[90] Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne," 185f. Meeks believes the passage "clearly betrays the
influence of Plato." He provides a full list of rabbinic sources which use the terms, but only spells
out the philological connection explicitly in his footnotes, cf. especially note 90. In general, Meeks
article is very helpful in identifying the concept in early Christian sources.

[91] *Symposium* 189e–190a. Translated by Michael Joyce in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato,* edited by
Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

[92] Boyarin, *Carnal Israel,* 43, proposes that the rabbis "were much more likely to have encoun-
tered the myth in the form in which it became widely known among both Jews and Gentiles in late
antiquity: the myth of the spiritual, primal androgyne" which is central to Philo's and early Patristic
uses of the motif. Boyarin does not trace the stream of influence beyond this. The discussion which
follows (here) not only traces the sources, but attempts to establish that the motif was already part of
an exegetical matrix.

the differences between the rabbinic *account* and that of Plato should not be overlooked. Aristophanes' myth is primarily concerned with the etiology of various forms of sexuality. The midrash does not relate to that motif at this locus at all, and in fact, the only reference to sexuality and its relationship to procreation occurs later in this chapter in BR 8 §9 לא איש בלא אשה ולא אשה בלא איש ולא שניהם בלא שכינה.[93] The discussion of procreation in 8 §9 attempts to harmonize the conclusions of 8 §1 with the realities of human birth. Obviously, androgynes are not typical of human offspring. Given that the current state of reproduction is not altogether in conformity with either the androgyne motif or the divine image, BR 8 §9 establishes a scenario in which divine intervention provides for a continuity with *Imago Dei*. While neither male nor female remains identical to the divine image in that they only contain one of the two genders (and are therefore somehow incomplete), a quasi-unification does take place during the act of procreation under the aegis of the *Shekhinah*. In this manner (if not in others), the divine participates in human sexuality.[94]

There is no vestige in the rabbinic rendition of this myth of the audacious challenge to the gods presented by Plato's androgyne. Indeed, Adam is an innocent bystander when it comes to the challenge God perceived in his likeness, for the angels are responsible for an erroneous judgement as to who is who in 8 §10, far removed from this passage. Thus, the reason for splitting the androgyne, which is not explicit in the BR text, is not related to any punishment, per se.[95]

One might wish to claim that these differences in details do not negate the important influence of the *Symposium* as the original source for this image. It is unnecessary to view the Platonic dialogue as the *direct* source for the rabbinic adaptation, for perhaps other intermediate sources containing this image were more operative in the formation of the BR tradition. This does not mean that the sages were not aware of the *Symposium,* or that the other sources themselves were not indebted to Plato's composition. That is to say that Plato's *Aristophanes* and R. Shmuel, as well as the other sources about to be considered, all had different reasons for appropriating the image of the androgyne—an image which did not originate with Plato. The pervasiveness of this theme in sources much closer to the time and place of BR's

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[93] "No man [will be created] without a woman, no woman [will be created] without a man, and neither of them [can be created] without [the participation] of the *Shekhinah*." Compare this passage with I Corinthians 11:11–12 and the context. On the mention of angels in this enigmatic passage, see J. A. Fitzmyer, "A Feature of Qumran Angelology and the Angels of I Cor 11:10," reprinted in *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972) 187–204. Fitzmyer does not draw attention to the closeness of the BR text.

[94] I believe this to be an adumbration of later sexual imagery which involves humans and the divine, especially in kabbalistic texts. The issue is being explored by Elliot Wolfson in his work *Through a Speculum that Shines* (Princeton University) which should appear at the end of 1994.

[95] This, of course, is not the case in BR 21 §3, where Adam "was banished from the garden of Eden," whereupon God recites the verse in Job 14:20 (with emendations) to mean, "Where is the man who *was* as one of us?"

author suggests that the latter could have been altogether ignorant of the *Symposium,* but still come up with the same conclusion.

As an aside, it is noteworthy that attempts to link Plato's dialogue to the rabbinic imagery is not a recent development; however, an earlier tradition saw the direction of influence as reversed. Since ancient times there has been a practice of assigning the origins of Greek and Egyptian rites, as well as their respective wisdom literatures, to the ancient Hebrews, in some cases, Moses himself. Such ascriptions were not exclusively the results of Jewish hubris or ethnocentrism; pagan and Christian historians of antiquity often perpetuated these myths and expanded upon them as well.[96] The practice was especially popular as late as the Middle Ages. For instance, we find one of the interlocutors in Judah Abrabanel's *The Philosophy of Love (Dialoghi d'Amore),* claiming that the Jewish concept of the androgyne "was the source of that ancient androgyne of Plato and the Greeks who was half man and half woman."[97] Moreover, Plato's intention, according to Philo (not of Alexandria, but the expositor of wisdom in Abrabanel's popular dialogue) was "to uphold the Hebrew narrative."[98] Abrabanel adopts the explanation of R. Shmuel in the *petiḥta'* outright, including the detail that "the word in Hebrew being equivalent to rib . . . elsewhere . . . stands for side."

Despite the ahistorical nature of Abrabanel's explanations and its late date, this work may be cited as the culmination of a long history of Jewish interpretations which ascribed considerable antiquity to the androgyne exegetical solution. Well known are the lists concerning tendentious alterations included in the Septuagint.[99] The tradition conveyed in the *Mekhilta d'Rabbi Išmaᶜel* (MRI) and reiterated in BR 8 §11, teaches that the original Septuagint rendition to Gn 1:27 composed under the aegis of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, included the allusion to the androgyne. According to the MRI, the controver-

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[96] See Eusebius' note concerning Aristobulus (mid-2nd century B.C.E.), *Praeparatio Evangelica* 13.12.1f., where the latter asserts that Plato took philosophy from the Hebrews. Also see the discussion below of the "Jewish influence" on the Hermetic literature and relevant sources. See A. Yarbro Collins' introduction to Aristobulus in J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985) vol. 2, 821ff. W. C. Van Unnik discusses the often-called "Greek theft" of philosophy from the Jews as it appears in Josephus and other sources in "Flavius Josephus and the Mysteries," in M. J. Vermaseren, ed., *Studies in Hellenistic Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1979) 268ff. Also see F. E. Peters, *The Harvest of Hellenism* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1970) 302ff. On the identification of Moses with Musaeus, see Brian P. Copenhaver, *Hermetica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) xviiif.

[97] *The Philosophy of Love (Dialoghi d'Amore),* translated by F. Friedeberg–Seeley and Jean H. Barnes (London: Soncino Press, 1937) 349. Abrabanel is known by the name Leone Ebreo for this work. The original language of composition is unknown, but 1501 is thought to be the date of composition. See Cecil Roth's introduction to the volume.

[98] *The Philosophy of Love,* 349. The following passage attempts to harmonize the entire passage in the *Symposium* with the first three chapters of Genesis.

[99] See BR 1 §12 where this is of relevance. For a complete listing of relevant sources, see Theodor-Albeck's notes to BR 8 §11. A thorough discussion of the history of scholarship on this issue and the nature of the evidence can be found in Emanuel Tov, "The Rabbinic Tradition Concerning the 'Alterations' inserted into the Greek Pentateuch and their relation to the Original Text of the LXX," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 15 (1984) 65–89.

sial phrases in Genesis 1:26-27 were rendered ‫זכר . . . וכדמות בצלם אדם אעשה‬
‫ונקביו בראו‬ respectively.[100] Lauterbach translates: "I will make a man according to an image and a likeness. . . . A male with corresponding female parts created He *him*." For Lauterbach, the change of the pronominal endings of the words "image" and "likeness" resulted in the meaning that the first man was made after some "image" or paradigm that God had in mind or that he copied from an angel.[101] The changing of the pronominal ending of the last word of the verse, "He created *him*" (instead of "them") is what Abrabanel and others interpret as indicative of the androgyny solution. John Bowker, reflecting on the Targumic evidence accepts the same translation, but alerts us to the philological ambiguities.[102] This is not the reading preserved in every manuscript. Moreover, regardless of the final proniminal ending, the word ‫ונקביו‬ is shrouded by ambiguity. What could it mean in this instance? By translating "female parts," Lauterbach must be understanding ‫ונקביו‬ with the sense of "orifices" or "apertures."[103] But why in the plural? Targum PsJ reads ‫דכר ונוקבא בגוונהון ברא יחהון‬ "Male and *nuqbᵓa* after their kind He created them," but in this case, the "them" could refer to the angels with whom God is speaking.[104]

Jarl Fossum interprets the MRI quite differently, claiming that "the *Mekhilta* rendering of Gen 1,27c is most likely directed against the idea that the first man is an androgynous being. . . ." Fossum believes that

the Mekhilta renderings would seem to block the Philonic interpretation of Gen. 1,27c as well as of Gen 1,26a, for Philo takes the former passage as evidence that the *genos* of man was an androgynous being. . . . [. . .] Substituting ‫נקיבין‬ for ‫נקבה‬, the pronominal object in the plural could be retained,[105] while at the same time the problem of verse 27b-c was solved, for the substitution obviously implies that only the male was created. The Pseudo-Jonathan Targum and a couple of other sources change

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[100] Tractate *Pisha*, §14. This is Lauterbach's reading, I,111f. But the "original" reading is not certain, for the Horowitz-Rabin Edition 50.10 has ‫ונקביו בראו זכר‬ which Lauterbach acknowledges in his notes. The Talmud, bMeg 9a-b, likewise records the tradition preserved in the MRI with the singular pronominal ending.

[101] See Ibn Ezra, ad loc., on this, and his rejection of Saadia and others who interpret in a similar fashion.

[102] John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) 142 and related notes. Also see his Appendix III for relevant comments pertaining to LXX, 319.

[103] Or more specifically, vagina, though I could not find a use of this term to refer to female genitalia in other sources. Only two intelligible understandings of the phrase are possible: "who created man and his orifices," or, "who created man and his appellations." Surely the second is irrelevant. The first is reminiscent of a passage in BR as well as the *Morning Blessings* of the daily liturgy. In BR 1 §2 (5.7) we read ‫וראה הזה עשׂי מחילים ונקבים ואין רוחו יוצאה מהם‬ and in the morning liturgy, we likewise read, ‫בא"י אמ"ה אשר יצר את האדם בחכמה וברא בו נקבים נקבים חלולים חלולים‬. It might have been understood as "man and his orifices—male and female ones"—but such an explanation presumes the presence of the androgyny theme and may thus be plagued by circularity. In both cases, the word ‫נקבים‬ derives from the segolite noun, whereas the consonantal form of the MRI (in the tradition cited by Lauterbach) is a noun of a different *misqal*.

[104] Neofiti translates ‫דכר וזוגיה‬ which surely supports the notion of "male and his wife"; Onqelos has the ambiguous, ‫דכר ונוקבא‬.

[105] He has in mind the last words of the verse, ‫ברא אתם‬.

the pronominal suffix in the singular into plural. Both these changes prevent the notion that the primal man was androgynous.[106]

Fossum's theory that the sages were trying to "block the Philonic inter-pretation" is problematic. Such a claim rests on the notion that sages fabri-cated the tradition in order to provide their position with authority, and that these emendations via translation are fictions. Fossum correctly points out that of the thirteen emendations recorded (in the MRI) only four are attested in surviving LXX versions, and they do not include Gn 1:26-7.[107] Thus he rallies support for the notion that the list is the author's creation (though he never says this explicitly).[108] But this is not a strong argument. It is unlikely that such a list was fabricated given the nature of the tradition and the length of the list. Besides, since when do the sages of Palestine turn to the LXX for a boost to their authority?[109] The particular emendations represent (in some cases) attempts to alter the image of Jewish Scripture in the eyes of Gentile readers. Despite the fact that the original LXX was a "Jewish" translation, many have pointed to its role in non-Jewish (pre-Christian) contexts.[110]

The lack of manuscript evidence in some instances can also be explained in terms of the numerous variants which existed prior to the standardiza-tion of the LXX in the hands of Origen and Lucian. The fact that some of the references do not agree with extant LXX readings reflects the reality of the early period of LXX transmission, when "there were no two scrolls in existence identical or nearly identical for any book of the LXX."[111] Stan-

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[106] Jarl Fossum, "Gen. 1,26 and 2,7 in Judaism, Samaritanism, and Gnosticism," *JSJ* 16,2 (1985) 213, continuation of note 37 and note 38.

[107] Eight texts preserve this tradition with varying lists, with as few as 10 and as many as 18 emendations cited. See Emanuel Tov's detailed analysis of the various combinations, "The Rabbinic Tradition Concerning the 'Alterations'. . . ."

[108] If he is not implying this, then his argument is incomprehensible because of the dating of the sources.

[109] I believe that the LXX is only referred to directly once as a "prooftext" in the Babylonian Talmud, bMeg 9a, which of course, relates the same tradition recorded in the MRI. Epstein's (Soncino) translation of that passage is "Male and female he created him," obviously opting for the androgyny solution. We know that there was a negative sentiment toward the LXX because of the Church's appropriation of the text as its official Bible. Theoretically, this necessitated Aquila's translation (BR 1 §12). In the extra-canonical *Masekhet Soferim* 1:7 we read: "It happened that five elders translated the Pentateuch into Greek for King Ptolemy. That day was as hard for Israel as the day the calf was made, because the Pentateuch could not be translated properly."

[110] Ben Zion Wacholder, *Eupolemus: A Study of Judaeo-Greek Literature* (Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Press, 1974) 274–276, notes that one of the most interesting aspects of the Aristeas tradition is the fact that the impetus for the translation of Scripture had come from the outside world. "In view of the concurrent opening of the Babylonian, Egyptian, and Phoenician writings to Greek audi-ences, there is no reason to accept a modern dogmatism that entirely rejects the reports of the an-cients." Thus, there is reason to believe that traditions recorded in MRI on the LXX could represent very early Jewish attempts to alter the impressions made by the Scriptural text.

[111] This is Tov's argument, "The Rabbinic Tradition Concerning the 'Alterations' . . .," 75. See Geza Vermes' recent comments in "The War Over the Scrolls," *The New York Review of Books* xli/14 (August 11, 1994) 12, where he ascribes to the copyists "a considerable degree of creative freedom" in establishing the readings in a given manuscript.

dardization often brought the Greek translations back in line with what we today have in the MT. In the fourth cave of Qumran, Greek renditions of the Minor Prophets and Leviticus prove that Greek translations other than what became the standardized LXX were in circulation in Palestine.[112] Moreover, these passages support the notion that over time, translations were standardized according to the ever emerging authoritative Hebrew source.

