

DE GRUYTER

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**CANONICITY, SETTING,
WISDOM IN THE
DEUTEROCANONICALS**

PAPERS OF THE JUBILEE MEETING OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE
DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS

Please Note: I claim on p. 226 that the dog is never mentioned in Medieval Jewish versions of Tobit, but actually it is present in 5:17 in the Hebrew Constantinople 1519 (see Weeks, Stuckenbruck, Gathercole, The Book of Tobit). I thank Lucas Brum for drawing my attention to this oversight.

“What About the Dog?” Tobit’s Mysterious Canine Revisited¹

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When I mention that I work with the Book of Tobit, the most common question I receive does not concern date and place of composition, redaction, or even magic, demons and angels. Instead I am asked, “Why is the dog there? What is its meaning?” This is a question that has been deliberated upon for some time. Scholars have found the presence of the dog problematic on two counts. First of all, with a few exceptions, the dog is spoken of disparagingly by Israelites in the Hebrew Bible and in documents such as the Lachish Letters.² It is considered an insult to be a dog,³ a dog’s head⁴ or even worse a dead dog.⁵ Dogs moreover were both considered unclean and consumed that which was unclean,⁶ including human flesh.⁷ It appears that packs of feral dogs

¹ This paper is dedicated to the amazing Zoey, part Australian Shepherd, all heart. Zoey lives in Saint Louis with her human companion, my friend Sherry Korner. I would also like to express my great gratitude to my friend and teacher, Homer scholar Leonard Muellner for insight both into the *Odyssey* and into general issues of methodology. While this article was nearing completion, our home was subject to Colorado flooding, thus canceling a planned final visit to the library; I was thus not able to consult a small number of sources.

² See TORCZYNER, Lachish Letters, II 3f., V. 3f., VI. 2f., as cited in THOMAS, Kelebh, 414, n. 7.

³ 1 Sam 17:43 (spoken by Goliath), 2 Kings 8:13 (spoken by Hazael).

⁴ 2 Sam 3:8 (spoken by Abner). THOMAS, Kelebh, 419-423, argues that this refers to the dog-faced baboon.

⁵ 1 Sam 24:15 (spoken by David to Saul and compared with a flea, the implication is that David is not so lowly); 2 Sam 9:8 (spoken by Mephibosheth); 2 Sam 16:9 (spoken by Abishai regarding Shimei); Eccl 9:4 draws on the theme by preferring even a live dog to a dead lion.

⁶ Isa 66:3 (the immolation of which is forbidden and in parallel with the blood of pigs); Exod 22:30 (torn wild beasts).

⁷ Royalty and others threatened to be eaten and/or eaten include: 1) those belonging to Jeroboam (1 Kings 14:1), 2) those belonging to Baasha (1 Kings 16:4; birds of the air also mentioned as eaters) 3) Naboth (1 Kings 21:19), 4) Ahab (1 Kings 21:19, 24; 1 Kings 22:18), 5) Jezebel (1 Kings 21:23, 2 Kings 9:10, 35-36) and 6) Israelite enemies (Ps 68:24).

roamed around in urban areas.⁸ Even dogs that appear to be part of a wider household (Isa 56:10-11; Job 30:1) are spoken of disparagingly either as part of a negative metaphor (dumb or greedy) or with disdain. Furthermore, the word dog is presented in the text negatively in parallel with the term for female prostitute, suggesting that it may refer to a male prostitute.⁹ If the dog is viewed so negatively, it is reasoned, how could it appear as a positive figure in Tobit?

Secondly, the dog is poorly integrated into the narrative.¹⁰ It appears twice in the story. First in 6:2 (5:17 in the GI version¹¹) just as Tobiah and the angel Raphael depart Nineveh and approach the river Tigris and second in 11:4 (GI and GIII) just before the two are about to return to Nineveh to heal Tobit of his blindness. The passages are as follows:

Tob 6:1-4: The young man went out and the angel went with him; and the dog came out with him (καὶ ὁ κύων ἐξῆλθεν μετ' αὐτοῦ) and went along with them. So they both journeyed along, and when the first night overtook them they camped by the Tigris river.

Tob 11:1-4: When they came near to Kaserin, which is opposite Nineveh, Raphael said, "You are aware of how we left your father. Let us run ahead of your wife and prepare the house while they are still on the way." As they went on together Raphael said to him, "Have the gall ready." And the dog went along behind him (καὶ συνῆλθεν ὁ κύων ὀπισθεν αὐτῶν).¹²

One might think that the dog would help Tobiah with the large dangerous fish that attacks him in the Tigris river, but it does not. It would appear that aside for these two instances, the story proceeds as if the dog were not in fact present.

Neither of these apparent problems need loom so large. It is entirely possible to have a large amount of negative language about something and still be able to have a positive relationship with it. Even

⁸ Ps 59:7,15; in a related sense Ps 22:17 speaks of being surrounded by mauling dogs and in verse 21 the psalmist fears being killed by them.)

⁹ Deut 23:19

¹⁰ As will be discussed below, the dog has a larger presence in the Vulgate.

¹¹ In addition to five fragmentary Dead Sea Scroll manuscripts, study of the Book of Tobit also includes three distinct Greek text types (GI, GII, GIII) and Old Latin manuscripts. See further, WEEKS/GATHERCOLE/STUCKENBRUCK, *Book of Tobit*, 10-15, 21-26.

