

The Cosmological Temple in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*

A monster below, on the left side, swims in all those rivers. He comes with his mighty scales, each one as strong as iron, and he arrives there in order to draw water and defile the place. All the lights are darkened before him; his mouth and his tongue flame with fire; his tongue is as sharp as a mighty sword until he gets as far as entering the sanctuary within the sea, and then he defiles the sanctuary, and the lights are darkened, and the supernal lights disappear from the sea.

—*Zohar* I.52a

For, as the nut has a shell surrounding and protecting the kernel inside, so it is with everything sacred: the sacred principle occupies the interior, whilst the Other Side encircles it on the exterior.

—*Zohar* II.233b

Introduction

In chapter 18 of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, Abraham, having entered into the celestial throne room, receives a vision of all creation and the entire human history from the beginning to the end. This disclosure accounts for much of the apocalypse, stretching from chapter 19 to chapter 31. Although the main portion of the vision is devoted to describing the history of humankind, from the fall of Adam and Eve until the appearance of its eschatological messianic figures, the beginning of this vision is concerned with cosmological matters. In the cosmological revelations situated in chapters 19 and 21, the seer

contemplates the complex architecture of the heavenly realm and learns about the structure and features of the lower realms, which include earth and the underworld. In the lowest region, Abraham sees Leviathan, who is depicted as the foundation of the world.

Although certain details of this cosmological portrayal have been explored in previous studies, one important question that has not been addressed is how this vision fits into the overall sacerdotal framework of the Slavonic apocalypse. It appears that certain details of the disclosure account, including peculiar references to the imagery of the Garden of Eden and others, are distinctive sacerdotal motifs. Indeed, the Slavonic apocalypse may intend to apply its sacerdotal vision to the entire created order. From this perspective, the whole universe is envisioned as one macrocosmic temple, with heaven, earth, and underworld as its sacred chambers. The aim of this chapter is to explore in depth the cosmological revelation found in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 19–21 and its possible connections to the sacerdotal traditions.

*Waters of the Sacred Courtyard*¹

Abraham's vision begins in the initial verses of chapter 19 when the patriarch receives the divine command from the theophanic furnace to look beneath his feet and explore the lower levels of heaven. As the divine voice speaks, the "levels" under his feet open up to reveal the lower heavens.² Multitudes of angelic beings are situated on some of the lower heavens. On the lowest heavenly level, he sees stars and "the elements of earth obeying them."

The revelation, however, is not limited to heavenly realities. After contemplating the various levels of heaven and their inhabitants, Abraham receives another command from the Deity, this time the command to "contemplate creation." Following God's order, he again looks beneath his feet at the expanse and sees what the text calls the "likeness of heaven,"³ the lower realms including the earth and the underworld:

And he said to me, "Look now beneath your feet at the expanse and contemplate the creation which was previously covered over. On this level there is the creation and those who inhabit it and the age that has been prepared to follow it." And I looked beneath the expanse at my feet and I saw the likeness of heaven and what was therein. And I

saw there the earth and its fruits, and its moving ones, and its spiritual ones, and its host of men and their spiritual impieties, and their justifications, and the pursuits of their works, and the abyss and its torment, and its lower depths, and the perdition which is in it. And I saw there the sea and its islands, and its animals and its fishes, and Leviathan and his domain, and his lair, and his dens, and the world which lies upon him, and his motions and the destruction of the world because of him. I saw there the rivers and their overflows, and their circles. And I saw there the tree of Eden and its fruits, and the spring, the river flowing from it, and its trees and their flowering, and I saw those who act righteously. And I saw in it their food and rest.⁴

Some features of this depiction, including the portrayal of Leviathan as the foundation of the world, indicate that the vision is not merely a “historical” disclosure like those that are revealed to the seer in the later chapters of the apocalypse, but rather a distinctive cosmological revelation of a different nature intending to communicate to the patriarch the structure of the entire world. Several details of this depiction are subtly connected to cultic traditions and indicate that here one might have a sacerdotal vision of the entire creation understood as the cosmological temple rather than simply a depiction of the universe. This macrocosmic sacred structure reflects the tripartite division of the earthly temple wherein heaven is conceived as the macrocosmic Holy of Holies; earth, the holy place; and the underworld—represented by the sea—the courtyard. This concept of the cosmological temple, attempting to connect creation and cult, is quite ancient, stemming from early Mesopotamian⁵ and Egyptian⁶ traditions. In Jewish materials, this conceptual trend is often associated with the cluster of protological motifs in which the Garden of Eden is understood as the celestial Holy of Holies⁷ where the first human was ministering as the high priest.⁸

Scholars have noted that a conception of the cosmological temple is already implicit in some biblical materials, including Ezekiel’s formative depiction of the eschatological sanctuary, which paradoxically juxtaposes cosmological and paradisaical imagery.⁹ Ezekiel’s portrayal of the eschatological temple provides a crucial aid to discerning the possible sacerdotal dimensions of the cosmological narrative found in the

Slavonic apocalypse. For instance, one important cultic motif that is equally important in both Ezekiel and the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is the imagery of the primordial waters.

Abraham reports that he sees under his feet “the sea and its islands, and its animals and its fishes, and Leviathan and his domain, and his lair, and his dens, and the world which lies upon him, and his motions and the destruction of the world because of him . . . the rivers and their overflows, and their circles.”¹⁰ In addition to the text’s use of the sea to represent the underworld, this watery imagery appears to betray several cultic connections as well.

In Jewish sacerdotal reinterpretations of creational imagery, the sea often symbolizes the courtyard of the sanctuary of the world. *Numbers Rabbah* 13.19 states that the court encompasses the sanctuary just as the sea surrounds the world.¹¹ *B. Sukkah* 51b likewise tells how the white and blue marble of the temple walls were reminiscent of the waves of the sea.¹² The association between the sacred chamber and the sea may also be suggested by the symbolism of the bronze tank in the courtyard of Israel’s temple, designated in some texts as the “molten sea.”¹³ It has been suggested that “the great size of the tank . . . in conjunction with the fact that no practical application is offered for the ‘sea’ during the time of Solomon, supports the supposition that the tank served symbolic purpose.¹⁴ Either the ‘cosmic waters’ or the ‘waters of life,’ which emanated from below the garden of Eden, or the ‘great deep’ of chaos is most often cited as the underlying symbolism of the molten sea.”¹⁵

It appears that depictions of the eschatological temple in the Book of Ezekiel reflect the cosmological meaning of the sacred courtyard, connecting it to the imagery of living water. Victor Hurowitz notes that “Ezekiel’s temple of the future has a river flowing from under the threshold (Ezekiel 47:1). . . . The river envisioned by Ezekiel seems to replace the basins in Solomon’s temple—basins that may have symbolized the rivers of a divine garden.”¹⁶ Ezekiel 47:1–8 offers the following description of the sacred waters:

Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple; there, water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east); and the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. Then he brought me out by

way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and the water was coming out on the south side. Going on eastward with a cord in his hand, the man measured one thousand cubits, and then led me through the water; and it was ankle-deep. Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was knee-deep. Again he measured one thousand, and led me through the water; and it was up to the waist. Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross, for the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be crossed. He said to me, "Mortal, have you seen this?" Then he led me back along the bank of the river. As I came back, I saw on the bank of the river a great many trees on the one side and on the other. He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah; and when it enters the sea, the sea of stagnant waters, the water will become fresh." (NRSV)

The flowing rivers of this passage evoke the cosmological account found in the Slavonic apocalypse where the sea is depicted alongside rivers and their circles. Like the great prophetic account, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is familiar with the paradisaic provenance of the sacred waters since it connects the Edenic tree with "the spring, the river flowing from it." In both passages, the waters of the Paradise are portrayed as "flowing."¹⁷ The origin of the paradisaic imagery of the circulating waters can be traced to Genesis 2:10,¹⁸ in which a river flows from Eden to water the garden.¹⁹ In Ezekiel, however, the image of flowing Edenic waters receives further cultic meaning. Yet such an emphasis is not unique to Ezekiel. Gregory Beale notes²⁰ that the similar sacerdotal imagery of "rivers" can also be found in the description of Israel's Temple in Psalm 36:8–9.²¹ Scholars have additionally discerned²² a similar sacerdotal motif of sacred waters in various Jewish extra-biblical accounts, including the *Letter of Aristeas* 89–91²³ and *Joseph and Aseneth* 2.²⁴ Christian materials also display acquaintance with the sacerdotal tradition of flowing waters. Revelation 22:1–2, for example, portrays a river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God.²⁵

If we again turn our attention to the foundational Ezekiel account, it is notable that in Ezekiel 47:12, the imagery of the water is conflated with other distinctive symbols, including arboreal imagery:

And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.