But even if the list were fabricated, Fossum's charge that they were combating Philo's interpretation is difficult to understand. A careful reading of Philo would demonstrate that the Alexandrian was loathe to accept the conventional androgyne myth himself (spiritualizing it altogether) and therefore could not have been the origin of the MRI's concern—if this was their concern at all. What Fossum's argument (almost inadvertantly) does appropriately establish for us is the ambiguity of the passages altogether. His position—that this passage does not support the concept of androgyny—has to be entertained simply because of the oscillation in the manuscripts between "created him" and "created them," as well as the highly ambiguous combinations with the word "apertures." When it comes to the MRI passage and this tradition in general, John Bowker's final judgment is most circumspect: "it is possible that the full force of *naqab* has been lost, and that it may simply mean 'male and female.' This is supported by the fact that exactly the same phrase was used by both Targums in Gen. iv.19. . . ."[113] In short, the MRI may contain reference to this tradition, but doubts still remain.

One of the other emendations recorded among these lists relates quite specifically to Gn 1:26, ‫נעשׂה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו‬ which is sometimes rendered ‫אעשׂה אדם בצלם ובדמות‬. Emanuel Tov reconstructs the Greek to be ποιήσω ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα καί καθ' ὁμοίωσιν. Obviously, this emendation bypasses the problem treated in this *petiḥta'* altogether, by eliminating the plurality of the verb and by dropping the pronominal endings. Tov posits that the "translator did not represent the pronouns in order to avoid an anthropomorphic description,"[114] but it is doubtful that this was the case. The debate on anthropomorphism would take us too far afield in this context, but the research of Michael Klein and others originally in the field of Targum, have shown falacious the popular assumption that rabbinic

[112] These may be "daughter" translations, or altogether independent. Others maintain that these fragments are truer to the original LXX than subsequent "fixed" renditions which conformed more to the proto-MT. See P. W. Skehan, "The Qumran Manuscripts and Textual Criticism," *Vetus Testamentum Supplement* 4 (1957), reprinted in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text,* edited by F. M. Cross and S. Talmon, 212–225, and in the same volume, the reprint of his 1965 study, "The Biblical Scrolls from Qumran and the Text of the Old Testament," 264–277. On Greek traditions see Emanuel Tov's *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) 136ff.; as well as his chapter "The Septuagint," in *Mikra,* edited by Martin Jan Mulder (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988) 168ff.

[113] Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature,* 142.

[114] Tov, "The Rabbinic Tradition Concerning the 'Alterations' . . .," 85.

literature is anti-anthropomorphic.[115] The more compelling motivation would have been the avoidance of the plural suffixes in accordance with the initial change from נעשה to אעשה. The consideration of the Hermetica literature which follows shall demonstrate that the androgyne solution was already present during the era of Egyptian Greek translations. Clearly more than one option was pursued in the exegetical traditions. Indeed, once having rid themselves of the plural in Gn 1:26, the need for the androgyny solution would have been greatly abated, though not altogether.

In *De Vita Contemplativa,* Philo of Alexandria lashes out against the "mythical stories" which spoke of a primal being who combined the characteristics of both sexes. He stated that they "were regarded with supreme contempt by 'the disciples of Moses trained from their earliest years to love the truth.'"[116] Philo was clearly aware of the exegetical uses of the androgyne myth, but despite his awareness of the independent Greek mythological usages, the terminology in his treatment of the first anthropos is difficult to decipher. In *De Opificio Mundi* 134 we read:

> But the man who came into existence after the image of God is what one might call an idea, or a genus, or a seal, an object of thought, incorporeal, *neither male nor female,* by nature incorruptible.

The controversial expression in this passage, οὔτ' ἄρρεν οὔτε θῆλυ, could mean either asexual or bisexual, that is, androgynous. C. H. Dodd, for instance, argues that "Philo understood the LXX of Gen 1:27 . . . to mean 'God created man, like Himself, bisexual,' i.e., bisexuality (or asexuality) is a part of the image of God." Dodd evades making a decision between the two by maintaining that "asexuality is equivalent to bisexuality."[117] Though such a claim is difficult to support, it is significant that Dodd is willing to ascribe the direction of this exegesis to God's image. In contrast, Richard Baer, following early 19th century precedents, argues that Philo's position was that the first man was asexual. Philo created a double-bifurcation in the nature of the first man, noting a dichotomy between the rational soul and the irrational soul, as well as the soul and the body. Baer summarizes his exegetical logic as follows:

> Because man is a composite . . . consisting of both a heavenly and an earthly part, in the case of man God first forms the genus of each part of man, which only "afterwards" together form the first empirical man, the Species Adam. Neither of these "men," the earthly or the heavenly (i.e. the man created after the image of God), is to be thought of as an actually existing man but only as a generic component part of the first empirical man.[118]

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[115] See Michael L. Klein, "The Translation of Anthropomorphisms and Anthropopathisms in the Targumim," in *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum Congress Volume, Vienna* 1980 (Leiden: Brill, 1981), as well as his earlier study, "The Preposition קדם ('Before'): A Pseudo-Anti-Anthropomorphism in the Targums," *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1979): 502–507. Also see Etan Levine's *The Aramaic Version of the Bible* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988) whose argument cites Klein and expands upon it.

[116] *De Vita Contemplativa,* 7,63: see H. A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,* 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press [1947] 1982) I, 33.

[117] C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London, 1935): 151.

[118] Richard A. Baer, Jr. *Philo's Use of the Categories of Male and Female* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 28.

Philo's adaptation of the Platonic model of the Ideas leads him to argue, according to Baer, that that part of man which was created in God's image (the "Heavenly Man"), "the rational soul of man, which is one and indivisible and closely related to the Logos and God himself, in no way participates in sexuality."[119] Baer maintains that Philo was against the use of the *mythological* content of the sexual imagery and therefore sought to move away from the implications of androgyny as it appears in Plato's *Symposium*.[120]

Philo recognized that whatever the first man was, he had to be a semblance of God. In fact, his problems with the issue of sexuality derive from his desire to make those "images" as identical as possible given the limits of his philosophy of bifurcation, spirituality and incorporeality. This is made clear in his comment on Zechariah 6:12 which occurs in *De Confusione Linguarum* (62f.):

A strange appellation, if you think that the reference is to the man composed of body and soul; but if it refers to the incorporeal Man, who is no other than the divine image, you will admit that the name 'Aνατολή has been given him most appropriately, for the Father of all caused him to spring forth (ἀνέτειλε) as His eldest (πρεσβύτατον) son, whom he elsewhere calls "first-born" . . .; and the begotten one, imitating his Father's ways, looked to the archetypal models and shaped the forms.[121]

The striking similarities between Philo and numerous Gnostic passages have been discussed in the scholarship and need not occupy us here.[122] Philo is important to our discussion, however, as a source for comparison. Having incorporated the implications of Platonism, Philo is driven to exegetical and cosmologically minded solutions which have echoes in the writings of the sages, but with extremely different results. All of the ancient sources reflect the fact that the anthropology of the interpreter is directly linked to however the exegete conceives of God—for ultimately, that is how the first man must also have been. Unfortunately, Philo does not indicate which other sources at his disposal employed the androgyne myth in exegetical solutions.

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[119] Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories*, 65.

[120] Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories*, 38. Also see Boyarin's discussion in *Carnal Israel*, 37–42.

[121] I have used the translation found in J. E. Fossum, *The Name of God*, 287. Fossum cites this passage as possible evidence that Philo believed in a demiurgic function for the "Heavenly Man."

[122] See the comprehensive overview of the scholarship on this issue in B. A. Pearson, "Philo and Gnosticism," *ANRW* II.21.1: 295–342; as well as his earlier study, "Friedländer Revisited: Alexandrian Judaism and Gnostic Origins," *Studia Philonica* 2 (1973): 23–39. Pearson contrasts Friedländer and Jonas. Also see Fossum's comments *The Name of God*, 286f., but in greater depth, see his treatment in "Gen. 1,26 and 2,7 in Judaism, Samaritanism, and Gnosticism," *JSJ* 16,2 (1985), 203–208. For the concept of the division of the soul, see Plato's *Timaeus* 41c and 69c and our discussion below. On the use of Plato in the Gnostic sources as well as Philo with respect to the creation of man, see R. Van den Broek, "The Creation of Adam's Psychic Body in the Apocryphon of John," in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions*, edited by R. Van den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren (Leiden: Brill, 1981) 38–57.

III.   Corpus Hermeticum

Passages in the *Corpus Hermeticum*[123] shed an extraordinary light on the antiquity of the ideas expressed in BR 8 §1. Most scholars are ready to attribute the opening discourse, *Poimandres* as well as parts of *Asclepius*, to the workings of a Jewish pen.[124] In contrast, Hans Jonas argued that "the Hermetic writings . . . not only are purely pagan but even lack potential reference to either Judaism or Christianity, though the Poimandres treatise for one shows its author's acquaintance with the biblical story of creation which through the Septuagint translation had become widely known in the Greek world."[125] Though I am inclined to believe that in this instance, only a Jew (or perhaps, an anti-Jew) would have been so very concerned with the biblical motifs, our purpose here is not to review the evidence or scholarly discourse on the corpus, but to use these sources as a way of demonstrating the antiquity of the mythological matrix which emerges in BR.[126]

Unfortunately, the dating of these sources is not without controversy either. As the Hermetica literature underwent centuries of transformations, it is difficult to establish just when a given tractate originated. Birger Pearson dates the *Poimandres* to the very end of the second century C.E.[127] The various theoretical *Hermetica,* of which *Asclepius*[128] is but one tractate, are

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[123] All quotes will be from Brian P. Copenhaver, *Hermetica.*

[124] For the influence of Jewish thought on the *Corpus Hermeticum,* see Birger A. Pearson, "Jewish Elements in *Corpus Hermeticum I (Poimandres)"* in Pearson, ed., *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), this being a revised and updated version of a study by the same name published in 1981; Pearson provides a bibliography of those who have discussed the Jewish influence, if not the Jewish origin of passages in *Poimandres,* and he draws parallels with *2 Enoch* (Slavonic). Also see his brief summary in Michael Stone's *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period,* edited by Stone (Van Gorcum/Fortress Press, 1984), 474–475. See Brian Copenhaver's Introduction to *Hermetica,* xxviii and following. Also see John R. Barlett, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Josephus, Aristeas, the Sibylline Oracles, Eupolemus* (Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World, I.1 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985]). Walter Burket, in *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) maintains that this work has a "Jewish-Christian background," making it such that "whatever elements of pagan mysteries show up are modified by the filter of a religious system that differs radically from the environment in which pagan mysteries were known to thrive." (67) I find no evidence of Christian influence on the *Poimandres* or *Asclepius* documents.

[125] Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963, 2nd edition) 147.

[126] The question of Jewish origin is one which carries over to an enormous amount of material in the Hellenistic world. Erwin R. Goodenough discusses the issue in many contexts, but most interesting may be the consideration of charms, amulets and magic papyri which appear in pagan contexts with heavy "Jewish influences." See *Jewish Symbols of the Greco-Roman World* (NY: Bollingen/Pantheon, 1953–1968) I-XIII, especially vol. II, p.153ff. Goodenough starts by recognizing that pagans might simply have adopted Jewish god-names and idioms as part of cultural syncretism.

[127] Birger A. Pearson, "Jewish Elements in *Corpus Hermeticum I (Poimandres),"* 147. Those who want a comprehensive discussion of the scholarship on the dating process should consult Copenhaver and Pearson.

[128] See Robinson, *NH,* the introduction to the *Asclepius* fragment edited and translated by J. Brashler, P. A. Dirkse, and D. M. Parrott, 330–331. *Asclepius,* thought to have been composed originally in Greek, survived only in Latin until the discovery of NH. The Coptic *Asclepius* is similar though not identical to the Latin version.

cited in sources as early as the first century C.E., and Copenhaver suggests that none of them are later than the third century.[129] Concerning *Poimandres* and *Asclepius,* some scholars have supported early dates of composition by citing the lack of stringent dualism and the absence of a negative attitude toward the material world, both signatures of the later gnostic literature.[130] But thematic arguments are not foolproof in that thematic developments need not follow an orderly chronology. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that these non-gnostic documents were included at Nag Hammadi without ideological alterations—this despite the fact that the Hermetic idiom would later be used to reflect pagan and gnostic ideas quite regularly.[131] Roman and Church citations still remain our most secure dating referrents, confidently placing the non-gnostic and non-Christian sections of *Poimandres* and *Asclepius* some time between 100 B.C.E. and 150 C.E.

This being said, the general themes of this literature would appear to be much older. This judgment is made on the basis of literary parallels drawn with both Orphic and Sybilline documents. The twelve books of the *Sibylline Oracles* were composed over three-quarters of a millennium, from the second century B.C.E. to the middle of the seventh century C.E. Books 3, 5 and parts of 4 all reflect Jewish authorship and are thought to precede the turn of the millennium.[132] Many of these documents are quite similar to the oracular *Hermetica* in significant ways, not only with respect to the informant's role, but also with regard to apocalyptic and eschatological themes.

Equally noteworthy is the corpus of pseudepigraphic testaments and apocalyptic tractates from the Second Temple period which parallel the structure of the older pagan oracular dialogues. These documents attest to the antiquity of this literary tradition; yet others speak more specifically to the themes which interest us in this context. The incursion of Hermetic traditions into Jewish intellectual circles is noted in documents stemming from second century C.E. Egypt. Fragments preserved from the little-known historian Artapanus credit Moses with the creation of the sacred letters (writing in hieroglyphics?) "for which the priests honored him as a God, calling him Hermes."[133] The debate over whether Artapanus drew this motif from (the

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[129] Copenhaver's Introduction to *Hermetica,* xxxi, citing Roman historians, and xliii–xliv, citing early Christian evidence.

[130] In Robinson, *NH,* 336 (*Asclepius,* vi,8) Asclepius asks "Is the world good?" to which Trismegistus replies, "it is good, as I shall teach you."

[131] The Hermetic literature of NH is now called "The Discourse of the Eighth and Ninth," after an opening phrase of the document. See Robinson, *NH,* 321, for the comments of its editors and translators, J. Brashler, P. A. Dirkse, and D. M. Parrott.