¹² So reads GI. GIII has the dog run before in front of them, instead of behind. Sinaiticus (the main exemplar of GII), however, uses the same verb as GI but also speaks instead of the Lord as coming from behind (ἐκ τῶν ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ), as will be discussed below.

in the English speaking world, in which dogs are most beloved, a term for a female dog and the term for a son of a female dog are heavily used insults and curse words. From the fine article of D. Winston Thomas about dogs in ancient Israel and the Ancient Near East, it is clear that the negative use of the word "dog" not only is not unique to Israel but is attested in the writings of the Ancient Near East, as far back as Mari, as well as in the Amarna letters;¹³ the expression "dead dog" is found in correspondence with Ashurbanipal.¹⁴ This kind of language is found in a culture which had a close working relation with dogs in lion hunting, as guarding and watching sheep and households and participating in war.¹⁵ As part of an Akkadian dialogue with a fox and wolf, the dog proclaims proudly

I take my onerous place before the sheep
 Their lives are intrusted to me
 instead of to shepherds or herdsman
 I am sent off on my regular path in the open country,
 and the watering place, I go around the fold.
 At the clash of my fearsome weapons I flush out
 At my baying, panther, tiger, lion, wildcat take to
 The bird can[not] fly away or go on course
 No rustler thieves [from] my pens!¹⁶

Furthermore, a major Babylonian goddess, Gula, is accompanied by a dog, as will be discussed further below. Indeed, as Thomas notes, the dog could also be considered a positive symbol of loyalty in which the worshipper sees him or herself as a "dog of [deity]." This is seen not only in a hymn to Marduk but possibly in 1 Chron 17:19's parallel of 2 Sam 7:21, where it has been proposed that David speaks of himself as YHWH's dog.¹⁷ It is in the sense of being devoted to a deity that Thomas understands the male prostitute reference in Deuteronomy, not as a negative label but in keeping with terms for cultic personnel attested elsewhere.¹⁸

¹³ THOMAS, Kelebh, 415.

¹⁴ THOMAS, Kelebh, 417.

¹⁵ LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 75.

¹⁶ Translation is from FOSTER, *Before the Muses*, 930; citing LAMBERT, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 192-193.

¹⁷ THOMAS, Kelebh, 424. The proposed reading vocalizes a *patach* instead of a *chireq* for the second letter of דָּבָר.

¹⁸ THOMAS, Kelebh, 425-426; Thomas refers to workers in a temple to Astarte in Cyprus (425) among other evidence.

One need not go so far as Geoffrey David Miller who attempted to emphasize a positive relationship with dogs in Ancient Israel as the author unfortunately uses Tobit as his main counterexample as well as Job, a writing whose original cultural context has been much debated.¹⁹ As noted above, there does seem to be evidence from Isaiah 56:10-11 that Israelites at some point had watch dogs. Moreover, in the tragic story of Jephthah's daughter, Jephthah states that whatever comes out to greet him when he returns to battle will be sacrificed. Assuming that Jephthah is not contemplating human sacrifice, just what exactly is he expecting: could it be a dog? Note further that in Ps 68:24 God promises "that the tongue of your dogs (כלביך) may have its portion of your enemies," directly referring to dog ownership and that Prov 26:24 (admittedly a document that includes among its sources non-Israelite material, such as Egyptian) speaks of seizing a dog by its ears, something that suggests close physical encounters with dogs. One must also not forget the name Caleb, linked with a popular leader.²⁰ Whether the numerous dog burials found at Ashkelon (and outside the land of Israel) however indicate emotional attachment to dogs cannot at this time be determined and has indeed been challenged.²¹

Much later, in 4QMMT, it clearly states that dogs do not belong in the Temple because of their habit of chewing bones and/or the meat attached thereof (a situation also lamented in 4Q306). Are these wild dogs or dogs that belong to worshippers? In fragment 8 col. IV line 8 of 4Q396, one of the MMT manuscripts, the text appears to be stating that it is not permitted להבי the dogs. The hiphil infinitive להבי, which here has mostly damaged letters, has been translated both as "bring"²² and "allow to enter,"²³ although the first meaning is by far the predominant one in the Hebrew Bible and in Mishnaic Hebrew.²⁴ The first option could conceivably but not necessarily imply that people might bring in dogs themselves, perhaps with the intent to feed them.

Even more striking evidence comes from the *Book of Jubilees*. Already in the Exodus story in the Torah, the dogs of Egypt do not bark, thus saving the Israelites. But in *Jubilees'* account in 49:4, the Israelites themselves have dogs,

¹⁹ MILLER, *Attitudes Towards Dogs*, 487-500.

²⁰ Caleb for instance is singled among the spies for being confident of being able to conquer Canaan (e.g. Num 13:30, 14:38).

²¹ See WAPNISH/HESSE, *Pampered Pooches*, 55-80. The authors also do not find it possible to attribute the burials to a particular culture.

²² E.g. WISE/ABEGG/COOK, *Dead Sea Scroll*, 459.

²³ E.g. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ/TIGCHELAAR, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 793

²⁴ HALOT 111; JASTROW, *Dictionary*, 144.

And the powers of the Lord did everything according as the Lord commanded them, and they passed by all the children of Israel, and the plague came not upon them to destroy from amongst them any soul either of cattle, or man, or *dog*.

The verse in *Jubilees* has several implications. It shows that for *Jubilees*, the presence of a dog as part of a greater household unit is taken for granted. It also might show that the death of a dog would be considered a loss.²⁵ And note, turning to the Diaspora, that *Pseudo-Phocylides* mentions dogs both as eaters of unclean food (148, 185) and at the same time as a desired animal:

Noble horses we seek, and strong-necked bulls,
plowers of the earth, and the very best of dogs (ἀτὰρ σκυλάκων²⁶ πανάριστον)
(201-202).

The case that the Jews in the Diaspora could have close experiences with canines is also attested by Philo in *Giants* 35.