This portrayal is evocative of the constellation of motifs found in the Slavonic apocalypse, particularly where the tree of Eden is mentioned in conjunction with other trees:

And I saw there the tree of Eden and its fruits, and the spring, the river flowing from it, and its trees and their flowering, and I saw those who act righteously. And I saw in it their food and rest.²⁶

One cannot ignore the panoply of striking similarities between Ezekiel and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, both of which combine the imagery of flowing rivers, Edenic trees, and the fruits of these trees that will serve as nourishment for the elect.²⁷ In both accounts, the Edenic imagery appears to hint at the motif of eschatological restoration of the harmony of creation, known in various traditions as the paradise of the righteous. Paradisal imagery, as mentioned, permeates the Ezekelian account. In the Slavonic account, too, the patriarch sees “those who act righteously” near the tree of Eden. Some early Jewish texts often interpret this restored, uncorrupted, paradisal state of creation in cultic terms, envisioning it as the eschatological temple.²⁸

The host of similarities between Ezekiel and the *Apocalypse of Abraham* suggests that the portrayal of the eschatological temple found in the great prophetic book appears to exercise some influence on the cosmological narrative of the apocalyptic work. Moreover, Ezekiel’s cultic concerns may also underlie the Slavonic apocalypse’s account, especially considering its own priestly concerns.²⁹

Chambers of the Macrocosmic Temple

Let us now return to the motif of the sacred courtyard symbolically representing the primordial sea. In Jewish lore, the courtyard of the macrocosmic temple was identified with the sea, whereas the other chambers of the sanctuary of creation were associated with heaven and earth, respectively. A late rabbinic tradition that circulated in the name of Rabbi Pinhas ben Ya’ir states that “the Tabernacle was made to correspond to the creation of the world. . . . The house of the Holy of Holies was made to correspond to the highest heaven. The outer

Holy House was made to correspond to the earth. And the courtyard was made to correspond to the sea.”³⁰ This arcane cosmological speculation is not a late rabbinic invention but a tradition with ancient roots. Josephus, in his *Jewish Antiquities* 3.121–123, suggests that the tripartite division of the earthly sanctuary was a reflection of the tripartite structure of the entire creation,³¹ with its sacred chambers that corresponded to heaven, earth, and sea:

Internally, dividing its length into three portions, at a measured distance of ten cubits from the farther end he set up four pillars, constructed like the rest and resting upon similar sockets, but placed slightly apart. The area within these pillars was the sanctuary; the rest of the tabernacle was open to the priests. Now this partitionment of the tabernacle was withal an imitation of universal nature; for the third part of it, that within the four pillars, which was inaccessible to the priests, was *like heaven* devoted to God, while the twenty cubits’ space, even *as earth and sea* are accessible to men, was in like manner assigned to the priests alone.³²

Likewise, *Jewish Antiquities* 3.180–181 affirms a similar tradition:

For if one reflects on the construction of the tabernacle and looks at the vestments of the priest and the vessels which we use for the sacred ministry, he will discover that our lawgiver was a man of God and that these blasphemous charges brought against us by the rest of men are idle. In fact, every one of these objects is intended to recall and represent the universe, as he will find if he will but consent to examine them without prejudice and with understanding. Thus, to take the tabernacle, thirty cubits long, by dividing this into three parts and giving up two of them to the priests, as a place approachable and open to all, Moses signifies *the earth and the sea*, since these too are accessible to all; but the third portion he reserved for God alone, because *heaven* also is inaccessible to men.³³

The idea that cult and creation corresponded was also known to another prominent Jewish interpreter, Philo, who suggests that the holy temple of God represents the whole universe in his *De Specialibus*

Legibus 1.66.³⁴ This belief that the earthly temple is a replica of the entire creation is rooted in biblical materials; the creation of the world in Genesis 1–2 is set in conspicuous parallel with the building of the tabernacle in Ex 39–40. Moshe Weinfeld notes that “Gen 1:1–2:3 and Ex 39:1–40:33 are typologically identical. Both describe the satisfactory completion of the enterprise commanded by God, its inspection and approval, the blessing and the sanctification which are connected with it. Most importantly, the expression of these ideas in both accounts overlaps.”³⁵ Scholars often suggest that, in view of these parallels, the earthly sanctuary is envisioned as a microcosm of the world, imitating the sacerdotal structure of the entire creation.

Keeping in mind these intriguing connections, let us return to the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. If a cultic dimension is indeed present in its cosmological depiction, then the Slavonic apocalypse might also be aware of the threefold sacerdotal structure of the universe—heaven, earth, and watery underworld—as the visionary account found in chapters 19–21 mentions all three realms. In these chapters, the seer first sees the heavenly levels, and then the earth and the sea. Moreover, Abraham’s position in the upper heaven, which represents the macrocosmic Holy of Holies, provides an elevated vantage point from which he is able to glimpse into the other chambers of the cosmological temple. This spatial arrangement provides additional insights about the structure of the macrocosmic sanctuary, which exhibits some similarity to the earthly temple.

Much like the earthly shrine, whose inner sanctum was shielded from the less holy parts of the sanctuary, the macrocosmic temple seems also to possess a sacred border between its Holy of Holies, identified with the heavenly realm, and its less sacred chambers, with the earth and the sea. Such a boundary, represented in the Slavonic apocalypse by the firmament, appears to be understood as equivalent to the *Pargod*, the mysterious curtain of the celestial Holy of Holies, an entity which, according to some traditions, reflects all human history from the beginning to the eschatological end. We should now explore more closely this imagery of the cosmic fabric.

The Veil of the Cosmological Sanctuary

Assuming that the idea of the macrocosmic temple is indeed present in the cosmological depiction found in the Slavonic apocalypse, it is

possible that this macrocosmic structure, similar to the earthly shrine, has its own sacred veil that separates the adytum of the sanctuary from other less sacred enclosures.

It has been noted that the patriarch's revelations in the heavenly throne room are reminiscent of the vision of the *Pargod*, the heavenly counterpart of the veil of the terrestrial sanctuary.³⁶ Later Jewish mystical accounts often depict the *Pargod* as the mystical textile that miraculously reflects the history of creation. The patriarch's placement in the celestial Holy of Holies, gazing on the firmament under his feet, situates him behind the curtain that separates the heavenly adytum from the rest of the macrocosmic sanctuary.

Further, some researchers have commented that the unique way in which Abraham receives the vision of the ages is reminiscent of the disclosures to the Hekhalot mystics on the celestial curtain and the apocalyptic seers on the heavenly tablets.³⁷ Specifically, it recalls the revelation of the *Pargod* to R. Ishmael³⁸ in *Sefer Hekhalot*,³⁹ where the rabbinic seer beholds the whole span of human history on a cosmic curtain.⁴⁰

The mystical screen of *3 Enoch*, like the medium of revelation in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, reveals the order of events from the generation of the protological couple until the generation of the Messiah. However, as noted previously, in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* the vision of the *Pargod* encompasses not only historical but also cosmological subjects, attempting to reveal the structure of the entire universe.

In this respect, it is curious that some early Jewish texts state that even the veil guarding the terrestrial Holy of Holies was to be understood as the fabric that somehow mirrors the entire universe. Josephus's *Jewish War*, for example, explains that the veil of the Jerusalem temple was an image of the entire universe; it reads:

Before these hung a veil of equal length, of Babylonian tapestry, with embroidery of blue and fine linen, of scarlet also and purple, wrought with marvelous skill. Nor was this mixture of materials without its mystic meaning: it typified the universe. For the scarlet seemed emblematic of fire, the fine linen of the earth, the blue of the air, and the purple of the sea; the comparison in two cases being suggested by their colour, and in that of the fine linen and purple by their origin, as the one is produced by the earth and the other by the sea. On this tapestry was portrayed a panorama of

the heavens, the signs of the Zodiac excepted. (*Jewish War* V. 212–214)⁴¹

The account noticeably emphasizes the combination of the colors of the veil, which the author asserts symbolize the four elements of the universe: fire, earth, air, and water. He also underlines the familiar tripartite structure of the universe, in other words, the heavenly realm, the earth, and the sea. Josephus's reflection on the curtain of the tabernacle in his *Jewish Antiquities* contains a similar portrayal, again alluding to the cardinal elements and their corresponding colors:

The tapestries woven of four materials denote the natural elements: thus the fine linen appears to typify the earth, because from it springs up the flax, and the purple the sea, since it is incarnadined with the blood of fish; the air must be indicated by the blue, and the crimson will be the symbol of fire. (*Jewish Antiquities* III. 183)⁴²

Creation's projection onto the sacerdotal fabric, the veil of earthly sanctuary, may represent an important contribution to the concept of the heavenly curtain, *Pargod*, which shows the entire universe to apocalyptic or Hekhalot seers.