[132] See Michael Stone's chapter on Apocalptic Literature in *Jewish Writings* 421f. David Flusser places the document before 180 C.E. See his discussion of the Christian description of creation and preexistence and its possible relationship to Zoroastrian thought, in *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988) 355–360.

[133] Ben Zion Wacholder, *Eupolemus,* 80. Associating one who speaks with God with Hermes was common. Paul will later be called Hermes as well, Acts 14:12. Artapanus may be as early as the third century B.C.E., but some scholars date him as late as the first century, C.E. L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian,* I, 237. See J. J. Collins' introduction and translation of relevant fragments in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* II, 89ff. See 889 for the passage alluded to by Wacholder.

pagan) Hecateus of Abdera or an independent Jewish source need not concern us.[134] Orphic traditions were integrated by Egyptian Jewish circles as well, where Orpheus' "traditional association with Musaeus" was exploited to mean that Moses was Orpheus' teacher.[135] These fragments from history serve as important circumstantial evidence as to the degree of literary syncretism in the early hellenistic era. No matter what position one takes with regard to the *Poimandres, Asclepius,* the Orphic and Sibylline literatures, what is clear is that at least parts of them have pre-Christian origins and developed as attempts to merge pagan and Jewish mythology. The use of the Hermetic idiom by Jews can confidently be placed in the late second century B.C.E., regardless of whether or not *Poimandres,* as we now have it, actually stems from that time or a century later.

We turn to the motifs in the Hermetic literature which resemble those in the *petiḥta*'. In the Latin *Asclepius,* ascribing androgyny to the deity is used to explain god's ability to procreate. Two sexes were necessary for humans and animals to procreate and the same is said of the one god who must be "completely full of the fertility of both sexes and ever pregnant with his own will, always beget[ting] whatever he wishes to procreate." When the astounded Asclepius asks, "Do you say that god is both sexes . . . ?" Trismegistus answers affirmatively and expounds upon the theme with regard to other procreating beings.[136] In contrast to Philo and other hellenistic sources, the initial creation in Asclepius is not "spiritualized," but quite direct and corporeal. Thus, we have absent here the hellenized, idealized forms of androgyny which some have seen as underlying a rabbinic polemic in BR 8 §1.[137] This discourse does not invoke the divine-image argument directly; however, other motifs taken up later by Trismegistus are quite similar to those found in the opening *petiḥta*'. For instance, Asclepius learns that god created the human beings with a unique ability to reason, and that these cognitive skills were to help them *"spurn the vices of bodies,"* while reaching *"for immortality as their hope and intention."* Trismegistus makes it clear that

god made mankind good and capable of immortality through his two natures, divine and mortal, and so god willed the arrangement whereby mankind was ordained to be better than the gods, who were formed only from immortal nature, and better than all other mortals as well. Consequently, since he is conjoined to them in kinship, *mankind honors the gods with reverent and holy mind.* . . . [. . .] Not only is mankind glorified; he glorifies as well. He not only advances toward god; he also makes the gods strong.[138]

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[134] Wacholder provides a detailed discussion of the evidence in *Eupolemus,* 85ff. Also noteworthy is Martin Hengel's discussion in *Judaism and Hellenism,* translated by John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) 92ff.

[135] Copenhaver, *Hermetica,* xxviii. "An Orphic *Testament,* probably of the first century B.C.E., makes Orpheus recant his polytheism and teach Musaeus about the one God. Alexandria produced syncretist Orphica in the next century."

[136] Copenhaver, *Hermetica, Asclepius,* 78–79.

[137] See especially Boyarin on this, *Carnal Israel,* p.43.

[138] Copenhaver, *Hermetica, Asclepius,* (§22–24), 80–81.

The thematic parallels with the *petiḥta'* of BR §1 concern three issues. (1) Trismegistus understands the human being to have been created with immortality as a potential, just as the *petiḥta'* states, "he [can potentially] enjoy two worlds."[139] (2) What determines man's fate in the *petiḥta'* is his conduct; ethical behavior brings the world-to-come within reach. Asclepius is taught that it is man's "unique reason and learning through which humans could banish and spurn the vices of the bodies, and he [God] made them reach for immortality as their hope and intention." The theme is expanded in *Asclepius* §28 where the process of judgement is described. In §29 we learn that "reverence for god and supreme fidelity" guarantee

immortality to come. This is what will separate the good from the wicked. When he has seen the light of reason as if with his eyes, every good person is enlightened by fidelity, reverence, wisdom, worship and respect for god, and the confidence of his belief puts him as far from humanity as the sun outshines the stars.

Finally, (3) the human being is glorified above the other beings, but "he glorifies as well." The theme of praise is contrasted with the theme of punishment in the concluding section of the *petiḥta'*, when R. Shmuel b. R. Tanhum admonishes *'adam* for his failure to praise earlier.

As we have noted, immortality as the soteriological reward for ethical behavior is central to the opening *petiḥta'* of BR 8 §1. It is difficult to establish when this idea may have first entered Judaism. It is not derived from any particular pagan source, Platonic or otherwise. In Greek philosophical writings, the survival of the incorporeal soul is not affected by the moral conduct of a being; it is by nature immortal while the body, corporeal, is by nature perishable. While failure to envision and ascend to the "ideas" may doom the immortal soul to repeated imprisonments within the material world, its immortality is never affected by external states of being.[140] Among the Jewish literatures not heavily influenced by Hellenism, immortality is altogether absent. The Qumran sect[141] is silent on the issue of immortality, despite the fact that central to its ideology is an eschatological era of destruction.[142] Among hellenized Jewish writings, the situation is quite different. The Greek apocryphal Book of Wisdom,[143] probably written by an Alexandrian Jew during the first century B.C.E., combines immortality with eschatology in a manner reminiscent of *Asclepius*. But the *Book of Wisdom*, or for that matter, other apocalyptic tracts, do not contain the confluence of

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[139] I will comment further on this image in a discussion of the *Poimandres* parallel.

[140] See Walter Burkert's discussion in *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) 323–324.

[141] These documents may date back to the middle of the second century B.C.E., and certainly do not post-date the first century C.E.

[142] See Geza Vermes' discussion in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) 187.

[143] See *Book of Wisdom* chapters 3–5.

images which emerge in the *petiḥtaʾ; Asclepius* does. Trismegistus actually sounds like a sage of Tractate ʾAvot when he teaches:

[every person is] subject to penalties for the right or wrong they have done in life, and the penalties after death are more severe in so far as their *wrongdoing may have been hidden during life*. The divinity foreknows all of it, so one pays the penalty precisely in proportion to one's wrongdoing.[144]

Motifs shared by *Poimandres* and BR 8 §1 are yet more extensive than what is found in Asclepius. Not only does *Poimandres* provide the very same justification for the androgynous nature of *ʾadam* operative in §1, but the confluence of details present in the first four sections of the *petiḥtaʾ* are reflected in *Poimandres* even in the same order. In the first discourse, Poimandres informs Hermes that god, an androgyne[145]

gave birth to a man like himself whom he loved as his own child. The man was most fair: he *had the father's image;* and god, who was really in love with *his own form,* bestowed on him all his craftworks.[146]

Details of the man's form follow:

. . . unlike any other living thing on earth, mankind is twofold—*in the body mortal but immortal in the essential man.* Even though he is immortal and has authority over all things, mankind is affected by mortality because he is *subject to fate;* thus, although man is above the cosmic framework, he became a slave with it. *He is androgyne because he comes from an androgyne father,* and he never sleeps because he comes from one who is sleepless. [Yet love and sleep are his] masters.[147]

Here Poimandres makes explicit the notion that man is androgynous because he is created specifically in the image of the androgyne deity. There can be no doubt that the impetus for such a comment derives from the biblical verse in Genesis, 1:26-7, already discussed as part of the LXX list of emendations.[148] The use of the motif also diverges significantly from the Platonic usage. There, no reason is given for the creation of the hermaphrodite, and surely in Plato the notion of emulation could not have been a possibility since Greek gods were *not* androgynous.[149]

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[144] See M. ʾAvot 3.15 (Albeck edition): הכל צפוי והרשות נתונה ובטוב העולם נדון והכל לפי רב המעשה. Ephraim Urbach persuasively argues that the opening phrase does not convey the notion of predestination (it is usually translated "everything is foreseen"), but should be rendered, "everything is seen [by God]," using the passive participle to mean that God views everything. See Urbach's *The Sages,* I, 257 and the accompanying notes in II,802 n.11 giving references of relevance. The last phrase is reminiscent of the classical principle of מדה כנגד מידה. In contrast, the *Hodayot* of Qumran contain quite expressly the concept of predestination. See for instance Jacob Licht, מגילת ההודיות (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1957), 57, where it reads ובטרם בראתם ידעתה מעשיהם לעולמי עד.

[145] Copenhaver, *Hermetica,* I,8 (p.2). All emphases indicated by italics in the passages cited from *Hermetica* are my own.

[146] Copenhaver, *Hermetica,* I,12 (p.3).

[147] Copenhaver, *Hermetica,* I,15 (p.3).

[148] Again, noting Jonas' argument cited above, it does not really matter whether the exegesis was performed by pagans on the LXX or Jews; the fact of the matter is that the androgyny solution was applied to these very verses because of the issue of the divine/human image.

[149] The exception, of course, is the son of Hermes and Aphrodite, whose fusion with a nymph of a fountain in which he bathed, Salmacis, resulted in a beautiful male youth with developed breasts. For Greek sources and a discussion of this motif in Hellene, see C. A. E. Jessen's "Hermaphroditos," in Pauly-Wissowa 8 (I) 1912: 714–721.

The difference between the two beings (God and the first human) lies in their susceptibility to the powers of fate; god is immortal, man is only potentially immortal. As we noted above with respect to *Asclepius,* the very same theme is put forth at the beginning of BR 8 §1: "If a man is meritorious, he enjoys two worlds. . . . But if he is not meritorious, he is destined to provide a complete accounting [of his misconduct]. . . ." The initial immortality *(in potentia)* of Adam is not expounded specifically in this BR passage, though I believe it is assumed. It is made explicit in BR 21 §5: "[Adam was] like Elijah: just as he did not experience the taste of death, so [Adam] too was *not meant to experience death* [but for his sin]." As is consistent throughout the *petihta*ʾ, this assumption about the nature of man was necessitated by the claim that man was created in God's image. The *petihta*ʾ under discussion starts out with that very realization, only immortality is translated into the dual realms of human life: this world and the world to come. Whereas the Hermetic discourse attributes the foundering of man explicitly to the weaknesses of the flesh—love and sleep are probably metonymic for the numerous human frailties which distinguish us from gods[150]—the *darshan* leaves the cause of Adam's faltering to other BR passages.[151] However, *Poimandres,* BR 8 §1 and *Asclepius* all see mortality as brought about by man and not the original intention of his creator.

Christian interpreters since anquity have emphasized the issues of moral responsibility and disobedience as the central aspect of the Adam and Eve narrative.[152] A close reading of the text makes it absolutely clear that the Adam and Eve story is concerned with immortality lost and *not* Paradise Lost![153] By fulfilling one's potential to act benevolently, one achieves immortality (life in the world to come). Malevolence results in one's failure to achieve the desired soteriological state (which means one is punished).

Making the parallel character of the *Poimandres* yet more noteworthy is the explanation given for the creation of woman; it is identical to that offered by R. Shmuel bar Nahman.

Hear the rest, the word you yearn to hear. When the cycle was completed, the bond among all things was sundered by the counsel of god. All living things, *which had been androgyne, were sundered into two parts—humans along with them—and part of them became male, part likewise female.* But god immediately spoke a holy speech: "Increase in increasing and multiply in multitude, all you creatures and craftworks, and let him [who] is mindful recognize that he is immortal, that desire is the cause of death, and let him recognize all that exists."

After god said this, providence, through fate and through the cosmic framework, caused acts of intercourse and set in train acts of birth; and all things were multiplied according to kind. The one

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[150] Asclepius cited food and striving for sustenance, as well as other physical (material) failings.

[151] See the material in BR 19–21.

[152] See Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent,* especially the introduction and first chapter.

[153] See especially Gn 3:22: . . . *Now that man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!* Rarely in exegetical texts is this character of the story emphasized. The sin has become dominant because of the poetic insertion elucidating the punishment. But my reading is that the punishment poem is in fact separate from the original concern of the narrative, which attempted to explain how it came about that we either lost, or could not maintain immortality.

who recognized himself attained the chosen good, but the one who loved the body that came from the error of desire goes on in darkness, errant, suffering sensibly the effects of death.[154]

The author's awareness of Plato's *Symposium* need not be doubted. The stipulation that beings create according to their own kind and that there is a mandate to be fruitful and multiply, reflects verses in the first chapter of Genesis.[155] Can there be any doubt that these materials provide the mythological antecedents to the rabbinic documents? Mere coincidence would not adequately explain the confluence of *this many* identical ideas. Thus, the Jewish exegetical tradition of using the androgyne to solve the meaning of "in-the-divine-image" predates our midrashic version perhaps by as much as 550 years, but not less than three centuries. Moreover, it appears to have had as much prominence among Egyptian Jews as it would come to have in Roman Palestine.[156]

IV.   Gnostic Sources

The debate over whether Gnosticism as a movement finds its origins in Judaism, Jewish Christianity, or some other permutation of the two, is still controversial and will probably never find resolution. Ioan Couliano noted that ". . . it remains a mystery why our Platonists [behind this literature] were so keen on commenting on the Book of Genesis instead of anything else. . . ."[157] Couliano narrowed the originators of the gnostic literature to "Jewish Platonists *not bound to Jewish tradition* . . . Jewish-Christian circles from the turn of the Ist century C.E. or perhaps . . . Christians from the beginning of the IInd."[158] One of the strongest arguments for Jewish origins of many of the writings is the fact that they exhibit no Christian ideology. This fact is not persuasive according to Bentley Layton. He believes that those texts devoid of specifically Christian content do not indicate other than a Christian form of Gnosticism. Arguing that "ancient Christians certainly made use of writings that contained no explicit reference to Jesus Christ or to other distinctive marks of their own religion," Layton claims that neutral sounding documents cannot serve as conclusive evidence for an extra-Christian, or even pre-Christian gnostic movement.[159]

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[154] Copenhaver, *Hermetica,* 1,18–19 (p.4).

[155] As Pearson points out, scholars as early as the 10th century linked passages to Genesis. See Pearson's review of the scholarship in "Jewish Elements in *Corpus Hermeticum I (Poimandres),*" 137.