Let not then our appetites rush eagerly in pursuit of all the things that are pleasant to the flesh, for the pleasures are often untameable, when like dogs they fawn upon us (ὅταν κυνῶν τρόπον προσαινωσιν) and all of a sudden, change and bite us, inflicting incurable sounds.

Philo has clearly known a dog in an intimate setting. Later, the Mishnah makes it clear that one could own a dog; *m.B.Q.* 5:3 speaks explicitly of a householder owning a dog in a tort case and again in 7:7 states that anyone who raises a dog needs to keep it chained. Note also that in *m.Pesah* 2:3, Rabban Gamliel refers to that which the dog cannot scratch up as relevant for a case regarding leaven; this certainly assumes ready access to a dog.²⁷ Thus from evidence both within the land of Israel and outside of it, it is clear that at the very least, dogs could be seen as positive and valued, even as part of the greater household.

²⁵ In the *Testament of Judah* 2:6 (admittedly Christian in its current form) Judah speaks of having a dog that is attacked by a leopard and just before compares himself with a dog in tearing apart a wild animal, 2:4.

²⁶ This term often refers to young dogs, but can also refer to dogs in general. *LSJ*, 1616.

²⁷ Note further that Targum Pseudo-Jonathan adds the words "as its wages/reward" (תַּרְוָתוֹ) to Exod 22:30's command to give meat torn from a living beast to a dog. Although it may be seen as a midrashic allusion to the reward for the Egyptian dogs not barking during the Exodus as attested in *Exodus Rabbah* 31 (so JASTROW, Dictionary, 963), it definitely highlights a positive perspective and presents the relationship between human and dog as something ongoing.

Now we come to the second alleged problem, the brief mention of the dogs in Tobit and the absence of integration. This is a more serious concern. The fact that Sinaiticus mistakenly replaces the dog (κύων) with the Lord (κύριος) in 11:4 may attest that an ancient scribe did not find the dog well integrated either. Similarly, the absence of the dog in all known Jewish Medieval versions of Tobit could indeed reflect Jewish-canine relations of that time but it could also reflect the dog's minimal function in the story and these versions do cut out much of the story to varying degrees. Likewise the expanded presence of the dog in the Vulgate could either reflect a different cultural context or that Jerome too saw the dog as occupying too minimal a role and chose the opposite approach; the Vulgate of Tobit is known for its expansionist tendencies.²⁸

Although my own individual reading also found the presentation of the dog as strange, I am not entirely convinced that the narrative of Tobit does. This narrative, aside from issues of redaction, has some other loose ends. It states that Sarah was beating the household maid-servants yet this is never followed up once Sarah, is cured nor fully integrated into the positive portrait of Sarah especially as she is described in Tob. 6:12 as wise and of a good character. The question remains, would it be possible in an ancient narrative to briefly mention something without further development? I believe the answer is yes. Although I will shortly be critiquing attempts to explain the dog's presence as an influence of the *Odyssey*, it is instructive that the dogs associated with Telemachus also appear here and there without complete integration in the narrative.²⁹ Furthermore, although it is extremely illuminating to go deeper into the folkloric, magical and spiritual aspects of the dog to better appreciate its presence in Tobit, it is not true that it can only be explained by recourse to an external text or an external culture. At the very minimum, the dog in Tobit, as noted by others, is linked with the transition between home and travel and between travel and home.³⁰ It may or may not also be no accident that it appears

²⁸ The Vulgate 11:9 corresponding with Tob 11:4 elsewhere, "Then the dog, which had also been on the journey, ran ahead and as a messenger that arrives, showed his joy with his tail" (*tunc praecurrit canis qui simul fuerat in via et quasi nuntius adveniens blandimento suae caudae gaudebat*). The translation is my own in consultation with SKEMP, Vulgate of Tobit, 329. ZIMMERMANN, Book of Tobit, 132 also sees the Vulgate as an expansion.

²⁹ Telemachus in particular is said to be accompanied by two swift dogs (*Od.* 2.11, 17.62, 20.145) yet the dogs of Eumaeus do not bark at him (16.4, 6, 9) as they surely would in the presence of other dogs, had Telemachus' two dogs been present.

³⁰ Cf. ZIMMERMANN, Tobit, 78.

right before an act of healing. Other possible dimensions to the dog in Tobit will be discussed below.

This paper aims not merely to address the problem of the dog, *per se*, it also has the aim of investigating the very process that scholars undergo when they think there is an element in the narrative that is problematic by using the dog in Tobit as an example. Thus, even though the dog's presence is not nearly as problematic as it appears, the reasons given for its presence are worth analyzing to highlight the kinds of questionable assumptions made by scholars about how one can tell when a narrative incorporates external elements, be they literary sources or cultural influences. At the same time, this paper will also show that even explanations about the dog possessing some merit need to be more carefully explicated. Rather than state that the dog is a vestige of a "secular" folktale, as do Frank Zimmermann followed by Carey Moore, it is more productive to focus on how the dog in Tobit is presented far less potently than folklore and world culture would suggest.³¹

Carey Moore has helpfully collected a full range of explanations for the presence of the dog and further research into the issue has not found any fundamentally new explanations. The explanations, which have been reordered and recombined, now follow, stating that the dog is present in Tobit because: 1) the mention of the dog is a copyist error;³² 2) the dog is derived from Ahiqar;³³ 3) the dog is derived from the *Odyssey*;³⁴ 4) the use of the dog as a companion in Tobit reflects Hellenistic culture;³⁵ 5) the dog is a product of Iranian culture, where the dog is important in Zoroastrianism and is used in exorcism;³⁶ 6) the dog has associations with the Babylonian healing deity Gula;³⁷ and finally 7) the dog was originally a helper against dragon-slaying in folklore, but because Asmodeus is now a spirit, the dog is no longer needed yet is maintained.³⁸

³¹ MOORE, Tobit, 197; ZIMMERMANN, Tobit, 198.