After this short excursus into early *Pargod* traditions, let us return to the developments found in the Slavonic apocalypse. Before proceeding to a close analysis of the revelation given to the patriarch, it will be important to discuss certain spatial aspects of this disclosure. Consider, for instance, *Apocalypse of Abraham* 21:1–2, which reports the Deity's command received by the visionary immediately before the disclosure is given to him; we read:

And he said to me, "Look now beneath your feet at the expanse and contemplate the creation which was previously covered over. On this level there is the creation and those who inhabit it and the age that has been prepared to follow it." And I looked beneath the expanse at my feet and I saw the likeness of heaven and what was therein.⁴³

Here the Deity orders the seer look beneath his feet. At first, the vision's arrangement appears to be strange and quite different from the customary appearance of the *Pargod*, which in rabbinic accounts

is usually depicted as a vertical barrier. In the Slavonic apocalypse, however, the curtain of the celestial Holy of Holies, unlike the *paroket* of the earthly adytum, is not a vertical entity but a horizontal one. The arrangement of the vision stresses the fact that Abraham looks down from the heavenly Holy of Holies onto the medium of the divine revelation, which is situated under his feet. It affirms a paradoxical spatial structure of the macrocosmic sanctuary in which the upper Holy of Holies is separated from the lower realms by a horizontal boundary called “a spreading under one’s feet”—in Slavonic, простертие ножное.⁴⁴ This horizontal orientation of the heavenly veil is not unique to the Slavonic apocalypse and is found in other Jewish documents. Some rabbinic traditions understand one of the heavens as a veil that separates the celestial Holy of Holies from the lower realms/heavens, often envisioned as the less sacred chambers of the heavenly Temple. George MacRae, in his in-depth investigation of the imagery of the heavenly veil,⁴⁵ draws attention to a passage from the Babylonian Talmud in which the lowest heaven, Wilon (וילון),⁴⁶ is understood as the cosmic veil.⁴⁷ The relevant passage from *b. Hag.* 12b reads:

R. Judah said: There are two firmaments, for it is said: Behold, unto the Lord thy God belongeth heaven, and the heaven of heavens. Resh Lakish said: [There are] seven, namely, Wilon, Rakia’, Shehakim, Zebul, Ma’on, Makon, ‘Araboth. Wilon serves no purpose except that it enters in the morning and goes forth in the evening and renews every day the work of creation, for it is said: That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. Rakia’ is that in which sun and moon, stars and constellations are set, for it is said: And God set them in the firmament [Rakia’] of the heaven.⁴⁸

According to the rabbinic tradition, then, the cosmic curtain represented by Wilon, the lowest of the seven firmaments,⁴⁹ draws back every morning, revealing the light of day to the world, and in the evening, the same cosmic veil closes and hides the daylight.⁵⁰

The biblical roots of Wilon’s imagery are usually traced to Isaiah 40:22, in which the Deity is depicted as stretching heavens like a curtain: “It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in. . . .”⁵¹

B. Ber. 58b also connects the imagery of the celestial veil with Wilon: “R. Huna the son of R. Joshua said: Wilon was torn asunder and rolled up, showing the brightness of Rakia.”⁵² It is significant that both talmudic passages connect the symbolism of Wilon to the imagery of firmament (רקיע). This connection is important in light of the tradition found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, in which the seer beholds the mysteries of creation and human history by gazing on the firmament at his feet:

And he said to me, “Look now beneath your feet at the *expanse* (простертие) and contemplate the creation which was previously covered over. On this level there is the creation and those who inhabit it and the age that has been prepared to follow it.” And I looked beneath the *expanse* (простертие) at my feet and I saw the likeness of heaven and what was therein. (*Apoc. Ab.* 21:1–2)⁵³

In the biblical materials, the firmament or *expanse* (רקיע) is often understood as the diaphragm that separates upper waters from lower waters. Genesis 1:6 records that the Deity created a firmament (רקיע) in the midst of the waters in order to separate “the waters from the waters.” In a fashion similar to the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, some midrashic materials appear to envision the firmament’s separating function as the cosmic curtain by tracing the etiology of the sacerdotal veil to the division of upper and lower waters at that crucial point of creation. Thus, in *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati* on Exodus 26:33, the veil of the terrestrial sanctuary is put in parallel with the firmament as the dividing line between upper and lower waters:

In the Tabernacle the veil divided between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, and in body the diaphragm divides the heart from the stomach, and in the world it is the firmament which divides between the upper waters from lower waters. . . .⁵⁴

Numbers Rabbah 12:13 preserves a similar conceptual development:

. . . It is written, In the beginning God created the heaven, etc. (Gen. I, 1), and it is written, Who stretchest out the

heaven like a curtain (Ps. CIV, 2), while of the Tabernacle it is written, And thou shalt make curtains of goat's hair for a tent over the Tabernacle, etc. (Ex. XXVI, 7). It is written in connection with the second day, Let there be a firmament . . . and let it divide, etc. (Gen. I, 6), and of the Tabernacle it is written. The veil shall divide unto you (Ex. XXVI, 33). Of the third day we read, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together (Gen. I, 9). . . .⁵⁵

A passage from the *Book of Zohar* underlines the sacerdotal significance of the firmament as the curtain by stating that it separates the more sacred realm from the less sacred:

Rabbi Yehudah said, "From here we learn that every division of opinion for the sake of heaven is destined to endure, for here is a division for the sake of heaven, and through it heaven endured, as it is written: *God called the expanse Heaven* (Genesis 1:8). In a waterskin of lofts they appear by the pint and endure. For we have learned that it is written: *The curtain shall serve you as a partition between the Holy and the Holy of Holies* (Exodus 26:33), precisely, for this is an *expanse* dividing in the middle. (*Zohar* I.33a)⁵⁶

It appears that in the aforementioned passages from *Midrash Rabbah* and the *Zohar* there is found a peculiar parallelism in which the dividing line between upper and lower waters is understood as the cosmic veil. This rabbinic understanding of the curtain as the cosmic diaphragm between the more sacred upper regions and the less sacred lower realms, a boundary represented either by the lowest heaven or the firmament, appears to have early conceptual roots. MacRae draws attention to some Nag Hammadi materials in which the cosmic veil is understood as the threshold that separates the divine Pleroma from the world of matter. One text, the *Hypostasis of Archons* (NHC, II, 94, 9–14) states that "a veil exists between the world above and the realms that are below; and shadow came into being beneath the veil; and that shadow became matter; and that shadow was projected apart."⁵⁷ Here, as in the Jewish texts attesting to the Wilon imagery, the veil is understood as the horizontal entity dividing the divine realm from its material "shadow." Another passage, *Hypostasis of Archons* (NHC, II, 95, 19–22), again envisions the cosmic veil as the dividing border

between upper and lower abodes: “And Sophia and Zoe caught him up and gave him charge of the seventh heaven, below the veil between above and below.”⁵⁸ In these heterodox Christian traditions, similar to the aforementioned rabbinic developments in which the lowest firmament Wilon serves as the macrocosmic veil, the lowest region/aeon of the divine Fullness, Sophia, is often understood as the curtain separating the realm of the Pleroma from the realm of humans. *On the Origin of the World* (NHC, II, 98, 21–23) another Nag Hammadi text, informs its readers that “she (Sophia) functioned as a veil dividing mankind from the things above. . . .”⁵⁹

As we see, these texts often endow their cosmic veils with a cultic function, serving as a boundary between the more sacred and the less sacred realms. The horizontal spatial arrangement of the macrocosmic “veil” in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* possesses both cosmological and cultic significance. It might suggest that the lower realms portrayed in the patriarch’s vision can be understood as exterior chambers of the temple of the universe, which correspond to the less sacred chambers of the terrestrial sanctuary known as the holy place (*hekhal*) and the vestibule (*olam*).⁶⁰

The Leviathan as the Foundation Stone

Returning to the motif of the sacred courtyard, which the Slavonic apocalypse associates with the sea, another feature demands some attention, namely, the mysterious oceanic inhabitant, Leviathan, whom the text portrays as the foundation of the world. Exploring this motif of the primordial monster sustaining the earth leads to a cluster of Jewish traditions in which the world’s protological foundation often has cultic connotations, being closely associated with the sacred base of the Temple. The idea of the sacerdotal and cosmological groundwork received its crystallization in the notion of the Foundation Stone (the *Eben Shetiyah*),⁶¹ the primordial entity with which, according to some Mesopotamian⁶² and Jewish texts, creation began and which became the cornerstone not only of the entire world⁶³ but also of the temple.⁶⁴ This idea of the primordial foundation of the sanctuary is reflected in *2 Enoch*, in which the primordial aeon Adoil becomes the foundation of the upper temple, represented by the divine throne.⁶⁵