[156] This is not to suggest that the Egyptian Jews did not get the matrix from Palestine itself, but unfortunately, none of our early sources stem from this region. Again, it should be emphasized that this hellenized source does not spiritualize the androgyne as other Egyptian-Jewish sources would do.

[157] Ioan P. Couliano, *The Tree of Gnosis* ([French edition, 1990] San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992) 135.

[158] Couliano, *Tree of Gnosis,* 135. What constituted "Jewish tradition" in Alexandria may already have incorporated much Platonism, as the Hermetica and Philo's writings eventually suggest. Christians may have come to Gnosticism independently of Judaism in Alexandria. Thus, Couliano does not really offer us enough variables here.

[159] Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures* (NY: Doubleday, 1987) 20–21.

The concern here is not whether the sources to be considered are Christian or Jewish in origin, but rather that they exhibit the very exegetical solutions, or creative misreadings, as Harold Bloom might refer to them,[160] as are later found in rabbinic literature. Given the nature of the Hermetic literature and the tradition of LXX emendations—both of which appear to predate the Nag Hammadi material—I believe it is accurate to look upon some of the gnostic solutions as permutations of standing Jewish traditions, strategically distorted. Regardless of why the gnostics felt obliged to integrate the Genesis narrative with their philosophical understanding of the existential predicament, the fact remains that the problems addressed in some of Nag Hammadi texts are identical to those considered in BR; but more importantly, the solutions are analogous as well. What we are seeing, therefore, is a continuum of an exegetical tradition, which changes its garb from exoteric to esoteric and then back again, repeatedly through history, indeed, well into the medieval world.

In a brief study, Elaine Pagels identifies

three different ways in which the image of the androgyne occurs in gnostic sources: first, to indicate a state of human autonomy; second, to describe the original unity of humankind, or its state of ultimate perfection; third, to represent the "fullness" of the divine.[161]

By "'fullness' of the divine" Pagels means that "the true nature of the divine being" is described in answer to the exegetical question, "How . . . could a masculine, single God say . . ." the words recorded in Genesis, *let us make . . . in our image, after our likeness?*[162] The only possible answer is that God was both male and female, able to procreate alone. Pagels provides examples of the three ways she believes the androgyne image is used. The goal here is to identify more specifically than she had space to do in the *Parabola* article, just how exegetical the adaptations of the androgyne motif are in gnostic sources.[163] I also hope to indicate that the androgyne motif is but one in a matrix which we have been tracing in other sources as well.

In *On the Origin of the World* we read:

And when Pistis Sophia desired to cause the thing that had no spirit to be formed into a likeness and to rule over matter and over all her forces, there appeared for the first time a ruler, out of the waters, lionlike in appearance, *androgynous*, having great authority within him, and ignorant of whence he had come into being. Now when Pistis Sophia saw him moving about the depth of the waters she said to him, "Child, pass through to here," whose equivalent is *"yalda baoth."*

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[160] Harold Bloom, *The American Religion* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1992), 51: "Gnosticism takes its origins in a strong reaction against or creative misreading of an overwhelming precursor, the Hebrew Bible." Also see his comments in *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992) 114, there referring to Coulianu's work.

[161] Elaine Pagels, "The Gnostic Vision," *Parabola* 3,4 (Nov 1978) 9.

[162] Pagels, "The Gnostic Vision," 8.

[163] I will not cover all of the sources Pagels cites as some of them are irrelevant to the specific issue of exegetical adaptation.

Since that day there appeared the *principle of verbal expression,* which reached the gods and the angels and mankind. And what came into being as a result of verbal expression, the gods and the angels and mankind finished. Now as for the ruler Yaltabaoth,[164] he is ignorant of the force of Pistis: he did not see her face, rather he saw in the water the likeness that spoke with him. And because of that voice, he called himself Yaldabaoth. But Ariael is what the perfect call him, for he was like a lion. Now when he had come to have authority over matter, Pistis Sophia withdrew up to her light.

When the ruler saw his magnitude—and it was only himself that he saw: he saw nothing else, except for water and darkness—then he supposed that it was he alone who existed. His [. . .] was completed by verbal expression: it appeared as a spirit moving to and fro upon the waters. And when the spirit appeared, the ruler set apart the watery substance. And what was dry was divided into another place. And from matter he made for himself an abode, and he called it heaven. And from matter, the ruler made a footstool,[165] and he called it earth.

Next, the ruler had a thought—consistent with his nature—and by means of verbal expression he created an androgyne. (NH, 173 [II, 5; 100–101])

The individual themes and their confluence make this text particularly noteworthy. This source maintains the common hellenistic spiritualized, double-bifurcation: first, the bifurcation of the body and spirit and then the second bifurcation of spirit and soul. The being Pistis Sophia desired to create had no spirit, but it was nonetheless alive. Both Philo (as noted above) and Josephus reflect this double bifurcation, or *polypsychism,* which was a common approach in the hellenistic world.[166] Josephus writes of the creation of Adam that "God took dust from the ground, and formed man, and inserted in him a *spirit* and a *soul.*"[167] Likewise, Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, specifically identifies the whole being as having these three parts: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your *spirit* and *soul* and *body* be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."[168]

This soulless but living being is androgynous. In addition, he is of such an immense magnitude, that he can see nothing but his own being. The

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[164] The exact order and responsibility of the archons is not always consistently related among the sources, or even within a given work. Yaldabaoth is generally considered the ruler; however, his image is often that of the "Heavenly Man" as he is understood from Philo. For a hierachy, see Layton's discussion of *The Secret Book According to John* (=NH, *Apocryphon of John*), and his diagram, 12–13. The name has many spellings. I will use Yaldabaoth as the standard, but cite whatever spelling is used in quotations from sources.

[165] See Isaiah 66:1; Ps 99:5; Ps 132:7.

[166] See Ginzberg, *Legends* V, 74 n.18 notes that this multiple bifurcation of the soul was "prevalent in ancient times." He identifies as many as five different souls in the Midrashim: "blood, wind, breath, the principle of life, and the individual soul." Interestingly enough, some of the texts which preserve this abstraction even assign sexuality to the soul, as in the gnostic document known as *The Exegesis on the Soul,* Robinson, *NH,* 192 (II 127.19,24): "Wise men of old gave the soul feminine name. . . . As long as she was alone with the father, she was virgin and in form androgynous."

[167] Josephus, *Antiquities,* I.1,2. Interestingly, the tripartite division has a long history in Jewish mystical traditions where, Scholem argued, many early gnostic ideas reemerge. For instances, consider the end of *Sefer Bahir* §198, where Tamar is said to have been both male and female מפני שכוללת זכר ונקבה and the subsequent debate on Gn 1:27 where the *ʾadam-*androgyne theme is noted, but in line with soul, spirit and body being parallel to the verbs formed, made, and created (יצר, עשה, ברא).

[168] On the "trichotomous anthropology" of Paul, see Rudolph Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament,* I, 203f. Also see Segal, *Paul the Convert,* 38–9.

spirit, "moving to and fro upon the waters," which he believed to be responsible for his emergence into life, should be read as an interpolation of the phrase רוח מרחפת על פני המים. The water motif was a medium for visualizing deities and in this case appears to connote the image-making characteristic of the Genesis narrative.[169] Moreover, in this way the Gnostics were able to establish תהום, namely the "depths" or "chaos," as the origin of the creator god itself.

The importance of verbal expression is twofold here. First of all, the notion that mankind and the angels complete creation with their speech acts must be seen as an adaptation of the incident described in Gn 2:18f. where Adam uses the power of naming to identify (and in the NH text, create) the animals. Equally significant is the concept in Scripture of God creating by means of speech, a characteristic which serves to distinguish the levels of creators in the celestial realms for NH.[170] Creation via speech has been studied as an important aspect of the history of the *golem* motif.[171] Moshe Idel discusses a passage from *Sefer Yeṣira* which bifurcates the soul into that of the soul for the creature itself and "the soul of all the speech[172] which will be formed in the future."[173] Traditions in the Talmud imply that the studying of *Sefer Yeṣira*[174] could enable one to duplicate the acts of creation executed by God. The last chapter of *Sefer Yeṣira* teaches that "when Abraham

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[169] It is not altogether clear whether the well discussed rabbinic texts of the four who ascended to *pardes* might have a relation to this image. In the Babylonian Talmud, the Rabbi Akiba instructs: "When you draw near the stones of pure marble, do not say, 'Water, water. . . .'" (bHag 14b) The Talmudic texts simply read, "Ben Azzai looked and died," but Scholem quotes a manuscript of the Lesser Hekhaloth which contains the following reading: "[Ben Azzai] . . . stood at the gate of the sixth palace and saw the ethereal splendor of the pure marble plates. He opened his mouth and said twice, 'Water! Water!'" Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (NY: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965, 2nd ed.) 15. Also see David Halperin's discussion which compares the Talmudic texts and cites this mss tradition and others, in *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature,* 86ff.

[170] This is not unique to Hebrew Scriptures. In *Enuma Elish,* Marduk manifests his enormous powers by creating and destroying simply by commanding. See Stephanie Daley, *Myths of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1985).

[171] One should contrast, however, BR 5 §1, where God discovers that the power of speech is the source of all His problems with man.

[172] There clearly underlies the Onqelos translation of Gn 2:7 a similar principle of the soul engaging the power of speech, but the bifurcation is obscured: ונפח באפהי נשמתא דחיי והות באדם לרוח ממללא "And He blew into his nostrils a soul of life and *it became* in man a *speaking spirit.* Jarl Fossum, *Name of God,* 242, makes mention of this passage: "God's·infusion of his spirit into man was at the same time an endowment of the faculty of speech."

[173] Idel, *Golem,* 10; I am taking his suggestion that the word יצור here means "creature." This is from the last two dicta of the second chapter.

[174] There is some ambiguity as to whether the Talmud's ספר יצירה is to be identified with the work known as *Sefer Yeṣira* today. On the basis of the Talmudic references, many are inclined to date the work as early as the second to sixth century, such as Scholem, *Major Trends,* 75; and Y. Liebes, *Elisha's Sin: The Four who Entered Pardes and the Nature of Talmudic Mysticism* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1986) 115–116. Steven M. Wasserstrom, in "*Sefer Yeṣira* and Early Islam: A Reappraisal," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy,* 3 (1993) 1–30, posits that the eclectic text—as it now is—originates some time in the ninth century, and "functioned as a Jewish expression of the well-known Shiʿi-influenced gnostic intellectualism of the Muslim world, not that of a barely-documented secret Judaism of the Amoraic period." (23)

our father . . . came, he . . . succeeded at creation."[175] In the Talmud (bSan65b) we learn that R. Hanina and R. Oshaia (the latter being the sage to whom the first *petiḥta'* in BR is attributed), "spent every Sabbath eve in studying *Sefer Yetzirah,* by means of which they created a third-grown calf and ate it."[176] The Talmud makes explicit in the name of Raba, that "If the righteous desired it, they could [by living a life of absolute purity] be creators." Interestingly, *Genesis Rabba* may reflect the same sentiment in 8 §7 where the (albeit, pre-existent) souls of the righteous are exegetical identified as היוצרים. Whereas the creators in the gnostic texts are defective, the sages make human beings who are perfect in their righteousness, co-creators with God.

Yet more relevant to our concern is what follows in bSanhedrin 65b. Rabbah, presumably using the same knowledge as R. Hanina and R. Oshaia, actually created a man. He sent him to R. Zera who spoke to him (not knowing who he was or how he was created) at which point it becomes evident that Rabbah's creation was unable to speak.[177] Idel writes:

> We may summarize our attempt to explain the Talmudic text as follows: the pietists, or the righteous, are endowed indeed with extraordinary powers which are, however, apparently limited by the inescapable iniquities of these persons. [. . . .] An essential issue in the Talmudic text is the fact that the artificial man was not able to speak; ostensibly, this is the result of some iniquities in its creator, Rava.[178]

Idel concludes that the Talmudic argument was "conceived as part of the polemic with the pagan practices of creating speaking statues."[179] He does not cite the strong resemblance we find in this gnostic source, where a defect in the creators was responsible for the imperfections of this created being. Similarly, as we will note in a text from the *The Hypostasis of the*

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[175] The prooftext offered is Gn 12:5, . . . את הנפש אשר עשו בחרן . . . ויקח אברם which has traditionally been interpreted as meaning "converted to Judaism." However, see the difficult reading in BR 39 §14 and its parallel in 74 §4, where the "converting" is awkwardly contrasted with the phrase אם מתכנסים הם כל האומה לבראות יתוש אחד אין יכולין לזרוק בו נשמה. Cf. *Sifre* Deuteronomy (Finkelstein edition, JPS, 1969) 54.14f. Idel discusses the matter in *Golem,* 16 and 24 n44–45. A later midrashic tradition relates that Abraham and Shem (his teacher), after contemplating the truths of the Book, produce a living calf which they ultimately sacrifice. See Scholem, "The Idea of the Golem," 177 and ad loc, note 2; also Idel, *Golem,* 19. These passages derive from medieval commentaries, but Scholem approaches some of them as authentic fragments of the original *Sefer Yeṣira* text. The source of the particular motif appears to be "the apocryphal version" of Yehudah of Barcelona.

[176] See bSan 67b as well, and some relevant material on witchcraft and transformations of beings on the intervening pages. See Dan Cohn-Sherbok, "The Alphabet in Mandaean and Jewish Gnosticism," *Religion* 11 (1981) 227–234.

[177] R. Zera then ascribes the creation to "magicians," I suppose in contrast to God. But the point appears to be the conflicting attitude toward the actual ability to create; one dismissing it as sorcery, the other (Rabbah) seeking to emulate the divine powers by use of the divinely given formulas.

[178] Idel, *Golem,* 28f.

[179] Idel, *Golem,* 31.

Archons,[180] the lower powers were able to create a human being, but it lacked powers of mobility and intellect (also implying a state of speechlessness).[181]

In other aspects, the Jewish influence on this passage from *On the Origin of the World* is blatant. The equation of *Ariel* and *Yaldabaoth* is certainly dependent upon knowledge of the Hebrew (or Aramaic) roots. Gershom Scholem describes a magical amulet bearing the names Yaldabaoth and Ariel in Greek letters written next to a lion-headed figure;[182] on the converse side of the same amulet are the names of the seven Ophitic demonic rulers of the universe.[183] Scholem believes that Ariel was the older name for the Yaldabaoth. What is clear is that the equation could only have been made by one who had an understanding of the Hebrew name Ariel.[184] Of course, the

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[180] Robinson, *NH* 163 (II 4, 87:26f.), discussion to follow.