³² ABRAHAMAS, Tobit's Dog, 288.

³³ SMEND, Alter und Herkunft, 153, cited in MOORE, Tobit, 197.

³⁴ GLASSON, Main Sources, 277 (here following ROSENMAN, Studien); PAUTREL/LÉFEBVRE, Trois texts, cited in MOORE, Tobit, 197 and recently MACDONALD, Tobit and the Odyssey, 1-40; and NICKELSBURG, Tobit, Genesis, and the Odyssey, 41-55.

³⁵ ROSENMAN, Studien; GROSS, Tobit, Judit, 19:30.

³⁶ MOULTON, Iranian Background, 258; HAUPT, Asmodeus, 176; GOODSPEED, Story of the Apocrypha, 17; BRUNNER, Fable of the Babylonian Tree, 196, cited in MOORE, Tobit, 197; WINSTON, Iranian Component, 194 and recently RUSSELL, God is Good, 3.

³⁷ DESALAERS, Buch Tobit, 114, n. 135.

³⁸ ZIMMERMANN, Tobit, 198.

Explanation number 1, which assumes that the presence of the dog is impossible in a Jewish text can be dismissed easily. The argument made is that the word for heart (לב) was misread as dog (כלב). Even were the text underlying the Greek in fact Hebrew, which cannot be ruled out,³⁹ the heart has no role in the two places where the dog is mentioned. In the first instance, 6:2, Tobiah has yet to encounter the fish let alone any of its organs, although they are mentioned a few verses later. Even more critically, by the second instance, 11:4, the heart has already been dispensed with three chapters earlier to remove the demon. Exactly what would it mean for Raphael and Tobiah to be accompanied by a heart may be best left to Edgar Allen Poe.

Explanations 2 and 3 share the common assumption that the dog cannot be positive for Jews and that this problem must be solved from an external text (either in written form or by oral transmission).⁴⁰ There certainly is strong evidence elsewhere in Tobit that the Ahiqar story influenced the narrative. Ahiqar himself as well as his nephew Nadab are in the story several times and the court tale elements of Tobit's story with his exile and return to the court mirror Ahiqar's fall and rise in his career.⁴¹ Dogs are mentioned several times both in the *Aramaic Ahiqar* and in other versions. None of the examples in *Aramaic Ahiqar* refer to animals as companions; at most is a reference to a hunting dog (8:17).⁴² An ongoing relationship between a dog and a human master is only evident in other versions. There are two sayings related to this theme. The first is that the speaker is addressed to smite (*Syriac A* 2:35) or pursue (*Armenian* 2:85) the dog that follows him, having abandoned his master. The second saying reads as follows in *Syriac A* 2:38 and *Syriac B* 2:5 with parallels in *Armenian Ahiqar* 8:26, *Ethiopian Ahiqar* 2 and *Greek Ahiqar* 26:11,

³⁹ There is one Hebrew DSS manuscript, 4Q200 and there have been no unambiguous mistakes in the Greek that definitively point to a Hebrew or Aramaic base text, although Zimmermann's explanation of "pouring bread" in Tob. 4:17, which assumes a possible Aramaic *Vorlage* (ZIMMERMANN, Tobit, 70), is a strong contender.

⁴⁰ The larger questions of how to define the concept of intertextuality and how it operates is a complicated one beyond the scope of this study but well explicated by MARTÍNEZ ALFARO, *Intertextuality*, 268-285.

⁴¹ Ahiqar and/or his nephew "Nadab" (elsewhere Nadin) are mentioned in Tob 1:21, 1:22, 2:10; 11:18; and 14:10.

⁴² See *Ahiqar* 2:51, 8:8, 8:14, 8:17, 8:28. Many of these sayings have parallels among Syriac and Armenian Ahiqar.

My son, sweeten your tongue and make savory the opening of your mouth; for the tail of a dog gives him bread, and his mouth gets him blows.⁴³

Both passages certainly reflect the situation of a dog owned by a human. At the same time, the dog does not appear as part of saying in Tobit and neither saying above presents the dog as a character. The first is a comment on dealing with another's property; the second uses the dog as a metaphor for human behavior. The larger question remains: either the dog is or is not a problem for the Jewish narrative; why should a single line in *Ahikar* overturn supposed negative views of dog. Was the narrative of Tobit that much in the thrall of a particular source?

It may be helpful to this discussion to consider here briefly the famous problem of placing consumable substances upon a righteous person's grave, which can also be traced to multiple versions of *Ahiqar* (Syriac, Arabic, with an Armenian parallel).⁴⁴ For years many scholars assumed that that practice could not be Israelite or Jewish and brought in *Ahiqar* as explanation. The language is indeed close and specific enough to show that passage is in all likelihood derived from *Ahiqar*, although it appears in a different form. For here is a real case of a saying in Tobit corresponding with a saying in *Ahiqar*. At the same time, further research has shown that there is evidence for that placing food and/or drink on graves was an actual Israelite and Jewish practice and that the very passage in Deuteronomy (26:14) evoked as evidence against such practices, is in fact evidence for the practice. Indeed, the concepts of righteousness, food, and honoring the dead fit squarely with the values of the narrative.⁴⁵ If it can be shown that even when *Ahiqar* is clearly being used as a source, it is not necessarily done so in contradiction of Israelite or Jewish practice, one can hardly expect this to be the case where there is no clear evidence of *Ahiqar* being used as a source.