In rabbinic lore, the Foundation Stone was often identified both with the foundation of the upper sanctuary⁶⁶ and with the rock in the

earthly Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem Temple. *Mishnah Yoma* 5:2 tells us that “after the Ark was taken away a stone remained there from the time of the early Prophets, and it was called ‘*Shetiyah*.’ It was higher than the ground by three fingerbreadths.”⁶⁷

Moreover, in Jewish lore, the primordial stone additionally becomes the cosmic plug, intended to subdue and seal the waters of chaos. One can find such idea of the primeval waters’ sealing in the *Prayer of Manasseh* 1–3, in which the Deity seals the abyss with his glorious Name:

O Lord, God of our fathers, God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their righteous offspring; He who made the heaven and the earth with all their beauty; He who bound the sea and established it by the command of his word, He who closed the bottomless pit and sealed it by his powerful and glorious name. . . .⁶⁸

Although the Foundation Stone is not mentioned in this early passage, the reference to the divine Name parallels this entity insofar as the *Eben Shetiyah* was often associated with the Name. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Exodus 28:30 states that, in the beginning, God sealed up the mouth of the Tehom with the Foundation Stone, on which the divine Name was engraved.⁶⁹ In the Babylonian Talmud,⁷⁰ this protological act of the Deity was later replicated by King David, who similarly seals the waters of chaos with the stone inscribed with the Tetragrammaton.⁷¹ Here the primordial act of subduing of the chaotic waters is linked to the Temple’s foundation.⁷² Michael Fishbane notes that

. . . the waters of Tehom are held in check by a stone . . . and this is the foundation stone upon which the Temple itself was established. . . . Thus . . . the Temple serves as an *axis mundi*, or point of connection and intermediation between the divine realms above and the chaotic waters below. There is also a palpable trace in these accounts of the ancient mythic theme of the establishment of the world and the heavenly shrine upon the defeated waters of chaos. This topic is most famously known from the great battle and building scenes found in *Enuma elish* iv-v; but one will also recall

the striking link between the divine combat against the sea and the references to the building of a temple recorded in Exod. 15:6–8, 17.⁷³

The imagery of the Foundation Stone, envisioned as the primordial solid point, brings us back to the cosmological account of the Slavonic apocalypse, in which Leviathan is depicted as the foundation of the world.⁷⁴ Like the *Eben Shetiyah*, Leviathan too serves as the cosmic dam against the turbulent waters. Rabbinic lore also often describes Leviathan not only as the cornerstone of the world⁷⁵ but also, similar to the Foundation Stone, as the barrier against the waters of chaos.⁷⁶ *Pesikta Rabbati* 48:3 claims that if Leviathan did not lie over the abyss and press down upon it, the abyss would eventually destroy the world and flood it.⁷⁷ In view of these traditions, scholars suggest that the Jewish materials appear to describe Leviathan as “a plug over the primordial waters, preventing a world-threatening flood from arising from the netherworld.”⁷⁸ Similar imagery is used with respect to the Foundation Stone.⁷⁹ Thus both Leviathan and the Foundation Stone are envisioned as the cosmic boundaries predestined to “block the primordial waters.”⁸⁰ William Whitney notes that rabbinic tradition about Leviathan “places him at a focal point in the cosmic order. He is the one solid point on which the cosmos might be founded in the midst of the watery depths.”⁸¹ This, again, evokes the rabbinic understanding the Foundation Stone as an initial solid point of cosmos, thrown by the Deity into the primordial abyss.⁸² In this respect, it is intriguing that the Leviathan tradition preserved in *1 Enoch* 60:9 depicts God throwing the monster into the depths of the sea during the process of creation, an act strikingly reminiscent of the protological casting of the Foundation Stone into the abyss.⁸³

The position of Leviathan as the sacred foundation of the cosmological temple might also be hinted at in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 10:9–10 in which the Leviathans are paired with the Cherubim/*Hayyot*.⁸⁴ Ezekiel’s vision depicts the *Hayyot* as the holders or foundation of the celestial sanctuary represented by the divine Chariot. Their counterparts are the Cherubim of the Holy of Holies, who hold the divine Presence in the earthly adytum. Pairing the Leviathans with these sacerdotal “holders” provides additional insight into the cultic functions of the monsters of the sea.⁸⁵

Appointing Yahoel, the angelic embodiment of the divine Name, as the stabilizing force over the Leviathans is also instructive. Whitney notes that *Apocalypse of Abraham* 10:9–10 is concerned with the stability of the *Axis Mundi*, since Yahoel—the angelic representation of the Name—rules over the Leviathans and is portrayed as “the one who guarantees the stability of the cosmic axis.”⁸⁶ Juxtaposing the themes of divine Name and the *Axis Mundi*, represented by Leviathan(s), again calls to mind the tradition of the Foundation Stone in which this primordial entity is sealed with the divine Name to suppress the watery chaos under the sanctuary. Whitney notes the same stabilizing function of Yahoel in relation to the *Hayyot*; besides taming the Leviathans, he also reconciles the rivalries of the Living Creatures of the Cherubim against one another. Whitney suggests that “here the power of the name of God serves to suppress dark and threatening forces beneath the throne of God.”⁸⁷ The hypostasized divine Name thus tames chaotic forces both in the foundation of the upper sanctuary as well as the sanctuary of the world.

It is also possible that, in some traditions, Leviathan is envisioned not only as the Foundation Stone that provides the cultic base and seals the primordial waters but also as the cosmological courtyard of the macrocosmic temple that, like the outer sacerdotal chamber, circumscribes the sacred realm. In some traditions, Leviathan encompasses the entire world, acting as “*Circuitus Mundi*.”⁸⁸

Leviathan “embodying” the sacred structure also seems to be found in the Babylonian Talmud, which tells that Leviathan will represent the building material for the eschatological Tabernacle. *B. Baba Bathra* 75a speaks of the following tradition: “Rabbah in the name of R. Johanan further stated: The Holy One, blessed be He, will in time to come make a tabernacle for the righteous from the skin of Leviathan; for it is said: Canst thou fill tabernacles with his skin.”⁸⁹ Here the eschatological tabernacle of the righteous will be constructed from the skin of Leviathan.

Conclusion

Examining the cultic dimensions of the cosmological account found in chapter 21 of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, we have suggested that this

chapter portrays the macrocosmic temple, with the sacred chambers corresponding to heaven, earth, and the underworld. The presence of such sacerdotal imagery reflects the cultic concerns that permeate the Slavonic apocalypse. Written shortly after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, the text offers an alternative, idealized vision of the sanctuary in order to mitigate the catastrophic loss of the earthly shrine. It portrays the young hero of the faith as an adept of otherworldly priestly praxis, receiving revelation about the true upper prototype of the earthly temple. In this respect, the portentous cultic disclosure of the macrocosmic temple in the very beginning of Abraham's vision in the celestial Holy of Holies appears to envision him as an archetypal sacerdotalist to whom God reveals the "idea of priesthood." The sacerdotal developments taking place in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and other Jewish apocalyptic writings will influence later Jewish mystical developments, as rabbinic seers will also receive visions of the idealized sanctuaries.⁹⁰

Another distinctive feature of the sacerdotal universe of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* that will play a similarly prominent role in later Jewish mysticism is the cultic dimension of the demonic side that attempts to mirror the sacerdotal realities of the divine realm. It has been previously noted that the chief antagonist of the Slavonic apocalypse, the fallen angel Azazel, appears to possess his own "glory," or *kavod*, an attribute that is reserved almost exclusively for the depiction of the Deity in apocalyptic accounts.⁹¹ The transference of divine theophanic attributes to the story's antagonist seems part of the broader ideological tendency of the Slavonic apocalypse, which builds paradoxical symmetry between the good and evil realms. Leviathan's role as the foundation stone of the macrocosmic sanctuary appears also to belong to the similar cluster of ideas that attempt to envision the prominent agents of the Other Side as counterparts to the divine realities.

(*Apoc. Ab.* 10:8–9). This role can again be compared to the future office of Metatron who often functions in the Hekhalot and *Shi'ur Qomah* accounts as the celestial choirmaster conducting the liturgies of the Living Creatures. Yahoel's expertise in heavenly praise does not seem to be limited to heavenly matters. In the apocalypse he is also depicted as the one who initiates a human visionary, the patriarch Abraham, into this mystical praxis of praising the Deity that serves here as an alternative practice to the vision mysticism.