[181] Quite amazing is the longevity of such themes. In a medieval mystical document of R. Joseph Ashkenazi, the Tanna of Safed, we read a passage which sounds virtually identical to some of the Gnostic sources we will cite below: "a man can make a Golem which possesses a living soul [*nefeš ḥayyah*] by the power of his speech, but the [higher] soul [*nešamah*] cannot be conferred by man because it is from the divine speech." See Idel, *Golem,* 71.

[182] Ariel would only have been an angel within Jewish angelology. It is theoretically possible that other Aramaic speaking peoples could have coined the word without knowing Hebrew or the Jewish angelology, but they would have had to be either Christians or some other group which accepted Hebrew Scripture, for the significance of the lion-like figure derives from the first chapter of Ezekiel: *Each of them had a human face [at the front]; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right.* . . . (Ez 1:10)

[183] Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism,* 71–2. Scholem notes that Celsus, as reflected in Origen, knew of this Ophite equation, but Scholem does not mention that Origen doesn't equate Yaldabaoth with Ariel directly, but rather with Michael; *Contra Celsum,* vi, 30 Chadwick edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953) 345–6: "Celsus said that the first is formed in the shape of a lion; but he does not inform us what these people, who are really *the most impious* ones, call it. However, we found that the angel of the Creator, who in the holy scriptures is spoken naturally of with honour, was affirmed by that foul diagram to be Michael the lion-like." Yaldabaoth can only be equated with this image with the indirect reference, "And thou, Ialdabaoth, first and seventh, born to have power with boldness. . . ." (*Contra Celsum* vi:31, Chadwick, 247). Since Michael was called "the first," Yaldabaoth, as the "first" would be equal to Michael, and hence, also lion-like. Following this argument is Fossum, *Name of God,* 322–5, who states that "according to the Ophites, the angel Michael was considered the same as the demiurge Jaldabaoth." For a discussion of these problems of identification, see Howard M. Jackson, *The Lion Becomes Man: The Gnostic Leontomorphic Creator and the Platonic Tradition* (Society of Biblical Literature, 1985) 23ff. Jackson writes, "Such a double system of nomenclature is frequent in magical texts obsessed with knowing the 'true' names of gods."

[184] With respect to this specific issue, Scholem postulates that Jewish apostates may have been responsible for the transference. See Stroumsa, "Aher: A Gnostic," in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism,* 2 vols. edited by B. Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1981) II 808–818, for a history of this claim in scholarship. Also making this suggestion is E. Yamauchi, "The Descent of Ishtar, the Fall of Sophia and the Jewish Origins of Gnosticism," *Tyndale Bulletin* 29 (1978): 143–175, as well as in his article, "Jewish Gnosticism?" in *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions,* edited by R. Van den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren (Leiden: Brill, 1981) 467–497. Yamauchi believes that "it was perhaps through apostate rabbis like Elisha [ben Avuyah] that Jewish elements were introduced into Gnosticism. . . ." (492) Stroumsa, in "Aher: A Gnostic," cleverly suggests that the byname *ʾAḥer,* "stranger," is a euphemism for Sethian Gnostics who considered themselves genetically different as the descendants of Seth, and therefore referred to themselves as αλλογενής, "of another race, stranger." Despite Stroumsa's ingenuity, I am more inclined to follow the argument of Y. Liebes, *Elisha's Sin.* I believe Liebes successfully demonstrates that no texts ascribe to Elisha any sectarian behavior or belief known to be Gnostic in origin. See his comments on 52–53, which disclaim his earlier speculation, part of which makes up the very last note in Stroumsa's article. It remains to be shown how material was traded. There is still no proof that *sages* actually crossed the line.

author of this passage may simply have inherited the notion that Yaldabaoth resembled a lion without knowing the origin of the equation, but this does not diminish its Jewish origin.[185]

The creator gods of the Gnostics were *androgynous,* as were their initial creations formed in their image. This is clearly identical to the BR passage under consideration. The bisexuality of the creators is again emphasized in *On the Origin of the World* with the ascription of both masculine and feminine names to the original seven archons. The multiple names of God in Jewish mystical literature are most often approached as being representative of "various aspects of God's glory."[186] But we learn in the following gnostic passage that the dual names of deities (one male and one female) were necessary because of the bi-sexuality.

Seven appeared in chaos, androgynous. They have their masculine names and their feminine names. The feminine name is Pronoai (Forethought) Sambathas, which is "week." And his son is called Yao: his feminine name is Lordship.[187] Sabaoth: his feminine name is Deity.[188] Adonaios: his feminine name is Kingship.[189] Eloaios: his feminine name is Jealousy.[190] Oraios: his feminine name is Wealth.[191] And

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[185] For a summary of the scholarship on the etymology of *Yaldabaoth,* see Francis Fallon, *The Enthronement of Sabaoth: Jewish Elements in Gnostic Creation Myths* (Leiden: Brill, 1978) 29–37. He adopts the position argued by L. R. Clapham as presented in her dissertation, *Sanchuniathon: The First Two Cycles* (Harvard University, 1969). Clapham believes the name Yaldabaoth comes from *Yalda* and *baoth,* meaning "son of chaos." Gershom Scholem rejects this interpretation, arguing that the philology which sees *baoth* as somehow related to the Hebrew בוהו or the *bahwu* of Phoenician, is inaccurate; see his article, "Jaldabaoth Reconsidered," in *Mélanges d'Histoire des Religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech* (Paris, 1974): 405–21. Scholem believes that the name derives from the Aramaic active participle ילד (to give birth) and the personal name *Abaoth* which he sees as a shortened form of Sabaoth. Thus he translates, "Father of Sabaoth." Layton accepts this interpretation as well in *The Gnostic Scriptures* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987) 74 n.95. Fallon argues that the equation of *Samael* who is the creator of *Sabaoth* and *Yaldabaoth* ("begetter of Abaoth") which results from this etymology, does not follow through in the literature. But his argument cannot be sustained given the text in *The Apocryphon of John,* where we read explicitly, "Now the archon who is weak has three names. The first name is *Yaltabaoth,* the second is *Saklas,* and the third is *Samael.*" (Robinson *NH,* 111; Layton, *Gnostic Scriptures,* 36). Yet an earlier comment by Scholem may lead to a more cogent interpretation. In a footnote in *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition* (71, note 23) Scholem argues that the ending -ωθ was the "'magic suffix' par excellence," and that it had "no connection with the purely hypothetical word for chaos that has been invented *ad hoc.*" Scholem's interpretatin of *Yaldabaoth* in his later treatment assumes that *Abaoth* is a shortened form of Sabaoth, which it often is. However, I believe that his earlier insight is even more instructive. Joseph Dan has added yet another possible explanation; see his "Yaldabaoth, Once More," in *Threescore and Ten,* edited by Abraham J. Karp, et al., (Hoboken: Ktav, 1991) 123–131. Drawing on a rare expression in bBer 7a and *Sefer Yeṣira,* Dan writes as follows (129): ". . . the gnostic Yaldabaoth is a congested form of the universalistic formula used by Hekhalot mystics to describe the powers of the divine pleroma in addition to the specific name of each power, a formula that was frequently recited orally, and thus only the key letters were preserved in the non-Hebrew form. From יה אלהים אדני צבאות, the Greek and Coptic preserved the "Yah," the L of "Elohim," the D of Adonay, and the ending, "baoth" of Zevaoth" to create the combined name Yaldabaoth." Also see E. Aydeet Fischer-Mueller, "Yaldabaoth: The Gnostic Female Principle in its Fallenness," *Novum Testamentum* 32,1 (1990) 79–95.

[186] Scholem, *Major Trends,* 56.

[187] Clearly יי which is pronounced אדני, "my lord."

[188] צבאות, but the basis for the feminine "deity" is unclear.

[189] אדני, with the concept of יי מלך probably in mind.

[190] Either אל or אלוה are probably in mind, with אל קנא as the allusion (Ex 20:5).

[191] Association is unclear.

Astaphaios: his feminine name is Sophia (Wisdom).[192] These are the [seven] forces of the seven heavens of [chaos]. And they were born *androgynous, consistent with the immortal pattern that existed before them,* according to the wish of Pistis: so that *the likeness of what had existed since the beginning* might reign to the end.[193]

The confluence of motifs here is shared with both the *Corpus Hermeticum (Poimandres)* and BR 8 §1.[194] It is once again made explicit that the "likeness of what had existed since the beginning" relates to the creation act in the image of the creator(s). Moreover, inclusion of immortality in the emulation of that original image reflects the exegetical concern central to the *petihta'* and the passages from *Poimandres* noted above.

The hellenized forms of the Hebrew names of God[195] and the corresponding translations or exegetical puns, demonstrate that the author must have either been Jewish, had a considerable knowledge of Hebrew to foster such allusions, or perhaps he simply lifted (in a wholesale fashion) these motifs from Jewish sources. The first two are the most probable. In Greek theologies, the sexuality of the gods was an essential aspect of the divine persona. In great contrast, the Israelite God of Scriptures is usually thought to have "stood absolutely beyond the polarity of sex."[196] It is obvious that the intensified sexualization of divine appellations (and also the divinity) in rabbinic Judaism derives from hellenistic influence. But the pagan gods did not have two sexes, save for the image of the androgyne itself. The only

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[192] Astaphaios, apparently from the Greek, ἀστέφανς meaning "without crown." Astaphaios, having the face of a hyena, is usually identified as a demon.

[193] The continuation of the previous passage, following page, 174. The theogony and cosmology in this work is extremely difficult to sort out, as it appears to be a composite document, often repeating what was said previously, but with variations. See H. G. Bethge's introduction in Robinson, *NH* 170–1. On the names and the powers of characters they represent, see R. Van den Broek, "The Creation of Adam's Psychic Body in the Apocryphon of John," in Van den Broek, Studies, 1981: 39ff. Slightly different names appear in the *Apocryphon of John,* Irenaeus, Origen, etc. Van den Broek believes that this is similar to "Philo's view that God had bestowed special powers . . . on the heavenly bodies." As it turns out, the names do correspond with certain astrologies, as Van den Broek indicates.

[194] On the relationship between the Sophia mythology, androgyny and Nag Hammadi texts, see Phéme Perkins' study, "Sophia and the Mother-Father: The Gnostic Goddess" in *The Book of the Goddess Past and Present,* edited by Carl Olson. (NY: Crossroad, 1989) 96–109. Though Perkins acknowledges that the NH texts "have a special involvement with Jewish traditions" and "in many cases . . . deliberately exploit Jewish Midrashic traditions contrary to their original intent," no sources are cited to support the nature of the "involvement" or exploitation.

[195] For a more thorough treatment of the list of appellations, see Marmorstein, *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God* 1927 (Reprint, NY: Ktav, 1968) chapter 3, "The Rabbinic Synonyms for God," listed alphabetically, 54–107.

[196] Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* 1957 (trns. by D. M. G. Stalker, NY: Harper & Row, 1962) 27. This may be something of an overstatement, for the sexual imagery in the prophets which portrays Israel as the whoring wife who has left her husband may have connotations deeper than the surface meaning of the metaphor makes known. Nonetheless, sexual imagery with respect to God is extremely weak in most of Scripture especially when taken in comparison to other ancient Near-Eastern traditions and Greek mythology. See Tikva Frymer-Kensy, *In the Wake of the Goddesses,* who claims that there is a general "homogenization of gender" in Hebrew Scripture with respect to men and women (142), and with respect to God, see chapter 14, "Our Father and Our Mother," 162ff.

(surviving) written antecedants appear to be the gnostic and apocalyptic traditions which employ names connoting quite specifically one sexuality or the other, sometimes in combination to connote dual-sexuality. Whether these texts, in turn, are dependent upon Jewish myths which have been lost, is currently unknown. The bisexual nature of the first human being and its creator is the *adaptation* of pagan mythology expressly for rabbinic purposes which needed existence to derive from a monism.[197] In an altogether polytheistic religion, no such solution was necessary, as we saw to be the case in the Platonic use of the androgyne myth. But in a system where progeneration from multiple beings was not an option, dual-sexuality proved to be mythologically and intellectually felicitous.

The Hypostasis of the Archons contains a matrix of motifs similar to that found in *On the Origin of the World* as well as BR, but the text is an even more direct exegetical comment on verses in Genesis than that found in other Nag Hammadi sources.

The rulers *(archontes)* laid plans and said, "Come, let us create a man that will be soil from the earth." They modelled their creature as one wholly of the earth. [. . . .]

They had taken [some soil] from the earth and modelled their [man], after their body and [after the image] of God that had appeared [to them] in the waters.[198]

The image of the god which facilitates the creation of the first human being is only seen indirectly by the lower archons, the creating forces. Here again, the water acts as a type of mirror capturing the ephemeral image. The importance of water in the creation act for the Gnostics surely derives from the mysterious verse, ורוח אלהים מרחפת על־פני המים; it is understood that God's image (Spirit) was visible, but not that God Himself became visible for the archons to clearly see and emulate. The adaptation of the Gnostics also involves a direct exegetical comment on Gn 1:26; the word צלמנו is interpreted to mean "after their (i.e., the archons') body," and כדמותנו is understood as "[after the image] of God."[199] The division will manifest itself in a further bifurcation of the soul. The solution for the Gnostics was to

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[197] I am specifically not using the term "monotheism" in contrast to paganism in this context due to the debate over the appropriateness of this term. In a future work I will be commenting on this issue at great length. For a recent synopsis of the debate, see Lawrence Hurtado's "What Do We Mean by First-Century Jewish Monotheism," in E. H. Lovering, Jr., ed., *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993) 348–368. Hurtado provides a comprehensive summary of the various sides of the debate, though he does not include Hebrew and Aramaic Rabbinic literature in the survey.

[198] Robinson, *NH,* 163 (II,4; 87.25f.)