The claim that the dog is based on influence from the *Odyssey* is both stronger and weaker than the *Ahiqar* claim, stronger because there are dogs in the *Odyssey* that are actual characters and weaker because the claim that Tobit is in any way directly influenced by the *Odyssey* is much more difficult to establish. Aside from abundant metaphorical

⁴³ Syriac *Ahiqar* 2:28.

⁴⁴ Syriac A 2:10 and Armenian 2: 7; Arabic no.1 in CONYBEARE/RENDEL HARRIS/LEWIS. Story of Ahikar, 6, 90, 26.).

⁴⁵ See further discussion JACOBS, And I Saw, 135-146. The thesis is available online at <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/2443/> and see also MACDONALD, Bread on the Grave, 99-103.

usage, dogs occur at certain points in the story.⁴⁶ Most significant for our purposes are the two swift dogs accompanying Telemachus and Odysseus' own dog Argus, who since the departure of his master, has aged greatly and been in most unhappy state, but perks up upon seeing him and wags his tail, yet is too weak to reach Odysseus and is to die soon thereafter.⁴⁷ Other noteworthy dog scenes include the occasion dogs do not bark at Telemachus because they recognize him.⁴⁸ Although a parallel with Argus has been suggested for the Book of Tobit, Argus' behavior concerns a dog at home greeting a master, whereas in Tobit it is a dog that leaves on a journey and returns from the journey.⁴⁹ At best, Argus' tail wagging resembles the dog in the Vulgate, but not the dog of any other version of Tobit.

The two swift dogs that accompany Telemachus are a slightly better parallel. They are described three times: 1) Telemachus comes out with his spear and with his two swift dogs to hold a meeting with the Achaeans (2.11); Telemachus then sits in his father's seat; 2) Telemachus goes into his family hall with his spear and with his two swift dogs and sits down near Mentor (Athene) and his father's friends (17.248); and 3) Telemachus goes through the hall with his spear and his two swift dogs on the way to the place of assembly where the Achaeans are (20.145). Although Telemachus does go on a journey, the accompanying dogs are only mentioned in places in or close to home, not as part of a journey as in Tobit. The dog of Tobit is one, not two, and it is not described as swift. At no point does Tobiah ever carry a spear.

With the wrong number of dogs (which Leonard Muellner informs me are parallel to the two maidservants accompanying Penelope⁵⁰) and with the wrong context, it is difficult to see this as a robust explanation. Furthermore, the evidence regarding the so-called parallels between *Odyssey* and Tobit is mixed at best. My doctoral thesis examined all four purported parallels related to food and eating between the two

⁴⁶ Passages include: *Od.* 2.11, 3.259, 14.29, 133, 16.4,6,9, 17.62, 200, 300.306, 309, 312, 18.87, 105, 19.429, 438, 44, 20.145, 340, 21.340. See further FAUST, *Künstlerliche Verwendung*, 8-31. I thank Leonard Muellner for this reference. Relevant to our discussion above about language, note that even in the *Odyssey*, where dogs are valued the word 'dog' can be used also as an insult, for example in *Od.* 17.248 and 22.35. This is also discussed in BECK, *Dogs, Dwellings, and Masters*, 164-165, 167.

⁴⁷ To review, Telemachus' dogs are mentioned in *Od.* 2.11, 17.62, 20.145 ; Argos is described in *Od.* 17.290-327.

⁴⁸ *Od.* 16.4, 6, 9.

⁴⁹ So PAUTREL/LÉFEBVRE, *Trois textes*.

⁵⁰ Leonard Muellner, pers. comm. August 5, 2013.

texts and found none convincing.⁵¹ Furthermore, that both Penelope and Hannah weave sounds impressive until one observes that women weaving is a female stereotype throughout the classical world and the Jewish world to the point that in Tobit it is said to be "women's work."⁵²

Arguments made about the density of parallel examples in support of the *Odyssey* as a source, moreover, fall flat if each individual parallel is difficult to establish.⁵³ Arguments made about patterns appearing in a certain order only establish that they are based on common folklore narrative patterns and motifs, such as the famous pattern Joseph Campbell describes as "The Hero's Journey."⁵⁴ One similarity that did strike me while reading the *Odyssey* afresh was the interchange with the disguised divine helper. In both cases the divine being pretends to be a male family friend and in both cases is asked about his family; Athene posing as Mentor is in fact asked about directly by Telemachus (1.169-177) and indirectly by Eurymachus (1.405). At the same time, being asked one's family is typical of Greek Epic as a whole,⁵⁵ not just in these scenes, and the person who asks about family in the Book of Tobit, is Tobit, who would better parallel Odysseus. But even more critically, there is a major difference in that very early on, "wise" Telemachus suspects that Mentor is really a goddess (1.323, 420), whereas no such suspicion is evident by the less than clever Tobiah. I also found it interesting that both Hannah (10:7 GI, GIII, Old Latin) and Penelope refuse to eat thinking they had lost their sons, but this seems more like a common motif or stereotype than a dependency.⁵⁶

By far, common folklore motifs are a more likely explanation than direct dependence to explain possible similarities between Tobit and the *Odyssey*, although one cannot rule out some level of influence, perhaps unconscious, as George W. E. Nickelsburg suggests.⁵⁷ What is notable is that even were the purported parallels demonstrable, they do

⁵¹ JACOBS, *Delicacies*, 106 (Hannah's goat), 209 (Raguel and Edna' welcoming meal), 237-238 (Raguel and Edna's wedding feast), 242-243 (Raguel urges Tobiah to remain with him).