The Cosmological Temple in the Apocalypse of Abraham

1. With respect to the temple and creation, see: M. Barker, *Creation: A Biblical Vision for the Environment* (London: T&T Clark, 2010) 42–49; G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (New Studies in Biblical Theology, 17; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos, 2004); U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1989) 122–123; B. Janowski “Die heilige Wohnung des Höchsten. Kosmologische Implikationen der Jerusalemer Tempeltheologie,” in: *Gottesstadt und Gottesgarten. Zu Geschichte und Theologie des Jerusalemer Tempels* (eds. O. Keel and E. Zenger; QD, 191; Freiburg: Herder, 2002) 24–68; idem, “Der Tempel als Kosmos—Zur kosmologischen Bedeutung des Tempels in der Umwelt Israels,” in: *Egypt—Temple of the Whole World—Ägypten—Tempel der Gesamten Welt. Studies in Honour of Jan Assmann* (ed. S. Meyer; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 163–186; M. Metzger, “Keruben und Palmetten als Dekoration im Jerusalemer Heiligtum und Jahwe, ‘der Nahrung gibt allem Fleisch,’” in: *Zion—Ort der Begegnung. FS L. Klein* (ed. F. Hahn; BBB, 90; Bodenheim, 1993) 503–529; S. Schroer, *In Israel gab es Bilder. Nachrichten von darstellender Kunst im Alten Testament* (OBO, 74; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987) 47–122; J. Strange “The Idea of Afterlife in Ancient Israel: Some Remarks on the Iconography in Solomon's Temple,” *PEQ* 117 (1985) 35–40; J. van Seters, “Solomon's Temple: Fact and Ideology in Biblical and Near Eastern Historiography,” *CBQ* 59 (1997) 45–57; H. Weippert, “Die Kesselwagen Salomos,” *ZDPV* 108 (1992) 8–41; W. Zwickel, *Der salomonische Tempel* (Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt, 83; Mainz: Von Zabern, 1999); H. Weippert, “Die Kesselwagen Salomos,” *ZDPV* 108 (1992) 8–41.

2. *Apoc. Ab.* 19:1–4: “And a voice came to me out of the midst of the fire, saying, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ And I said, ‘Here am I!’ And he said, ‘Look at the levels which are under the expanse on which you are brought and see that on no single level is there any other but the one whom you have searched for or who has loved you.’ And while he was still speaking, and behold, the levels opened, and there are the heavens under me. . . .” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 24–25.

3. *Apoc. Ab.* 21:1–2: “And he said to me, ‘Look now beneath your feet at the expanse and contemplate the creation which was previously covered over. On this level there is the creation and those who inhabit it and the age that has been prepared to follow it.’ And I looked beneath the expanse at my feet and I saw the likeness of heaven and what was therein.” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 26.

4. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 26.

5. Janowski, “Der Tempel als Kosmos—Zur kosmologischen Bedeutung des Tempels in der Umwelt Israels,” 165–175.

6. Janowski, “Der Tempel als Kosmos—Zur kosmologischen Bedeutung des Tempels in der Umwelt Israels,” 175–184.

7. Cf. *Jub.* 8:19: “He knew that the Garden of Eden is the holy of holies and is the residence of the Lord.” VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 2.53. Regarding this tradition, Jacques van Ruiten notes that in *Jubilees*, “[T]he Garden of Eden is seen as a Temple, or, more precisely as a part of the Temple: the room which is in the rear of the Temple, where the ark of the covenant of the Lord is placed, and which is often called ‘Holy of Holies.’” J. van Ruiten, “Eden and the Temple: The Rewriting of Genesis 2:4–3:24 in the Book of Jubilees,” in: *Paradise Interpreted: Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. G.P. Luttikhuisen; TBN, 2; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 76.

8. Understanding Eden as the temple presupposes the protoplast’s role as a sacerdotal servant. Van Ruiten suggests that the author of *Jubilees* sees Adam acting as a prototypical priest who burns incense at the gate of the Garden of Eden. He draws a parallel between this description and a tradition found in Exodus: “[T]he incense is burned in front of the Holy of Holies. The burning of incense is a privilege given to the priests, namely the sons of Aaron.” Van Ruiten also calls attention to another important detail related to the function of Adam as priest, namely, the covering of nakedness. He reminds us that covering one’s nakedness is a condition for offering since the priests are explicitly bidden to cover their nakedness. The author of *Jubilees* likewise lays emphasis on covering nakedness. Van Ruiten, “Eden and the Temple,” 77–78. On sacerdotal Edenic traditions, see also J.R. Davila, “The Hodayot Hymnist and the Four Who Entered Paradise,” *RevQ* 17/65–68 (1996) 457–478; F. García Martínez, “Man and Woman: Halakhah Based upon Eden in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in: *Paradise Interpreted: Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. G. Luttikhuisen; TBN, 2; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 95–115 at 112–113; E. Noort, “Gan-Eden in the Context of the Mythology of the Hebrew Bible,” in: *Paradise Interpreted: Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. G. Luttikhuisen; TBN, 2; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 25; D.W. Parry, “Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary,” in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism* (ed. D.W. Parry; Provo: Deseret, 1994) 126–151; J. van Ruiten, “Visions of the Temple in the

Book of Jubilees,” in: *Gemeinde ohne Tempel/Community without Temple: Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum* (eds. B. Ego et al.; WUNT, 118; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1999) 215–228; G.J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” in: *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A: The Period of the Bible* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986) 19–25 at 21–22; M. Wise, “4QFlorilegium and the Temple of Adam,” *RevQ* 15/57–58 (1991) 103–132.

9. Beale notes that “Ezekiel 32 explicitly calls Eden the first sanctuary, which substantiates that Eden is described as a temple because it is the first temple, albeit a ‘garden-temple.’” Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 80. Some scholars argue that Solomon’s temple was an intentional replication of the Garden of Eden, especially in its arboreal likeness. For this, see Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 72; L.E. Stager, “Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden,” in *Festschrift for F.M. Cross* (Eretz Israel, 26; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1999) 183–193; idem, “Jerusalem as Eden,” *BAR* 26 (2000) 36–47.

10. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 26.

11. “. . . His offering was one silver dish, etc. The dish was in allusion to the court which encompassed the Tabernacle as the sea encompasses the world.” Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 6.546. Concerning a similar tradition in *Midrash Tadshe*, see G. MacRae, *Some Elements of Jewish Apocalyptic and Mystical Tradition and Their Relation to Gnostic Literature* (2 vols.; Ph.D. diss.; University of Cambridge, 1966) 55.

12. “. . . The reference is to the building of Herod. Of what did he build it?—Rabbah replied, Of yellow and white marble. Some there are who say, With yellow, blue and white marble. The building rose in tiers in order to provide a hold for the plaster. He intended at first to overlay it with gold, but the Rabbis told him, Leave it alone for it is more beautiful as it is, since it has the appearance of the waves of the sea.” Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Sukkah* 51b.

13. 1 Kgs 7:23–25 reads: “Then he made the molten sea; it was round, ten cubits from brim to brim, and five cubits high, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference. Under its brim were gourds, for thirty cubits, compassing the sea round about; the gourds were in two rows, cast with it when it was cast. It stood upon twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east; the sea was set upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward” (NRSV). See also 2 Kgs 16:17; 2 Kgs 25:13; 1 Chr 18:8; 2 Chr 4:2; Jer 52:17.

14. Elizabeth Bloch-Smith observes that “the exaggerated size of the structures of the Solomonic Temple courtyard would suggest that they were not intended for human use, but belonged to the realm of the divine.” E.

Bloch-Smith “‘Who is the King of Glory?’ Solomon’s Temple and Its Symbolism,” in: *Scripture and Other Artifacts. Essays on the Bible and Archeology in Honor of Philip J. King* (eds. M. Coogan et al; Louisville: Westminster, 1994) 19–31 at 21.

15. Bloch-Smith “‘Who is the King of Glory?’ Solomon’s Temple and Its Symbolism,” 20. See also C.L. Meyers, “Sea, Molten,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. D.N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 5.1061–1062.

16. V. Hurowitz, “Inside Solomon’s Temple,” *Bible Review* 10:2 (1994) 24–36.

17. *Apoc. Ab.21:5*: “I saw there the rivers and their overflows, and their circles;” *Ezek 47:1*: “water was flowing from below the threshold of the temple.”

18. Regarding this biblical passage, Wenham observes that “the brief account of the geography of the garden in 2:10–14 also makes many links with later sanctuary design. ‘A river flows out of Eden to water the garden’ . . . Ps 46:5 speaks of ‘a river whose streams make glad the city of God’ and Ezekiel 47 describes a great river flowing out of the new Jerusalem temple to sweeten the Dead Sea.” Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” 22.

19. “A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches” (NRSV). Regarding the rivers of paradise, see also *2 Enoch* 8; *IQH* 14 and 16.

20. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 72.

21. “They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light” (NRSV).

22. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 74.