[199] Pearson, "Biblical Exegesis in Gnostic Literature," considers this passage in detail, however, he comments as follows: "This passage reflects an interpretation of the 'image' (εἰχών) of Gen 1:27, but also has to do with the creation of man's soul, a feature which derives from Gen 2:7, as has already been observed." I believe that the bifurcation of the images, one of the archons, and one of God, is more specific to this verse (i.e. 1:26 of MT, 1:27 of LXX).

ascribe the actual body-type to that of the archons, while God's likeness was less perceivable by the senses; it was also the real life-providing force. As the *Hypostasis of the Archons* continues, this becomes increasingly evident. The archons attempt to mobilize the first man by breathing into his face. Though this action provides him with a soul,

> (he remained) upon the ground many days. But they could not make him arise because of their powerlessness. Like storm winds they persisted (in blowing), *that they might try to capture that image,* which had appeared to them in the waters. And they did not know the identity of its power.

> Now all these (events) came to pass by the will of the father of the entirety. Afterwards, the spirit saw the soul-endowed man upon the ground. And the spirit came forth from the Adamantine Land; it descended and came to dwell within him, and that man became a living soul.

> It called his name Adam since he was found moving upon the ground.[200]

Though the archons are able to create the corporeal, they are impotent when it comes to actually providing the anthropos with self-mobility. Recognizing their failure at first, they increase their efforts, hoping to "capture the image," that is, emulate *God's image*—which is clearly a metonym for God's power. Once again we confront a double bifurcation of the person noted earlier. The double bifurcation appears to be based on a close reading of Gn 2:7. The opening words, וייצר יהוה אלהים את האדם are understood as: "YHVH and the Angels (i.e., Archons) created man."[201] The words אדם עפר מן האדמה as well as the phrase ויפח באפיו, are acts assigned to the lower beings. The final words, ויהי האדם לנפש חיה, again are associated with the supreme deity. As noted, the *blowing* of the archons, ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים, does manage to provide their creation with a soul, but it neither mobilizes

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[200] Robinson, *NH* 163 (II,4, 87:26f.) my emphasis. Pearson, "Biblical Exegesis," links this to Gn 2:7. See Pearson (75) for references to Plato and Philo concerning the background to the bifurcation of the creation of the soul and the body, as well as the two types of souls reflected in this text. A similar text is cited in Filoramo, *History of Gnosticism,* 158, ascribed to Saturninus, a successor to Menander: "'Let us make a man after the image and likeness.' When this was done, he says, and their creation could not stand erect becuase of the powerlessness of the angels, but crept like a worm, then the power above took pity on him because he had been made in his likeness and sent a spark of life which raised the man up . . . and made him alive."

[201] Were it my goal to point out the numerous parallels in rabbinic literature to this motif, I could easily fill numerous pages with quotations. The text of Pseudo-Jonathan explicitly has God and the angels creating: ואמר אלקים למלאכייא דמשמשין קמוי "And God said to the angels who serve before hi,m" דאיתבריין ביום תניין לבריית עלמא "who were created on the second day of the creation of the world," נעבד אדם בצילמנא כדייוקנא "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness." PsJ even goes so far as to identify the very limbs God created in man which were *reflective of the divine image:* "Elohim (the angels?) created man in His image, in the image of God He (they?) created him. With 248 limbs and with 365 sinews, He covered him with skin, and He filled him with flesh and blood. דכר יוקבא בווהון בריא יתהון Male and female in their kind He created them." Moreover, numerous midrashim record the tradition of assigning the creation of the two inclinations to the two *yud*s in the word וייצר of Gn 2:7 (cf. BR ad loc.). For a general discussion of the theme, see A. Altmann, "*Homo Imago* ," 235–256. Also see Fossum's discussion of the notion that Elohim was understood as "angels" among Jews and other Gnostic writings in, "Gen.1, 26 and 2,7 in Judaism," 234.

nor imbues him with power, for only the greater God has this ability.[202] The Gnostics are careful to state that this soul of life "descended and came to dwell within him," that is, it was not "blown" into the corporeal body via a physical act reminiscent of the archons.

The biblical text itself portrays the creation of the body and soul as two distinct events happening at separate moments and BR adapts the relevant verses in the following variation on the *golem* motif:

He blew into his nostrils (Gn 2:7) This teaches that he first established him as a *golem* [which extended] from the earth unto the firmament. Then he threw into him the soul.[203]

The sages here chose the phrase זרק בו הנשמה to comment on ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים instead of a phrase using the same verbal-root, as happens to be the case in LvR 29 §1, where we read בשׁביעי נפח בו נשׁמה, "in the seventh hour, he *blew* into him a soul." Idel notes in passing that לזרוק "occurs several times as an alternative to the biblical *nph*," but he makes no judgment as to whether this "alternative" has a significant connotation.[204] It is quite possible that the redactor/author was attempting to avoid assigning the actual act of "blowing" to God, because of the connotations it acquired among the Gnostics. It also distances God from the body of man, but it is impossible at this stage to establish whether that was a goal in these contexts.

Repeated in the following passage from the *The Hypostasis of the Archons* is the exegetical concern which underlies all of the passages considered thus far, namely, that the first being looked the way he did because of the deity's appearance and nature.

This ruler, by being androgynous, made himself a vast realm, an extent without limit. And he contemplated creating offspring for himself, and created for himself seven offspring, androgynous just like their parents. And he said to his offspring, "It is I who am the god of the entirety."[205]

Here the creator and his offspring are androgynous, as is the case in the *petiḥta*ʾ. The expression "made himself a vast realm," parallels the *petiḥta*ʾ's language גולם בראו היה מוטל מסוף העולם ועד סופו. There is also the act of

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[202] On the bifurcation of the soul into different aspects, see Plato's *Timaeus* 41c and 69c and Pearson, "Biblical Exegesis in Gnostic Literature," 76f., also citing the relevant texts in Philo, who likewise bifurcates the soul into the rational, deriving from God, and irrational deriving from the angels.

[203] BR 14 §8 (132.3f.) See Pearson, "Biblical Exegesis in Gnostic Literature," 78.

[204] Idel, *Golem,* 41 n.34. In GR 39 §14 and 74 §4 it is said of humans that אין יכולין לזרוק בו נשמה; the idiom occurs only once in each Talmud (Sanhedrin) and a handful of times in midrashic literature: LvR 4 §5, Tanhuma Buber *Vayikra* 12, Pesiqtaʾ Rav Kahana 23 §2.

[205] Robinson, NH, 168, (II,4, 95). Yaldabaoth is said to be the ignorant god who is under these misconceptions, and he is likewise equated with Israel's God, hence the demiurgic association with the evil in the universe. In the *Hypostasis,* Sabaoth is clearly one of the offspring of Yaldabaoth, and he is defined as "God of the forces, Sabaoth," clearly demonstrating an understanding of the Hebrew ה׳ צבאות so common in Isaiah and Jeremiah.

premeditation which will be echoed throughout this chapter of BR, a characteristic nowhere expressed in the actual biblical text.

V. Relevant Christian Sources and Further Discussion on *Golem*

Among early Christian sources we also find the concept that Jesus' body was immense like the golem's. The identity of Jesus with Adam provides yet another link between the various motifs. Hippolytus, who wrote at the beginning of the third century C.E., in Rome, preserves records of a certain "prophet" Elxai[206] who just after the beginning of the second century C.E., attracted many of the followers of Ebion.[207] A certain angel had revealed himself to the prophet

whose height was 24 schoenoi, which makes 96 miles, and whose breath was 4 schoenoi, and from shoulder to shoulder 6 schoenoi; and the tracks of his feet extend to the length of three and a half schoenoi which make 14 miles, while the breadth is one and a half schoenos and the height half a schoenos. There should also be a female with him whose dimensions, he says, are according to those already mentioned. The male is the son of God[208] but the female is called the Holy Spirit.[209]

Epiphanius includes Elxai's description of how he learned these measurements:

And how, he says, did I know these sizes? Because, he says, I saw from the high mountains that their heads were of the same height and when I informed myself about the sizes of the mountain, I also knew the sizes of Christ and the Holy Spirit.[210]

There is little doubt that Elkesai was employing midrashic motifs which were part of the *Merkabah* literature, albeit with variations. It would take us too far afield to consider the implications of this passage and its possible relationship to *Shi'ur Qomah* traditions, except to say that Elkesai serves as an external datable witness to the type of anthropomorphisms which were

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[206] That is Elchasai, who during the first years of the second century C.E. attracted a great following in Transjordanian regions. See Fossum, *Name of God,* 65f. Also see Joseph M. Baumgarten, "The Book of Elkesai and Merkabah Mysticism," *JSJ* 17,2 (1986): 212–213.

[207] On the obscure history of the Ebionites, see Joseph A. Fitzmeyr, "The Qumran Scrolls, the Ebionites and their Literature [1955]," in *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971): 435–480.

[208] In Epiphanius, it says explicitly, "Christ."

[209] From Hippolytus, *Refutation omnium Haeresus,* IX.13.2ff. in *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects,* edited and translated by A. F. J. Klijn and G. J. Reinink (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973) 115, and see next note for parallel references in Epiphanius. Hippolytus, writing in Rome, but probably of Eastern, maybe even Alexandrian origin, is the last of the Roman-Church writers to leave works in Greek. He was active at the very beginning of the third century C.E. and died a martyr in 235 C.E.. See Quasten, *Patrology,* II, 163ff.

[210] Epiphanius (who also includes a version of Hippolytus' text cited above with insignificant variations), *Panarion Haereses,* 30.17.6ff. in Klinj, *Patristic Evidence,* 187.

derived from Jewish exegetical circles.[211] Surely these anthropomorphisms are to be taken literally, and not as some argument via *reductio ad absurdum* for an incorporeal God.[212] For, this is a depiction of God incarnate who is immense in size, the Angel of God who likewise resembles God.

Verses in Colossians contain two images relevant to this passage:

> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rules or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.[213]

Here Jesus is portrayed as the proto-man, not only created in the *image* of God,[214] but also firstborn of all creation.[215] The Ebionites made explicit this link when they proclaimed "that Christ is also Adam who was the first man created and into whom God's breath was blown."[216] That Adam is the first-born of all creation is likewise reflected in BR 8 §1 in the name of R. Shimon b. Laqish אחור למעשה יום אחרון וקדם למעשה יום ראשון.[217] As for the idiom, *in him all things in heaven and on earth were created,* two possible parallels come to mind. In BR 1 §4 we read: "Six things preceded the creation of the world." Of course, first and foremost was Torah, and contained within Torah were the tools for the creation of the entire world. The primordial creation of Torah and the transference of the Sophia mythology to Torah was already in process during the Second Temple Period, notably early on in Proverbs and subsequently in *Ben Sira* and the *Wisdom of Solomon.*[218] This likewise took place in Christianity. Bultmann believes that the merging

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[211] For further discussion on the relationship of Elkesai to *Shi'ur Qomah* and other early mystical writings, see Baumgarten, "The Book of Elkesai" (cited above) and Martin Cohen, *The Shi'ur Qomah: Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism* (NY: University Press of America, 1983) 38–39 n.64.

[212] Many have argued that the *Shi'ur Qomah* literature represents metaphorical expressions about the deity. Such judgements stem from the ever popular thesis—long disproven especially by scholars of Targum—that rabbinic Judaism attempted to avoid anthropomorphisms. See my discussion in *Polemics and Mythology: A Commentary on Chapters 1 and 8 of "Bereshit Rabba"* (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1991: UMI# 9217471), 21–54. On this particular passage on Elkesai, see Elliot Wolfson, "Images of God's Feet: Some Observations on the Divine Body in Judaism," in *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism in Embodied Perspective,* edited by Howard Eilberg-Schwartz. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992) 153.

[213] New Oxford RSV, Colossians 1:15; see Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament,* I,132.

[214] Also see 2 Corinthians 4:4, . . . *the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

[215] See the extensive discussion on this subject in R. G. Hammerton-Kelly, *Pre-Existence, Wisdom, and the Son of Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973). On the interrelationship of primal existence and messianology, see David Flusser, "Messianology and Christology," in *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988) 269ff.

[216] Epiphanius, *Panarion Haereses* 30.16.4, in Klijn, *Patristic Evidence,* 183. For a discussion of Epiphanius' sources, see 28–38 and 42ff.

[217] "He was last [in one respect] of the creations on the last day and first [in one respect] of the creations of the first day." See our full discussion below, with other relevant citations in BR noted there.

[218] I have discussed the similarities with BR 1 §1 in *Polemics and Mythology* on the primal existence of Torah, 76ff. and BR 1 §4, 150ff., which contains a specific reference to the name of the Messiah being "contemplated" before creation, probably an attempt to undermine the Christian motif.

of Logos and Wisdom images—which for the rabbis would have been Torah and Wisdom—represents the combining of cosmology and soteriology.[219] He cites 1 Corinthians 8:6 as an example of how Jesus (here parallel to Torah for Judaism) embodied both roles: *Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.* There can be little doubt that Torah represents in BR not only the blueprint for creation itself, but also the plan for the preservation of life.[220] What is so striking in this instance, is the fact that this *petiḥta'* begins with the image of the first man containing within himself the potential for the world to come as well as the sins which prevent one's entrance; he is moreover, the wholeness of the world. Thus, in its own way, the *petiḥta'* also combines cosmology and soteriology.

The other relevant idiom brought to mind by the Colossians passage is the phrase in BR 8 §1 about which we have twice before postponed our discussion: בראו מלא כל העולם. The concept within this *petiḥta'* proves difficult to decipher. On the one hand, it would appear to simply mean that the first man was as big as the whole world. But why this particular idiom? As in the previous section, the midrash could have used the unambiguous expression, מוטל מסוף העולם ועד סופו. It is worth noting a literary image in *2 Enoch* (Slavonic), despite the controversy as to its antiquity, which may shed light on its connotation.[221]

And I [God] commanded the lowest things: Let one of the invisible things come out visibly!" And Adail[222] descended, extremely large. And I looked at him, and, behold, in his belly he had a great age. And I said to him, "Disintegrate yourself, Adail, and let what is disintegrated from you become visible." And he disintegrated himself and there came out from him the great age. And thus it carried all the creation which I had wished to create. And I saw how good it was.[223]

The text does not come close enough to the midrashic formulation to exemplify any influence on the part of the sages. At the same time, it hardly

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[219] Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament,* I,132. Also see Hamerton-Kelly's synopsis of this issue in the Synoptic tradition, in *Pre-Existence, Wisdom and the Son of Man,* 87ff.; in contrast, the importance of pre-existence for the Pauline letters is summarized on 123f.

[220] See Neusner's thematic anthology, *Genesis and Judaism,* 27ff.