⁵² In Athens, indeed, prostitution and wool-working (the two classic examples of women's work) were frequently combined in vase paintings and are also found in Hellenistic epigrams, so DAVIDSON, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 86-89; on the Jewish side see PESKOWITZ, *Spinning Fantasies*.

⁵³ MACDONALD, *Tobit and the Odyssey*, 14, 35.

⁵⁴ MACDONALD, *Tobit and the Odyssey*, 14, 35; on *The Hero's Journey*, see CAMPBELL, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

⁵⁵ Leonard Muellner, pers. comm. August 5, 2013.

⁵⁶ *Od.* 4.787-789.

⁵⁷ NICKELSBURG, *Tobit, Genesis, and the Odyssey*, 52-54.

not do much for the reader of Tobit beyond being noted as a clever allusion. So much more opens up to the reader who examines how Genesis can be used in the story. For example, note the parallels between Tob 8:19 and Genesis 18:6-7.

Tob 8:19 And he told [his] wife to make many loaves and having walked to the herd he brought two oxen and four rams and he told [them] to kill them and they began to prepare.

Gen. 18:6 Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, 'Quick three seahs of choice flour! Knead and make cakes!' 7 Then Abraham ran to the herd, took a calf, tender and choice, and gave it to a servant-boy, who hastened to prepare it.

The parallels are very tight. In both cases, a husband asks a wife to make bread products, the husband selects animal(s) for eating and asks servants to prepare it. There is no other passage in the Torah that is quite this similar. But the parallel details themselves are only part of the fun. The reader of Tobit who detects the similarities may recall that this is also a passage in the Torah in which angels, like Raphael, are guests in disguise as humans. The parallel thus works both at the micro and macro levels. Moreover, the angels of this scene in Genesis are here to deliver the good news of the couple having a child. In Tobit the fear that Sarah will never have children (Tob 3:9) parallels the infertility of the biblical Sarah, yet like her namesake she too will bear children (Tob 14:3,8, 12) Adding to the mix is that the word ערנה (sexual delight) in this very chapter in verse 12, its only appearance in the Hebrew Bible, is the same as the name of Sarah's mother.

Reading Tobit with its Genesis parallels leads the reader into a world of midrashic delight. Reading Tobit with a strict insistence upon Homeric parallels flattens the text. The larger project of linking the characters of Tobit to matriarchs and patriarchs goes beyond mere typology; it suggests numerous ideas including that the characters are a part of or a continuation of the world of Genesis, in which God's help is always forthcoming with the help of angels. In contrast, the parallels with the *Odyssey* do not add this level of richness to the reading. (Tobit's use of *Ahiqar*, in contrast, also does work on micro and macro levels both in details relating to him and Nadab and in invoking the wider arc of *Ahiqar's* story of ups and downs.)

There is however a great work of literature that follows a journey of sorts of a Diaspora Jew who is also a husband and father. Without knowing the story and details about the *Odyssey*, one misses the point of the work entirely. This work is not The Book of Tobit; it is James Joyce's *Ulysses*. For the student of literature studying this massive vol-

ume, there are numerous books that explain not only each and every of Joyce's allusions and references, but open up and enhance one's understanding of the text. In contrast, a reading of *Odyssey* is not necessary for understanding the story of Tobit.

Nonetheless, every Tobit scholar should read the *Odyssey*, along with the Hellenistic novels and as much of Greek and Latin literature one can find, because it allows one to perceive Tobit as part of a wider web of ancient narration with a certain amount of kinship between epic and folktale, the great mysteries and the novel. All the same, it remains very clear that the *Odyssey* cannot be sustained as the defining reason for the presence of the dog in Tobit.

Instead of relying upon on a specific literary source, explanations 4, 5, and 6 refer to cultural influence. All three explanations continue to assume that the dog does not otherwise belong in a Jewish text, an assumption that is not for certain. Explanation 4 makes the simple claim that an influence of Hellenistic culture is why the dog is not seen as negative. Explanation 5 makes the more complex claim that an influence of Persian culture in which the dog was highly valued and an aid in exorcism is why the dog is presented in the text. Explanation 6 maintains that the dog's link to a Mesopotamian healing deity accounts for its presence.

Explanation 4 may be correct. Certainly Jews living in a Hellenistic cultural context like Philo and the author of *Pseudo-Phocylides* were close to dogs. Even *Jubilees* could conceivably be influenced in some way by Hellenistic culture, even though it is wary of non-Jewish culture to such an extent that it forbids Jews to share a table with non-Jews.⁵⁸ One must continue to wonder, however if a less than negative view of dogs is a new development or can be traced to pre-Hellenistic cultural contact. Whether this is the case or not, the explanation lacks significant explanatory power. It accounts for why the dog's presence is tolerated but does not explain why the dog is present in the first place.

Explanation 5 referencing Persian culture is most interesting. It is definitely true, whether one looks at Zoroastrian literature or at Parsi (Zoroastrian inhabitants of India) funeral customs, that dogs are markedly important in Persian culture. The Zoroastrian *Vendidad*⁵⁹ devotes a substantial amount of space to dogs, stressing severe punishments for

⁵⁸ *Jub* 22:16.

⁵⁹ This Avestan text, possibly dating to before the 8th century C.E. yet preserving older materials, may be found online at <http://www.avesta.org/vendidad/vd13sbe.htm> [accessed September 16, 2013.]

those who misfeed them.⁶⁰ Book thirteen opens with the following lines,

Which is the good creature among creatures of the Good Spirit that from midnight till the sun is up goes and kills thousands of the creatures of the Evil Spirit?