23. “There is an uninterrupted supply not only of water, just as if there were a plentiful spring rising naturally from within, but also of indescribably wonderful underground reservoirs, which within a radius of five stades from the foundation of the Temple revealed innumerable channels for each of them, the streams joining together on each side. All these were covered with lead down to the foundation of the wall; on top of them a thick layer of pitch, all done very effectively. There were many mouths at the base, which were completely invisible except for those responsible for the ministry, so that the large amounts of blood which collected from the sacrifices were all cleansed by the downward pressure and momentum. Being personally convinced, I will describe the building plan of the reservoirs just as I understood it. They conducted me more than four stades outside the city, and told me to bend down at a certain spot and listen to the noise at the meeting of the waters. The result was that the size of the conduits became clear to me, as has been demonstrated.” R.J.H. Shutt, “Letter of Aristeas,” *The Old Testament*

Pseudepigrapha (2 vols.; ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985) 2.7–34 at 18–19.

24. A similar image of the overflowing water surrounding the Temple courtyard is found also in *Joseph and Aseneth* 2:17–20: “And there was in the court, on the right hand, a spring of abundant living water. . . .” Scholars have noted that “detailed description of [Aseneth’s] garden clearly echoes Ezekiel’s account of what he saw in his celebrated temple-vision (Ezek. 40–8).” G. Bohak, *Joseph and Aseneth and the Jewish Temple in Heliopolis* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996) 68.

25. “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city” (NRSV).

26. The motif of resting is also noteworthy. Rest imagery is often laden with sacerdotal connotations. Some studies point, more specifically, to a connection between the motif of rest and temple imagery. With respect to this connection, see Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 60–62; J.H. Walton, *Genesis* (NIVAC, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 149–155; M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord—The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” in: *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l’honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (eds. A. Caquot and M. Delcor; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1981) 501–512 at 501–502.

27. Such a peculiar constellation of subjects—turbulent rivers, trees, and paradisaic imagery—is also found in the Leviathan passage from *Zohar* II.34a-b: “This verse has been established, but *God created the sea serpents*—as we have established: This is Leviathan and his mate. *Tanninim, Sea serpents*—spelled deficiently, because the blessed Holy One slew the female, preserving her for the righteous, as has been established. *The great sea serpent* (Ezek 29:3)—there are nine rivers in which he sprawls, and one river whose waters are calm, into which pour blessings of the waters of the Garden three times a year. When twice, that river is blessed, but not greatly; when once, not so. The sea serpent enters that river, gathering strength, swimming along—entering the sea, swallowing fish of many kinds, gaining dominion, and returning to that river. These nine rivers flow and rise, banked by numerous trees and grasses of various kinds.” Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 4.150–1.

28. Concerning this, see Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 78.

29. With respect to the *Apocalypse of Abraham*’s use of the Ezekielian traditions, see: Rubinkiewicz, “*Apocalypse of Abraham*,” 685.

30. Patai, *Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual*, 108–109.

31. Regarding the tripartite structure of the entire creation in the Jewish tradition, see L.J. Stadelman, *The Hebrew Conception of the World—A Philological and Literary Study* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1970) 9.

32. *Josephus* (10 vols.; LCL; trs. H. S. J. Thackeray and R. Markus; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926–65) 4.373–375.

33. Thackeray and Markus, *Josephus*, 4.403.

34. *De Specialibus Legibus* 1.66 reads: “The highest, and in the truest sense the holy, temple of God is, as we must believe, the whole universe, having for its sanctuary the most sacred part of all existence, even heaven. . . .” *Philo* (10 vols.; LCL; trs. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1929–1964) 7.137. *Zohar* II.149a conveys a similar tradition: “Said R. Isaac: ‘We are aware that the structure of the Tabernacle corresponds to the structure of heaven and earth.’” Sperling and Simon, *The Zohar*, 4.22. Cf. also *Zohar* II.231a: “Now, the Tabernacle below was likewise made after the pattern of the supernal Tabernacle in all its details. For the Tabernacle in all its works embraced all the works and achievements of the upper world and the lower, whereby the Shechinah was made to abide in the world, both in the higher spheres and the lower. Similarly, the Lower Paradise is made after the pattern of the Upper Paradise, and the latter contains all the varieties of forms and images to be found in the former. Hence the work of the Tabernacle, and that of heaven and earth, come under one and the same mystery.” Sperling and Simon, *The Zohar*, 4.289; *Zohar* II.235b: “Now, the lower and earthly Tabernacle was the counterpart of the upper Tabernacle, whilst the latter in its turn is the counterpart of a higher Tabernacle, the most high of all. All of them, however, are implied within each other and form one complete whole, as it says: ‘that the tabernacle may be one whole’ (Ex. XXVI, 6). The Tabernacle was erected by Moses, he alone being allowed to raise it up, as only a husband may raise up his wife. With the erection of the lower Tabernacle there was erected another Tabernacle on high. This is indicated in the words ‘the tabernacle was reared up (*hukam*)’ (Ex. XL, 17), reared up, that is, by the hand of no man, but as out of the supernal undisclosed mystery in response to the mystical force indwelling in Moses that it might be perfected with him.” Sperling and Simon, *The Zohar*, 4.303.

35. M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord—The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” 503. See also S.E. Balentine, *The Torah’s Vision of Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999) 67–68; Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 60–61; M. Buber, *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung* (Berlin: Schocken, 1936) 39ff; M. Fishbane, *Text and Texture* (New York: Schocken, 1979) 12; P. J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex 25–40,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89.3 (1977) 375–378 at 375; J. D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985) 143; idem, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 85–86; Walton, *Genesis*, 149; Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” 19–25.

36. Concerning the *Pargod* traditions, see: Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 1.296; D. Arbel, *Beholders of Divine Secrets: Mysticism and Myth in the Hekhalot and Merkavah Literature* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003) 39, 100; H. Bietenhard, *Die*

himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Spätjudentum (WUNT, 2; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1951) 73ff.; F.T. Fallon, *The Enthronment of Sabaoth* (NHMS, 10; Leiden: Brill, 1978) 55; D. Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (New Haven, American Oriental Society, 1980) 169, note 99; O. Hofius, *Der Vorhang vor dem Thron Gottes* (WUNT, 14; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1972) 17ff.; MacRae, *Some Elements of Jewish Apocalyptic and Mystical Tradition and Their Relation to Gnostic Literature*, 1.49–78; C.R.A. Morray-Jones, *A Transparent Illusion: The Dangerous Vision of Water in Hekhalot Mysticism: A Source-critical and Tradition-historical Inquiry* (JSJSS, 59; Leiden: Brill, 2002) 164ff.; H. Odeberg, *3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch* (New York: KTAV, 1973) 141; C. Rowland and C. Morray-Jones, *The Mystery of God: Early Jewish Mysticism and the New Testament* (CRINT, 12; Leiden: Brill, 2009) 372; S. Shaked, *Dualism in Transformation: Varieties of Religion in Sasanian Iran* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1994) 5.

37. Cf. M.E. Stone, “Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (ed. M.E. Stone; CRINT, 2.2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984) 417, n. 190. B. Philonenko-Sayar and M. Philonenko, “Apocalypse d’Abraham,” in *La Bible. Écrits intertestamentaires* (eds. A. Dupont-Sommer et al.; La Bibliothèque de la Pléiade; Paris, 1987) 1691–1730, esp. 1720, n. 9.

38. The disclosure of the curtain to R. Ishmael in *3 Enoch* is not a unique rabbinic tradition. Other rabbinic materials make reference to visionaries who were privileged to behold the *Pargod*. According to the Babylonian Talmud and the *Book of Zohar*, the protoplast was the first human being who received a vision of every generation and its leaders. *B. Sanh.* 38b reads: “And that is what Resh Lakish meant when he said: What is the meaning of the verse, This is the book of the generations of Adam? It is to intimate that the Holy One, blessed be He, showed him [Adam] every generation and its thinkers, every generation and its sages. When he came to the generation of Rabbi Akiba, he [Adam] rejoiced at his learning but was grieved at his death, and said: How weighty are Thy friends to me, O God.” Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Sanhedrin* 38b. In the *Alphabet of R. Akiba*, the famous tanna receives the revelation of the future sages of Israel on the curtain. Cf. A. Jellinek, *Beth ha-Midrash* (6 vols.; Jerusalem: Wahrman, 1967) 3.44.