[221] Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism,* 17, believes that its author "seems to have been a hellenistic Jew writing during the second half of the first century." For a summary of the dating problem see F. I. Andersen's introduction to the translation in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,* 91–100. Andersen comments: "There must be something very peculiar about a work when one scholar . . . concludes that it was written by a hellenized Jew in Alexandria in the first century B.C., while another . . . argues that it was written by a Christian monk in Byzantium in the ninth century A.D." 95.

[222] On this name, see Fossum, *Name of God,* 288–89; he cites G. Quispel, "Hermetism and the New Testament, Especially Paul," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II, 22 on the name Adail/ Adoil, which Quispel says is derived from *Adonai-el,* "where the first element is the well-known circumlocution for the Tetragrammaton."

[223] *2 Enoch,* chs. 25–26; Fossum, *Name of God,* 287, cites this text from a different version of the source (for him it is chapter 11) within his discussion of "The Heavenly Man," but he does not connect this concept with this passage in BR.

exhibits the thematic we expect from the Gnostic sources which denigrate the lower creations (with some exceptions).[224] Scholem and others maintain that *2 Enoch* contains ancient material. It may be that an early connotation of מלא כל העולם בראו is reflected in this very passage in the sense that deep within the primal-anthropos was "all the creation which [God] had wished to create." Perhaps this second idiom in the opening *petiḥta'* represents the rabbinic attempt to frame the primal-anthropos as somehow containing the entire world, just as Paul had conceived of Jesus, and just as pseudo-Enoch writes of God's own plan.[225]

Idel cites as relevant background to the concept of "containing the world," a passage from *Midraš 'Avkir* preserved in *Yalqut Shimoni*. He believes that the ideas in the text derive from antiquity. Once again, despite the ambiguity of dating, it is worth considering the passage in detail. What follows is the translation which appears in Idel's book.[226]

Rabbi Berakhya said: When God wished to create the world, he began his Creation with nothing other than man and made him as a golem. When he prepared to cast a soul into him, he said: If I set him down now, it will be said that he was my companion in the work of Creation; so I will leave him as a golem [in a crude, unfinished state], until I have created everything else. When he had created everything, the angels said to him: Aren't you going to make the man you spoke of? He replied: I made him long ago, only the soul is missing. Then he cast the soul in him and set him down and concentrated the whole world in him. With him he began, with him he concluded, as it is written: *Thou hast formed me before and behind.* (Ps 139:5) *God said: Behold, man is become like one of us.* (3:22)

The passage clearly reworks older material. The phrase וכילל בו העולם has been translated here "[God] concentrated the whole world in him." Two alternatives should be entertained: (1) more simply, "[God] included within him the world," thereby avoiding the inuendos attached to the concept of "concentrate" (צמצם); or (2) "[God] completed the world with him." The latter would appear to lead into the notion "with him he began, with him he concluded," so prevalent in the BR passage as well, however, it is an awkward turn of phrase.

Idel summarizes three points as pertinent to the cosmic-Adam theme: "(1) as in the Gnostic and Christian texts, *unlike the biblical and classical rabbinic*

[224] The absence of negativism in some sources is noted by I. Gruenwald, "Jewish-Gnostic Controversy," 718.

[225] Fossum, *The Name of God,* cites in the first book of Marqa's *Memar* the following idiom: שם יקיר מלי כל בריתה. He translates this line and the next phrases as follows: "It is a Glorious Name that fills the whole of creation. By it, the world is bound together; and all the covenants with the righteous are bound by it for ever." More research would be required to follow this point up, but the verb in this phrase could be a passive participle, making the translation "A glorious name contains all of creation." This may be a similar usage, but its connotation would remain equally obscure. See Hammerton-Kelly, *Pre-existence,* 112, who argues that Paul believes "[t]he pre-existence of Christ is 'ideal' pre-existence in the mind of God." Hamerton-Kelly (20) sees "ideal" existence as the same as עלו במחשבה, BR 1 §4.

[226] Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives,* 117–118. Idel cites the passage as "stemming from *Midrash 'Avkir,*" but then identifies it as "preserved in *Yalkut Shimoni.*" (n.37).

sources, man is presented here as the first creature; (2) similar to the Coptic treatise and to Paul's Epistle,[227] the world is concentrated in this first creature; and (3) all these texts explicitly express a resemblance between God and his first creature; man is thereby given cosmic dimensions, a common view in Jewish classical texts."[228] As I have argued with respect to this *petiḥta*ʾ in BR, Idel also notes that the concept of the world-spanning first man derives from the resemblance between God and ʾ*adam.* However, the notion of ʾ*adam* as the very first creature is *not* unknown to early rabbinic sources, as the very first *petiḥta*ʾ of BR 8 makes clear with the idiom אחור למעשה יום ראשון אחרון וקדם למעשה יום ראשון.

The passage in *Midraš* ʾ*Avkir* serves as a type of thematic summary of many motifs. The difference between this type of thematic ensemble and those we find in BR is easily established on literary-structural grounds. *Genesis Rabba* regularly imports comments and themes in ·discrete literary units, or its redactor creates the appropriate rhetorical structure for their integration (albeit, with varying degrees of success).[229] This passage in the *Yalqut Shimoni* runs everything together in an almost stream-of-consciousness narrative. The passage is clearly a later medley rather than an earlier composition. The fact that the ideas are "older" is irrelevant in this case, since we have in hand the older sources. Given these points, I do not share Idel's enthusiasm for the matrix of motifs here, for they strike me as somewhat empty midrashic citations, as well as stereotypical uses of prooftexts. Scholem's interpretation of this phrase, which reads into this passage the concept that "the *power* of the whole universe is concentrated in [ʾ*adam*]," cannot be justified on the basis of this one phrase alone. It strikes me as an anachronistic overreading, imposing the concept כולל העולם which surfaces in numerous Kabbalistic texts of the Middle Ages, upon earlier images.[230] In short, I do not believe that this passage adds anything to our knowledge of the concept of "containing the world within."

I believe we find the presence of two motifs within the *golem* theme. The first simply involves the emulation of God's size; that is, man is created ·enormous to shadow God's image. In this case, the idiom מלא כל העולם בראו would appear to have no function other than to illustrate extension;

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[227] Idel is referring to Colossians 1:15–17, which he quotes on 116, however, verses 17–19 are perhaps more important: *He himself is before all things and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. . . .*

[228] Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives,* 118, my emphasis. On the following pages, Idel traces the development of this concept in the kabbalistic literature.

[229] This is not a hard and fast rule, but it is the case the majority of the times. See Neusner's exhaustive analysis of the literary structure in *Comparative Midrash,* chapter 3, "Recurrent Literary Structures: Types of Units of Discourse and their Order in Genesis Rabbah as a Whole," 65–91.

[230] Scholem's comment is in "The Idea of the Golem," 162. On later uses of this idiom, see Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives,* 118f. and especially the notes which provide the quotations.

and I believe this is the purpose of the expression in BR 8 §1e. However, later on in BR the theme undergoes modifications in different exegetical settings. *Genesis Rabba* 24 §2 also provides something of a medley on the *golem* theme. The juxtaposing of passages is quite interesting and suggests themes similar to those noted in the *2 Enoch* and the NT passages just cited.[231]

Your eyes saw my golem,[232] *they were all recorded in Your book:* R. Yehoshua b. R. Nehemiya, R. Yehuda b. R. Simon in the name of R. Eleazar: When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the first man he created him as a *golem* and he was extended from one end of the world unto the other, as it is written, *Your eyes saw my golem.*

R. Yudah b. R. Shimon said: While[233] Adam lay extended as a *golem* before Him who spoke and the world came to be, He showed him every generation and its interpreters and leaders.[234] He [God] said to him: [The words] נלמי ראי עיניך [mean], *golema*[235] which your eyes have already seen, and they are recorded in the Book of Adam, this is the Book of the Generations.[236]

The passage is very difficult.[237] The lemma underlying the *petiḥta'* is Gn 5:1. The *petiḥta'* is a totally self contained unit based on the only occurrence

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[231] The words from the last phrase of T-A 230.7 through the middle of line 10 are all enclosed in square brackets. Theodor explains that they were missing in the London MSS and that he added these phrases according to 8 §1 on page 55. Sokoloff, *Geniza,* 112, does not include the bracketed phrase and we might therefore assume that it really doesn't belong here. I have translated the passage as it appears in the Geniza, without the emendation suggested by Theodor.

[232] JPS (Ps 139:15–16) translates, *Your eyes saw my unformed limbs.* Dahood (Anchor Bible) translates the phrase, *my life stages,* changing the pointing to *gilay-mi* with *gil* identified with the substantive in Ps 43:4 and Dn 1:10.

[233] The opening phrase, עד שאדם מוטל גולם לפני מי שאמר והיה העולם is translated by Freedman, in Soncino, as, "While Adam lay a shapeless mass . . . etc." The adverb of time -עד can mean both "while" and "until/before." See the above quoted text from *Midrash 'Avkir,* הכל שאברא עד. On the other hand, below in 8 §5c (60.12) עד שמלאכי השרת מדיינין אלו עם אלו, certainly means "while." On both the adverb meaning "until" or "before" as well as the use of participles as future tense with such adverbials, see Abba Bendavid, *Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew* (Hebrew) 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1971) II, 535. Bendavid shows that the participle with this adverb is frequently used to indicate future tense. Also see M. Sokoloff, *"The Hebrew of Genesis Rabba,"* on the negative idiom קדם עד שלא which Sokoloff says often comes in place of עד שלא + העבר with the meaning -לפני ש. He does not treat the positive adverb. If we take the previous paragraph as a description of how God created Adam, then R. Yudah's statement might represent a pluperfect: God created man a *golem* extended from one end of the world to the other. *Before 'adam* lay extended as a *golem.* . . . In other words, God shows him the future before he is "born" in this manner. The idea may be parallel to that of the Christian notion of the primordial Jesus, but since the language is not without ambiguities, it is not worth pushing the point too far.

[234] T-A is longer: דור דור וחכמיו דור דור ושופטיו וסופריו ודורשיו ומנהיגיו, but as the apparatus demonstrates that almost every mss has a different reading—all along the same idea.

[235] T-A and *Geniza* have גילמה. See discussion below.

[236] T-A reads, "the Book of the Generations of Adam." Compare the end of 24 §4: "The royal Messiah will not come until all the souls which [God] contemplated creating have been created. . . . And the souls are those referred to in the book of Adam, viz. *This is the book of the Generations of Adam.*"

[237] Idel only mentions this passage briefly, *Golem,* 36: "while still being in the stage of Golem, namely before he was given a soul by God, this being was shown future things. But he does not treat any of the problems in the text as it appears in BR.

of the word *golem* in Scripture. The common rendering of *golem* as unformed substance or amorphic mass should be questioned. Idel finds no evidence in the early history of the term for this connotation. He chooses to see the *golem* as "a formed entity."[238] The opening phrase of this *petiḥta'* therefore means: Before *'adam* was formed into the massive being (the *golem*) in God's image, God showed him every generation and its interpreters. . . .[239]

The key phrase of the expository verse for the second part of this passage is ועל ספרך כלם יכתבו "*they* were all recorded in your book." Somehow the exegete must justify how one gets from the word גלמי to the plural of "they were all recorded." It is clear that the darshan construes the Psalms verse to be God's comment, though in Scripture it is clearly spoken by the human poet. Therefore, it is no longer man saying, "Your eyes (God) have seen my *golem,*" but rather, "Your eyes, Adam, have seen גלמי." The word גלמי is then transformed by the darshan into גולמה in the phrase: אמר לו גלמי ראו עיניך גולמה שראו עיניך וכבר הם כתובים על ספרו שלאדם.[240] According to Freedman's translation, the word גולמה is supposed to stand for a plural subject, specifically the third person plural of the phrase כבר הם כתובים. And thus he renders גולמה as "the potential descendants." But in doing this Freedman does not indicate what this particular reading of the word might be. Surely there is no absolute form גולמה, that is, a feminine *golem;* nor is there an abstract concept of "potential forms" associated with this word. Theodor suggests reading גולמה as if the *hey* were the determining article following the Aramaic גולמא—this substitution periodically occurs in BR.[241] But this solution is awkward. The text is altogether Hebrew; such an intrusion of Aramaic mid-sentence is not likely in this type of literary unit.[242]

I am afraid that a solution is wanting; for the time being Freedman's reading, though it doesn't address the philological problem, is the best we have.

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[238] Idel, *Golem,* 298.

[239] It is interesting to note that according to *3 Enoch* 9:3 Enoch/Metatron, in order to receive the oral history from God about the future generations, is first made as long and wide as the earth. Surely this concept makes Enoch identical to the primal *'adam.* In Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha* I, 263; Odeberg edition, 14–15. See Idel, "חניך היא ממטרון" *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6,1–2 (1987) 153.

[240] The conjunctive *vav* between the words עיניך וכבר does not exist in the T-A version, though other mss do have this reading which is preserved in the Geniza (i.e., Paris and Vatican Ebr. 30).

[241] See Albeck, "Introduction," 105, "בסוף המלות כתוב בהרבה מקומות ה' תחת א'" and see Sokoloff, "The Hebrew of Genesis Rabba . . . ," 32.

[242] If we are to take the consonantal text seriously, then we must entertain the possibility that the final *hey* is the feminine subject marker (*hey* with *mappiq*) and that the text is trying to include the *golem* of Eve as well. The first words of the very next lemma (5:2) are זכר ונקבה בראם. I do not find this solution satisfying because of the problem with the syntax, but the alternatives are not more attractive. The reading would be something like, "I have shown you your *golem* and her *golem* from which the generations will descend." See Idel's discussion of the gender of the *golem* in *Golem,* chapter 15, 232, where he notes that "in Hebrew . . . an unmarried woman was considered to be, like an unmarried man, an imperfect being and she was referred to in classical texts as a Golem." Another consideration: sometimes in BR, the *hey* suffix is equivalent to the third person singular, normally symbolized by a *vav.* Thus, *'adam* would have been shown his own *golem* before he entered it, and again, from him would issue the generations which were exhibited to him by God.

Despite this ambiguity, what can be said for certain is that Adam is shown something about the future generations. And though we cannot establish the best reading, it appears that God is showing him that these generations are part of his *golem* into which he will soon be placed. That is to say, the *golem* contains the generations to descend from him, as they are already recorded in the Book of Generations. Because of the closing words of the verse ("God created *'adam* in the image of God he made him"), the redactor was apparently reminded of the theme he set out in BR 8 §1, where the lemma had a similar turn of phrase. Drawn to the word *golem* he found yet another manipulation of the expository verse to serve his current exegetical goals. But what was the redactor to gain out of this legend of the *'adam* with foresight?