Ahura Mazda answered: "The dog with the prickly back, with the long and thin muzzle." (1-2)

The idea that dogs drive out evil spirits is notable in the Parsi custom of a dog being placed in the room with the newly deceased so that the dog can exorcise the corpse spirit.⁶¹ Dogs also accompany Persian deities such as Mithra and Sraochā.⁶²

At the outset, this sounds promising, especially since the notion of driving away evil spirits is important the story of Tobit, even though there is no explicit connection between the dog and exorcism made in the story. Arguments however that simply state that the dog is present because dogs were revered in Persia suffer the same difficulties as the Hellenistic explanation.⁶³

There are two other factors to consider when exploring the question of Persian influence. The first is the issue of whether one can in fact demonstrate a Persian influence in Tobit and the second is whether Persian culture exclusively held dogs in high esteem and involved in activities such as exorcism. There has been a long debate on the extant to which Iranian culture, especially Zoroastrianism, has impacted upon Judaism. To be sure, living under Persian rule for centuries is unlikely to be without impact. But the question is complicated by the fact that Zoroastrian literature is not attested until a much later period.⁶⁴ Certainly, the sudden strong interest in angels and demons and the increased power of Satan/Mastema/Beliar is notable and any evidence pointing to ancient Iranian religious beliefs would seem worthy of exploration. One would however, expect in the course of cultural interchange something more dynamic and complex than the simple mapping of one culture upon another, a process of adaption and adaptation as much as adoption. One may also one wonder whether the circum-

⁶⁰ Misfeeding a sheep-dog, for instance, is said to be as serious a crime as serving bad food to a master of house of first rank (13:IV.20) and warrants a punishment of 200 stripes (13:IV.24)

⁶¹ LURKER, *Dogs*, 397.

⁶² WINSTON, *Iranian Component*, 194, n. 28.

⁶³ See for instance, most recently, RUSSELL, *God is Good*, 3.

⁶⁴ This problem is discussed by WINSTON, *Iranian Component*, 186.

stances that led to the dualism of Zoroastrianism were also experienced by Israelite/Judahite culture in its own right.

To be sure the Zoroastrian text *Bahman Yasht* is relevant to understanding the four kingdom scenario of Daniel 2 as they share much in common.⁶⁵ In discussing the relationship between the two texts, John J. Collins favors a possibly Persian or at least eastern background to Daniel yet also cautions that "the evidence, however, permits neither specificity nor certainty. What is clear is that the imagery had a long and widespread tradition."⁶⁶ Might it not be better, therefore, rather than propose direct influence, to view Persian religion as something that when studied, helps one place Tobit within a wider context of cultural world streams? This finesses the problems of how to prove direct influence and how to establish the means of cultural dispersal as well as the means of cultural integration.

The specific question of Persian influence with respect to Tobit is an interesting one. After all, the story does include the regions of Ecbatana and Rages. The question as to whether Asmodeus, the name of the demon, derives from Asma Daeva is a complex one and involves issues relating to the Persian beyond this author's competence; nonetheless, it seems a more likely explanation than stating that the Semitic root *shin, mem, dalet* is the source of the name.⁶⁷ It is also not necessary or even expected for wholesale authentically certified Iranian culture to be incorporated into Tobit—it is quite possible that it could be vague and watered down.⁶⁸ Yet ultimately, as James Barr argues, it is truly difficult to demonstrate Persian influence in Tobit as a whole. Even if the name Asmodeus were Persian in origin, one must bear in mind that the names of deities and demons have a long life, extending way beyond the initial cultural context. Ereshkigal, the Mesopotamian queen of the Netherworld is still famously invoked in Greek magical papyri and Pazuzu, a Mesopotamian demon is featured in the movie *The Exorcist*. A Jewish example might include the use of semi-divine Gilgamesh as a name of a giant in the *The Book of Giants*, a far cry from his character in Mesopotamian Epic. This seems to be what is happening in Tobit as the Asmodeus there in no way behaves like his namesake; he is not a figure of cosmic import; he behaves like the generic evil spirit or demon men-

⁶⁵ COLLINS, Daniel, 163-164.

⁶⁶ COLLINS, Daniel, 164-165. WINSTON, Iranian Component, less cautiously speaks outright of Persian influence, 189-191.

⁶⁷ BARR, Question of Religious Influence, 216. Barr refers to a demon named Shimadon that occurs but once in *Genesis Rabbah*.

⁶⁸ Barr's article focuses upon religious influence, thus for him influence is demonstrated when it accurately reflects the religion of the source culture.

tioned in Tobit's recipes, with parallels more to Mesopotamia than to Zoroastrian theology.⁶⁹

We come now to the question of the dog in Persian culture. Is it unique? It is true that the extremely positive attitude towards the dog is notable in Persian culture. But it is anything but unique. The link between dog and human is one of the deepest and most complex of inter-species relationships. Dogs are thought to have been domesticated as far back as the late Paleolithic period, very likely the first animal in fact to be domesticated.⁷⁰ Whether the dog derives from the wolf or from a common ancestor, has been debated.⁷¹ To some extent dogs may have only been partially tamed⁷² and the dog thus occupied a complex place as ambassador between wildness and culture, between visible reality and the realm of spirits. Hence its association with the netherworld and its power against evil spirits or demons. The healing lick of the dog also may have led to the attribution of healing powers.⁷³ I have personally spoken with people with conditions such as epilepsy whose dogs are able to know when a seizure is about to take place before the person does. Anecdotally there are many stories of the healing and even psychic nature of dogs.⁷⁴

Throughout the world in past and present, dogs accompany gods (including at least two famous healing gods) and assist with exorcisms. In Maria Leach's extensive treatment of the dog in world culture, she identifies no less than 76 deities all over the world that are in one way or another connected to dogs.⁷⁵ Gods and goddesses that are accompanied by dogs include not only the gods of the Ancient Near East, Egypt, Greece and Rome such as Isis and Osiris,⁷⁶ Gula,⁷⁷ Artemis,⁷⁸ Pan,⁷⁹

⁶⁹ Cf. BARR, *Question of Religious Influence*, 217; one should, however, allow something for the informality of the folktale which can incorporate even the Devil himself in modest settings, such as stories in which he is defeated by being tricked into putting himself into a small space. That is to say, the absence of high theology may be an issue of genre as opposed to literary influence.