39. For the *Pargod* traditions in rabbinic literature, see also; *b. Yoma* 77a; *b. Ber.* 18b; *b. Hag.* 15a-b; *b. Sanh.* 89b; *b. Sotah* 49a; *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 4:6; *Zohar* I.47a; II.149b–150a; *Maseket Hekhalot* 7. According to *b. Sanh.* 38b. a similar vision was given to Adam when the first human was shown every generation and its most stellar man. Odeberg compares this tradition to the revelation of the *Pargod* to R. Ishmael. See H. Odeberg, *3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch* (New York: KTAV, 1973) 141

40. *3 Enoch* 45:1–6 reads: “R. Ishmael said: Metatron said to me: Come and I will show you the curtain of the Omnipresent One, which is spread

before the Holy One, blessed be he, and on which are printed all the generations of the world and all their deeds, whether done or to be done, till the last generation. I went and he showed them to me with his fingers, like father teaching his son the letters of the Torah; and I saw: each generation and its potentates; each generation and its heads; each generation and its shepherds; each generation and its keepers. . . . And I saw: Adam and his generation, their deeds and their thoughts . . . The Messiah the son of Joseph and his generation, and all that they will do to the gentiles. . . .” Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 1.296–299. Jewish mystical lore attempts to explicate how the omniscient historical and physical reality can be constantly present before the eyes of the creator. In *Zohar* I.90b–91b, this tradition takes the following form: “Come and see: Rabbi Shim’on said, ‘*This is the book of the generations of Adam* (Genesis 5:1). Was there really a book? Rather they have established that the blessed Holy One showed Adam every generation with its expounders. . . . ‘How did He reveal them? You might say he saw through the Holy Spirit that they were destined to enter the world, like someone foreseeing the future through wisdom. Not so! Rather he saw them all with his very eyes, witnessing the image in which all were destined to abide in the world. How could that be? Because since the day the world was created, all those souls destined to abide in human beings stand in the presence of the blessed Holy One in the actual image they are destined to assume in the world. Similarly, after all the righteous depart from this world, their souls all ascend; and the blessed Holy One prepares for them another image in which to be clothed, resembling how they were in this world. So they all stand in His presence, and Adam saw them with his own eyes. . . . When the blessed Holy One showed Adam all those generations of the world, he saw each and every one, each and every generation standing in the Garden of Eden in the image they were destined to assume in this world.” Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 2.71–75. As we can see, the revelation to Adam has very similar content as the revelation given to R. Ishmael in *Sefer Hekhalot*. The first human too sees each generation and “its students.”

41. Thackeray and Markus, *Josephus*, 3.265.

42. Thackeray and Markus, *Josephus*, 5.405.

43. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 26.

44. Philonenko-Sayar and Philonenko, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham. Introduction, texte slave, traduction et notes*, 84. The Slavonic term простертие can mean “spreading.” It is reminiscent of the already-mentioned passage from 3 *Enoch* 45 in which the heavenly curtain is spread before the Deity: “which is spread before the Holy One.” The other Slavonic term used for the description of the medium of revelation is образование or образ—an image, a picture.

45. MacRae makes an important distinction between the two orientations of celestial veil. In his opinion, “two types of veil emerge: the Wilon or curtain dividing heaven from earth (or noetic world from sense-perceptible),

and the *Pargod* or curtain before the divine throne in heaven.” MacRae, *Some Elements of Jewish Apocalyptic and Mystical Tradition and Their Relation to Gnostic Literature*, 68.

46. The term is derived from Lat. *velum*. Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 1.269.

47. MacRae, *Some Elements of Jewish Apocalyptic and Mystical Tradition and Their Relation to Gnostic Literature*, 49.

48. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Hagiga* 12b.

49. Sometimes all the firmaments are understood as “curtains.” *Zohar* II.164b speaks of the following tradition: “Rabbi Ḥiyya opened, *Wrapped in light as in a garment, spreading the heavens like a curtain* (Psalms 104:2). This verse has been established, for when the blessed Holy One created the world, He enwrapped Himself in that primordial light, and with it created the heavens. Come and see: Light and dark were as one, light on the right, darkness on the left. What did the blessed Holy One do? He combined them and from the created the heavens. What is *shamayim*, heavens? *Esh*, fire, and *mayim*, water. They were joined as one, and from them He created *shamayim*, heavens, making peace between them. When they were combined as one, He stretched them *like a curtain*, stretching them and making them into a letter *vav*, and this is called *a curtain*. *Curtains* (Exodus 26:1)—for look, from this letter spread a radiance, becoming *curtains*! Seven expanses are stretched, concealed in a supernal treasury, as has been established, with one expanse lying above them. That expanse has no color, has no revealed place to be contemplated, though it is susceptible to discernment. This expanse is concealed and illumines all of them, impelling them on their journeys, every single one fittingly. From this expanse and beyond, no one can know or perceive, and one should shut his mouth, neither speaking nor contemplating in discernment. Whoever contemplates recoils, for no one can know. There are *ten curtains*, which are ten expanses. And who are they? The curtains of the Dwelling, which are ten and are susceptible to knowing by the wise of heart.” Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 5.451–453. Cf. *Zohar* II.209a: “However, here one should contemplate, for there are *heavens*, and then there are *heavens*! Heavens below and earth beneath them; heavens above and earth beneath them. All rungs, higher and lower, correspond to this pattern, these resembling those. Heavens below are *ten curtains*, as is said: *Spreading the heavens like a curtain* (Psalms 104:2)” Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 6.192.

50. Cf. MacRae, *Some Elements of Jewish Apocalyptic and Mystical Tradition and Their Relation to Gnostic Literature*, 50. Philip Alexander observes, “It would seem, then, that the first heaven is regarded as a sort of veil or curtain which either conceals the heavenly world from human eyes, or which, by being opened and shut, is the cause of daylight and darkness.” Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 1.269.

51. Hofius, *Der Vorhang vor dem Thron Gottes*, 21.

52. Regarding similar traditions about Wilon in *Midrash Kohen* and other rabbinic materials, see Hofius, *Der Vorhang vor dem Thron Gottes*, 20–21; MacRae, *Some Elements of Jewish Apocalyptic and Mystical Tradition and Their Relation to Gnostic Literature*, 50.

53. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 26; Philonenko-Sayar and Philonenko, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham. Introduction, texte slave, traduction et notes*, 82–84. With respect to this passage William Whitney rightly observes that “Abraham remains in the seventh heaven and gazes down through the successive veils of the heavenly firmaments.” K.W. Whitney, Jr., *Two Strange Beasts: Leviathan and Behemoth in Second Temple and Early Rabbinic Judaism* (HSM, 63; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 68.

54. *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati* (ed. Ch. Albeck; Jerusalem: Mekitse Nirdamim, 1940) 32.

55. Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 5.483.

56. Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 1.202. Christian interpreters were also cognizant of the tradition of firmament as a sacred veil. In his *Christian Topography* 2:35, Cosmas Indicopleustes writes about the following tradition: “Now the divine Apostle in the epistle to the Hebrews, in explaining the inner Tabernacle, or that which was within the veil, declares that it was a pattern of the heavenly—that is, of the kingdom of the heavens or the future state, taking the veil which divides the one Tabernacle into two for the firmament; just as the firmament placed in the middle, between the heaven and the earth. . . .” *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk. Translated from the Greek, and Edited with Notes and Introduction* (ed. J.W. McCrindle; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 42–43.

57. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7* (2 vols.; eds. B. Layton et al.; NHS, 20; Leiden: Brill, 1989) 1.253

58. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7*, 1.255.

59. *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7*, 2.31.

60. These lower “sacerdotal” chambers also contain some cultic settings including the aforementioned theophany of Azazel.

61. Concerning the concept of the Foundation Stone, see L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998) 5.15; E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns in Babylonian Religion,” in: *The Labyrinth* (ed. S.H. Hooke; London: SPCK; New York: Macmillan, 1935) 45–70; Patai, *Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual*, 54–58; P. Schäfer, “Tempel und Schöpfung. Zur Interpretation einiger Heiligtumstraditionen in der rabbinischen Literatur,” *Studien zur Geschichte und Theologie des rabbinischen Judentums* (AGJU, 15; Leiden: Brill, 1978) 122–133; Fossum, *The Name of God*, 250ff.; J. D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985) 133ff; Fletcher-Louis, “The Revelation of the Sacral Son of Man,” 272ff.

62. Scholars note that the sealing of the abyss with the Foundation Stone can be traced to the Mesopotamian traditions. See Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns in Babylonian Religion,” 55; Fossum, *The Name of God*, 250.