Scholem comments on this passage as follows:

It would seem as though, while Adam was in this state, some tellurian power had flowed into him out of the earth from which he was taken, and that it was this power which enabled him to receive such a vision. According to the Aggadah, it was only after the fall that Adam's enormous size, which filled the universe, was reduced to human, though still gigantic, proportions. In this image—an earthly being of cosmic dimensions—two conceptions are discernible. In the one, Adam is the vast primordial being of cosmogonic myth; in the other, his size would seem to signify, in spatial terms, that the power of the whole universe is concentrated in him.[243]

I find Scholem's reading unfounded with respect to the concept of foreknowledge.[244] Idel's interpretation is equally strained. He believes that "the Golem in the *Genesis Rabba* passage is not different from the embryonic Golem in the Piyyut genre, both of them sharing an extraordinary cognitive faculty."[245] But the only passages Idel can produce to support this thematic association are a few verses from Yannai (6th century?), which only exhibit significance for the BR passage if one strains to bend the surface meaning altogether. In fact, the word *golem* does not even appear in these contexts. Though BR does use the embryo motif (e.g., 14 §2), it is never associated with the *golem,* and consequently, any attempt to link the foreknowledge of the embryo with that of the *golem* in 24 §2 constitutes grasping at straws.[246]

BR 24 §2 is based on the expository verse which is central to the golem motif throughout this corpus: *Your eyes saw my unformed limbs; they were all recorded in Your book.* (Ps 139:15-16) In the midrash, it may be that the concept of this "book" reflects the same tradition as that mentioned in *2 Enoch:*

See how I have written down all the deeds of every person before the creation, and I am writing down what is done among all persons forever. [. . . .] [Enoch instructs his sons so that they may

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[243] Scholem, "The Idea of the Golem," 162.

[244] Idel's disagreement with this reading can be found in his *Golem,* 36.

[245] Idel, *Golem,* 36.

[246] It may be that Ps 139:15 speaks of the embryo, but this theme is simply not present in BR with respect to the *golem.*

hand on the books to others also.] [. . .] The books which I have given to you, do not hide them. To all who wish, recite them, so that they may know about the extremely marvelous works of the Lord.[247]

It is also possible that the sages saw the "Book of the Generations of Adam" as equivalent to the many pseudepigraphic works which arose in the name of Adam. Virtually all of them contained legends about Adam's offspring, and in some cases, histories well beyond his life.[248] In this way, they were able to justify the legends in which Adam seems to know more than Scripture divulged in the scant narrative on his life.

Summary and Conclusions

I have endeavored to support a number of claims in this study. (1) The *motifs* present in this *petiḥta'* are found in pagan and gnostic sources composed prior to BR. Of course, this aspect is not original to this study, though to my knowledge, no other study has drawn as great a number of earlier sources together with the particular analysis and conclusions presented here. (2) The appearance of these motifs in non-rabbinic sources often occurs in *clusters* similar to the *mythological matrix* present in BR 8 §1. Drawing from this realization, (3) it became clear that the *exegetical goals* apparent in BR 8 §1 are often paralleled in external sources, though sometimes with different results. This is to say that we have concrete examples of how motifs were adapted in exegetical settings which served the theological principles of a given community. However, clear distinctions between the functions of the various texts should be kept in mind. The Hermetic literature and the gnostic writings from Nag Hammadi all survive as *mystical* texts. This classification should be based primarily on the epistemology of the author(s) and only on subject matter secondarily. Walter Burkert writes in his study, *Ancient Mystery Cults,* that in Jewish and Christian sources (Nag Hammadi falling into that category), *gnosis* was not understood to imply "the unspeakable" according to its more limited cultic connotation. Whether considering the Hermetic literature or Nag Hammadi, one finds that the terms gnosis and mysticism were greatly inflated (and therefore, devalued) so that they ultimately connoted the specific knowledge of the divinity acquirable only after an initiate becomes part of a cultic order.[249] But such an imparting of knowl-

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[247] I have quoted the "J" version, the end of chapter 53 and the beginning of 54; Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha,* I, 180.

[248] There is an immense "Adam Literature," surviving in the Pseudepigraphic and Gnostic corpora as well as in the early midrashim. See George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Bible Rewritten and Expanded," in Stone, *Jewish Writings,* especially 110–118; and B. A. Pearson, "Jewish Sources in Gnostic Literature," in Stone, *Jewish Writings* (1984), especially, 470ff. Among the midrashim, see Townsend's listings in "Minor Midrashim," in *Bibliographical Essays in Medieval Jewish Studies* (NY: Ktav, 1976) I, 333–392, under פרק אדם הראשון which is part of the B Recension of ARN, as well as תפילת אדם הראשון which is part of ספר נח.

[249] Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults,* 67ff.

edge required verbal transmission. The original acquisition of the knowledge is ascribed to a specific charismatic or a visionary experience (achievable with the appropriate knowledge), which may then undergo literary embellishment. In this way, BR is not mysticism, for it arrives *exegetically* at the same notions which Poimandres heard from Hermes directly. As for the Nag Hammadi gnostics, the issue requires further study. Some sources reflect the principle of direct revelation,[250] while others are less explicit about the derivation of their knowledge.[251]

(4) In BR 8 §1 there is no attempt to avoid mythological depictions of primordial states of being (and this is true of BR in general). Even though secret or *mystical knowledge* is not the overt purview of BR, the writer provides the very same type of information found in the mystical tracts. Regarding this last point, the reader may be disappointed in the ambiguous approach I have followed in the area of rabbinic motivation: overtly, I have not concerned myself very much with the question of whether this passage represents a polemical attempt to fend-off gnostic, sectarian, or even pagan teachings, or whether it has attempted to formulate a position with regard to some dialog within the rabbinic community itself. What should be clear from our discussion is that all or none of these scenarios are possible. As is most often case, when the direct identification of an adversary is wanting, rabbinic literature remains obscure with respect to its socio-historical motivations. This study has indicated the ubiquity of a given mythological matrix which surfaces in a variety of cultural and religious contexts. None of the instances explicitly negates the use of that matrix in another context, though each contains elements which could not be integrated by the authors of a parallel religious community. It is no easier to construe the irreconcilable differences as conscious refutations than it is to ascribe similarities to direct borrowings. The analysis of BR 8 §1 is more an exercise in understanding how the sages freely used ideas of the external mythological world to embellish their understanding of their inner scriptural world.

By the time the motifs present in BR 8 §1 reached the editor of this text, most of them had been around for at least half a millenium in both exegetical and mystical contexts. The antiquity of these images is noteworthy in and of itself, yet it is the newness of BR's approach which must ultimately

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[250] For example, *The Gospel of Truth* begins with a comment about "those who have received from the Father of truth the grace of knowing him through the power of the Word that came forth from the pleroma. . . ." Similarly, the *Apocryphon of John* begins with the declaration that the material to follow was taught, "by the savior, [Christ] directly to John." Other books follow this paradigm of claiming direct revelation.

[251] Mysticism might also be defined by determining the social circles who participated, just as a theurgic act in the hands on one person is called "magic," while in the hands of another it is labelled a divinely ordained "miracle." See Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978); Jack N. Lightstone, *The Commerce of the Sacred: Mediation of the Divine among Jews in the Greco-Roman Diaspora* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984) especially ch.2; A. F. Segal, "Hellenistic Magic: Some Questions of Definition," in R. Van Den Broek and M. J. Vermaseren, eds. *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1981).

command our attention. The characterization of the deity's image was necessitated by the desire to explain the human condition, biologically and historically (and history includes soteriology). Despite the integration of Platonic Ideas into Jewish thought—incorporeal and devoid of primordial urges as they were—the mythology of rabbinic Judaism did not balk at projecting the human condition upon God (though, admittedly this may have been done subconsciously). Consequently, nothing compels *us* today to read BR the way we read Philo or the Christianized texts of Nag Hammadi, both of which introduce aspects of the hellenized world that were devised as solutions to the problem of corporeality. Torah preserves for the sages an image which is to be understood literally and directly through human senses. I do not believe any of this material is to be taken metaphorically; the sages did not shy away from anthropomorphic depictions in their desire to describe reality.[252]

Xenophanes of Colophon, writing in the 6th century B.C.E., was among the first ancient Greek thinkers to criticize the gods of the Greek poets while encouraging belief in a form of (incorporeal) monotheism.

[Xenophanes] regarded customary religious beliefs as groundless and foolish. In the place of this folly he offered a rational theology. [. . .] [He] believed in a single god, who was moral and motionless, all-knowing and all-powerful. Nor was the god anthropomorphic: rather, he was an abstract and impersonal force; not a god from the Olympian pantheon, but a god accommodated to the new world of the Ionian philosophers.[253]

The belief that the deity did not have human characteristics moved Xenophanes to describe teachings about the gods as follows:

There is one god . . . similar to mortals neither in shape nor in thought. But if cows and horses or lions had hands or could draw with their hands and make the things men can make, then horses would draw the forms of gods like horses, cows like cows, and they would make their bodies similar in shape to those which each had themselves.[254]

Xenophanes' perspective anticipates what Freud, some 2400 years later, would call the reconciliation of the "three . . . systems of thought:" animistic (or mythological), religious, and scientific.[255] For the Greeks, science,

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[252] Surprisingly, this notion remains controversial. Many authors still attribute the significance of "angels" as intermediaries to the transcendental aspect of the rabbinic god, while explaining divine appellatives as circumlocutions. There is no evidence for any of these claims, I will be treating this issue in detail in a work to appear on the theology of *Genesis Rabba*.

[253] Jonathan Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy* (London: Penguin, 1987) 38.

[254] Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 95, taken from Clement, *Miscellanies* V xiv 109.1–3. Other sources preserve the contents of this epigram with variations.

[255] See *Totem and Taboo*, §3 and *Civilization and its Discontents*, the eighth (concluding) chapter; see the discussion on this principle in Paul Ricoeur, *Freud & Philosophy*, translated by Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970) 236f. Also see, Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist*, chapter 8, 257ff.

while engaging the meta-physical, was nonetheless deeply embedded in an empiricism. For Xenophanes, the mythological could not be integrated with the experiential. Hence, he attributed ideas about god to what Freud would call "projection." But if one eliminates this need to reconcile, if the mythological is not in conflict with the experiential, then "projections" translate into truth-statements about reality.

For the rabbinic sages, the text itself was a divinely created reality which merged myth and experience indistinguishably. Knowledge was revealed or decoded (exegetically), making the mythological as viable as the empirical. In their world of thought, the words *in our image, after our likeness* must, therefore, translate into some reality. Unencumbered of the notion that anthropomorphisms were inferior or *merely* metaphorical expressions, the literal "image" of God was decoded by considering the visual image of the human. In subsequent biblical passages, the images of men and women, manifest in their actions, may not always conform to the image of the divine. Ultimately, the midrash would integrate these passages exegetically into the general mythology of the Genesis narrative. It is the midrashic process which allows for our mortality, our duality as male and female, and our diminutive stature and extention, to remain linked in terms of origins to the divine image which is immortal, the unification of both sexes, and physically immense. The fact that the derivation may only be manifest subsequently in potentia (i.e., with regard to soteriological speculation), does not sever the primal link. While humans fell prey to destiny and departed from their original form in both substance and potential, the divine image—for the rabbinic mind—remains unaffected by the exigencies of history, past, present and future.

R. Menaḥem Ha-Me'iri: Aspects of an Intellectual Profile*

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I.

R. Menaḥem ha-Me'iri (14th century, Provence) is one of the most discussed of all medieval halakhists; indeed, I suspect most would agree that he has received more attention than many whose significance in the history of halakhic culture was far greater. This attention has been focused on a very narrow range of Me'iri's halakhic activity: his evaluation of contemporary gentiles, their culture and religion.[1] This topic—and Me'iri's apparently

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[1] J. Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 114–130; E. E. Urbach, "The Doctrine of Tolerance of R. Menaḥem Me'iri: Its Source and Limits," (in Hebrew) in *Perakim be-Toledot ha-Ḥevrah ha-Yehudit . . . Mugashim le-Professor Yaʿakov Katz* (Jerusalem, 1980), pp. 34–44; J. Katz, "More on 'The Religious Tolerance of Me'iri'" (in Hebrew), *Zion* 46 (1981), pp. 243–246; Y. Blidstein, "Me'iri's Attitude Towards Gentiles—Apologetics or Internalization?" (in Hebrew), *Zion* 51 (1986), pp. 154–166; D. Novack, *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism* (Toronto, 1983), pp. 351–356; G. Blidstein, "Maimonides and Me'iri on the Legitimacy of Non-Jewish Religion," in L. Landman, ed., *Scholars and Scholarship: The Interaction Between Judaism and Other Cultures* (New York, 1990), pp. 27–35. Z. Hillman has recently claimed, in his "Me'iri's Formulations That Were Written As Replies to the Gentiles (in Hebrew)," *Zefunot* 1 (1989), pp. 65–71, that Me'iri was indeed engaging in apologetics; Hillman—who is extremely hostile to recent scholarship on this topic and represents a conservative reaction to the claim that Me'iri rethought Judaism's attitudes to the gentile world—has produced a rich collection of sources (some 47 items), though he has also omitted other materials found in the work cited above. The historical materials given in Katz, *Exclusiveness*, pp. 106–113, might also provide a background for such an evaluation of Me'iri; see Blidstein, "Me'iri's Attitude," p. 165, nn. 39–40, as well. E. Waldenberg had argued against such a reading of Me'iri some forty years ago, but he considered only a small part of the corpus: see his Hebrew introduction to H. D. haLevi, *Bein Yisra'el la-Amin* (Jerusalem, 1954), pp. 16–17. Hillman's position has been adopted, in part, by J. D. Bleich, "Divine Unity in Maimonides, the Tosafists, and Me'iri," in L. Goodman, ed., *Neo-Platonism and Jewish Thought* (Albany, 1992), pp. 237–254. Surprisingly, little note has been taken of Me'iri's disclosure that his *Ḥibbur ha-Teshuvah* (ed. A. Sofer [New York, 1950], p. 2) was written when "a gentile sage (*ḥakham miyeter ha-ʿamim*) spoke to me and revealed to my ears" that the fact that Jews do not respond to their tribulations by repenting of their sins, was due to the lack of appropriate literature encouraging repentence.