63. Thus, the *Book of Zohar* I.231a depicts the Foundation Stone as cosmological foundation: “The world was not created until He took a certain stone—a stone called *even shetiyyah*, Foundation Stone. The blessed Holy One took it and cast it into the abyss, and it became lodged from above to below. . . . It is the central point of the whole world, and on this point stands the Holy of Holies, as is written: *or who laid her cornerstone?* (Job 38:6). *Her cornerstone*—as is written: *a tested stone, precious cornerstone* (Isaiah 28:16), and similarly: *It has become the cornerstone* (Psalms 118:22). Come and see: This stone was created from water, fire, and air, crystallizing from them all, becoming a single stone. That stone stands over the abyss; sometimes waters flow from it, filling the abyss. This stone stands as a sign in the middle of the world.” Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 3.396–397. See also *y. Yoma* 5:4: “Rebbi Johanan said, why is it called Foundation Stone? Because on it the world is based. Rebbi Hiyya stated: Why is it called Foundation Stone? Because on it the world is based.” *The Jerusalem Talmud. Tractates Pesahim and Yoma. Edition, Translation and Commentary* (ed. H.W. Guggenheimer; SJ, 74; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013) 525; *Numbers Rabbah* 12:4: “. . . the building of the world commenced from the spot on which the Temple was to stand. R. Jose b. Ilalafta said: Why was it called Foundation Stone? Because thereon began the foundation of the world.” Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 5.457.

64. Cf. *Zohar* I.72a: “Rabbi Yehudah opened, saying, ‘This stone that I have set up as a pillar will become the house of God (Genesis 28:22). This is the Foundation Stone, upon which the world was planted, upon which the Temple was built.’” Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 1.424.

65. The shorter recension of 2 *Enoch* 25 reads: “And I commanded the lowest things: ‘Let one of the invisible things come out visibly!’ And Adail 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. And I placed for myself a throne, and I sat down on it.” F. Andersen, “2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch,” *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; ed. J.H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985) 1.145.

66. Cf. *Zohar* I.71b: “‘Above the expanse over their heads—an appearance of sapphire stone’ (Ezek 1.26). This is the Foundation Stone, centric point of the entire universe, upon which stands the Holy of Holies.” Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 1.423

67. Danby, *The Mishnah*, 167. Cf. also *Leviticus Rabbah* 20:4: “After the disappearance of the ark there was a foundation stone in its place. Why was it so called? R. Jose son of R. Halafta said it was because from it the foundation of the world was constructed.” Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 4.256.

68. Charlesworth, “Prayer of Manasseh,” 634.

69. Cf. also *Targ. Eccl.* 3.11.

70. *b. Sukkoth* 53b; *b. Makkoth* 11a; *y. Sanhedrin* 29a.

71. Regarding this, see Fossum, *The Name of God*, 250.

72. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to *Exod* 28:30 speaks of the rock of foundation with which God sealed the mouth of the great abyss in the beginning.

73. M.A. Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 210.

74. This function of the monster is widely recognized by scholars. William Whitney, for instance, observes that “in *Apoc. Ab.* 10:8–12 the place of Leviathan as the cosmic axis is more closely defined. There, though he lies at the foundation of the world, he also resides above the underworld.” Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 123. Leviathan’s function is also affirmed in later Jewish lore; Whitney notes that in the *Midrash on the Length of the World*, Leviathan is envisioned as the foundation of the world. Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 115–116.

75. Thus, Yehuda Liebes reflects on rabbinic understanding of the fin of Leviathan as the foundation of the world. He notes that in *Zohar* II.34a-b the fin of the Leviathan is construed as the cosmological pillar, similar to R. Simeon. Y. Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar* (trs. A. Schwartz et al.; Albany: SUNY Press, 1993) 72. In *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 9 the whole world is supported by the fins of Leviathan: “. . . the Leviathan, the flying serpent, and its dwelling is in the lowest waters; and between its fins rests the middle bar of the earth.” *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* (ed. G. Friedlander; 2nd ed.; New York: Hermon Press, 1965) 63–64.

76. *1 Enoch* 60:7 portrays Leviathan above springs of water.

77. *Pesikta Rabbati* 48:3 reads: “I intended Leviathan to be sustenance for thee in the time-to-come. But if it were necessary for thee to feed him, thou wouldst be unable to provide for him. So huge is he, our Masters taught, that were he not lying upon the deep and pressing down upon it, the deep would come up and destroy the world by flooding it.” Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati*, 2. 824.

78. M.A. Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 208. Some Jewish texts depict Leviathan swallowing the chaotic waters, a tradition found in *3 Baruch* 4. Cf. also *b. Baba Bathra* 74b: “Rab Judah further stated in the name of Rab: The Jordan issues from the cavern of Paneas. It has been taught likewise: The Jordan issues from the cavern of Paneas and passes through the Lake of Sibkay and the Lake

of Tiberias and rolls down into the great sea from whence it rolls on until it rushes into the mouth of Leviathan; for it is said: He is confident because the Jordan rushes forth to his mouth.” With respect to this tradition, see Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 112–113; A. Kulik, “The Mysteries of Behemoth and Leviathan and the Celestial Bestiary of 3 Baruch,” *Le Muséon* 122 (2009) 291–329 at 306–309. Alexander Kulik notes that “regulating the world water system by swallowing superfluous waters is known as a function of primeval sea monsters.” Kulik, “The Mysteries of Behemoth and Leviathan,” 307.

79. Thus, in relation to the Foundation Stone, Fishbane observes that “the image conveys the sense that the stone serves as a plug against its upsurge. . . .” Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*, 126–127.

80. Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*, 210.

81. Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 117.

82. *Zohar* II.222a: “When the Holy One, blessed be He, was about to create the world, He detached one precious stone from underneath his throne of Glory and plunged it into the Abyss, one end of it remaining fastened therein whilst the other end stood out above; and this other and superior head constituted the nucleus of the world, the point out of which the world started, spreading itself to right and left and into all directions, and by which it is sustained. That nucleus, that stone, is called *shethyiah* (foundation), as it was the starting-point of the world. The name *shethyiah*, furthermore, is a compound of *shath* (founded) and *Yah* (God), signifying that the Holy One, blessed be He, made it the foundation and starting-point of the world and all that is therein.” Sperling and Simon, *The Zohar*, 4.258–259.

83. *1 Enoch* 60:9: “And I asked that other angel to show me the power of those monsters, how they were separated on one day and thrown, one into the depths of the sea, and the other on to the dry ground of the desert.” Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, 2.144.

84. *Apoc. Ab.* 10:9–10: “I am appointed according to his commandment to reconcile the rivalries of the Living Creatures of the Cherubim against one another, and teach those who bear him [to sing] the Song in the middle of man’s night, at the seventh hour. I am made in order to rule over the Leviathans, since the attack and the threat of every reptile are subjugated to me.” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 18. The parallelism between angels and monsters might also be reflected in *Zohar* II.20a: “All were created in one moment. And He made this world corresponding to the world above, and everything which is above has its counterpart here below, and everything here below has its counterpart in the sea; and yet all constitute a unity. He created angels in the upper worlds, human beings in this world, and the Leviathan in the sea.”

85. The pairing of the Leviathans and the Chariot is also found in *Midrash Rabbah* on the Song of Songs 1:28 wherein the revelation of the

secrets of the Chariot is conflated with the revelation of the secrets of Behemoth and Leviathan. *Song of Songs Rabbah* 1:28 reads: “For whence was Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite to know how to reveal to Israel the secrets of Behemoth and Leviathan, and whence was Ezekiel to know how to reveal to them the secrets of the Chariot. Hence it is written: The King hath brought me into his [secret] chambers.” Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 9.47–48.

86. Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 65.

87. Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 66.

88. Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 118. The origins of Leviathan as “*Circuitus Mundi*” is found in early Christian materials. Concerning this, see Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 121; Kulik, “The Mysteries of Behemoth and Leviathan,” 299.

89. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Baba Bathra*, 75a.

90. Philip Alexander notes that the concept of the celestial Temple was appropriated in varieties of ways in Jewish lore. He suggests that “the doctrine of the celestial sanctuary and the angelic liturgy is ambivalent and can be exploited in a number of different ways. It can be used to validate the terrestrial cult: if the earthly cult is in alignment with the heavenly, then it is efficacious. This, we suggested, was the meaning of the doctrine in the original priestly theology of Second Temple Judaism. It can also be used to substitute for the terrestrial cult. This is how it actually functioned at Qumran, and in priestly circles after 70. But in both these cases this substitution would have been deemed as only temporary, pending the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem. The idea of the celestial cult could also be used to replace and in effect negate the terrestrial cult.” P. Alexander, *The Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* (LSTS, 61; London: T&T Clark, 2005) 133.

91. See A. Orlov, “‘The Likeness of Heaven’: Kavod of Azazel in the Apocalypse of Abraham,” in *With Letters of Light: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Early Jewish Apocalypticism, Magic and Mysticism* (Ekstasis, 2; eds. D. Arbel and A. Orlov; Berlin; N.Y.: de Gruyter, 2010) 232–253.

The Demise of the Antagonist in the Apocalyptic Scapegoat Tradition

1. Orlov, “The Eschatological Yom Kippur in the Apocalypse of Abraham: Part I: The Scapegoat Ritual,” 79–111.

2. With respect to the question of the rivalry between various priestly clans in the Second Temple period, see G. Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism. Jewish Thought, 300 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991); idem, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).