⁷⁰ LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 69.

⁷¹ LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 70.

⁷² The Mishnah even debates as to whether the dog is domestic or not, with views representing both opinions (*m.Kit.* 8:6).

⁷³ According to JENKINS, *Role of the Dog*, 65 the healing powers of an animal's lick are recognized to this day in contemporary Great Britain and elsewhere. See further DALE-GREEN, *Healing Lick*, 51-59, which I was not able to personally consult.

⁷⁴ See for instance, BARDENS, *Psychic Animals*, 37-55 and ARNOLD, *Through a Dog's Eyes*, 55-64.

⁷⁵ LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 10.

⁷⁶ LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 23. When the worship of Isis became popular as a Roman "mystery religion," processions of the goddess were led by dogs, 23.

Hermes,⁸⁰ Hephaestus,⁸¹ Asclepius, Sarapis⁸² but also in North America (the Shawnee creator god, Nagaicho⁸³ of the Kato Indians,⁸⁴ Sedna of Central Alaska⁸⁵), Mesomamerica (the Aztec Xolotl, twin of Quezalecatl), South America (Ai Apaec of Peru⁸⁶), Asia (Varuna of India,⁸⁷ Yamantanka of Buddhist Nepal,⁸⁸ Da of Tibet⁸⁹), Europe (the Germanic Hel. the Irish Lugh,⁹⁰ and the Celtic Nodens and Nehalennia⁹¹), Africa (Nyamurairi of the Belgian Congo and the Yoruba Odudua⁹²), not to mention Hina (Hawaii), Marvunogero (Papua New Guinea) and Kadaklan (Philippines).⁹³

Dogs can also serve as symbols of deities or are the manifestation of deities. The clearest cases of this include Anubis,⁹⁴ Gula,⁹⁵ Marduk,⁹⁶ the goddess Lakevann (Armenian mountains),⁹⁷ Hecate,⁹⁸ the Roman god Lares,⁹⁹ Asclepius,¹⁰⁰ as well as Siva,¹⁰¹ Salveo of Samoa¹⁰² and To'ahiti of Tahiti,¹⁰³ as well as Aroui of the Yoruba.¹⁰⁴ Gula and Asclepius are of particular interest as healing gods. Gula, the divine doctor,

⁷⁷ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 13.

⁷⁸ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 24.

⁷⁹ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 24.

⁸⁰ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 25.

⁸¹ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 25.

⁸² LEACH, God Had a Dog, 26.

⁸³ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 5.

⁸⁴ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 3.

⁸⁵ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 16.

⁸⁶ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 27.

⁸⁷ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 10.

⁸⁸ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 11.

⁸⁹ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 26.

⁹⁰ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 25.

⁹¹ MANAGHAN, Encyclopedia of Celtic Mythology, 132.

⁹² LEACH, God Had a Dog, 30.

⁹³ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 28.

⁹⁴ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 18.

⁹⁵ See discussion below.

⁹⁶ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 21.

⁹⁷ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 21.

⁹⁸ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 18-19, 20.

⁹⁹ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 21.

¹⁰⁰ See discussion below.

¹⁰¹ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 19.

¹⁰² LEACH, God Had a Dog, 19.

¹⁰³ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 19.

¹⁰⁴ LEACH, God Had a Dog, 19.

protected the family and home, including against demons. She is represented by a hound. This hound may be beside her on her throne or may in fact carry her and her throne on its back.¹⁰⁵ Asclepius was said to have been nursed by a dog as an infant and the dog is also pictured by his throne. Along with the serpent, the dog served as his symbol. Live dogs were placed in temples to Asclepius and were sometimes credited for cures obtained through incubation.¹⁰⁶ There was also a Celtic healing goddess, Sirona, who was linked with a dog, although all evidence dates from the Roman period.¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, extensive studies have been made of Roman/Gaulic culture and Latin literature, where it is quite clear that dogs were of deep religious importance being linked with healing¹⁰⁸ and also recognized for their ability to protect against evil spirits.¹⁰⁹ The use of dogs as protection against evil spirits and/or sorcery is also attested in China,¹¹⁰ among the Mandan people of North America,¹¹¹ in Dahomey,¹¹² and in Europe during the Middle Ages¹¹³ (299). There is even a folklore motif F405.5.1 of dogs protecting the house against spirits.¹¹⁴ In addition to these, dogs are also linked to death and the netherworld (e.g. Cerberus) or venerated in their own right (throughout northern and western India, for example).¹¹⁵ Given that the importance of the dog and its powers against evil is both a worldwide phenomenon and attested in a wide range of cultures encountered by Judaism, it would be best not to solely attribute the presence of the dog in Tobit to Persian influence, especially since it is so difficult to demonstrate said influence.¹¹⁶

From the above discussion, one sees that Explanation 7 that links the dog to Gula is relevant information yet not a definitive explanation.

¹⁰⁵ LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 20-21; see also Fuhr *Hund als Begleiter*, 135-145, which I did not have the opportunity to consult.

¹⁰⁶ LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 24, 76, 183.

¹⁰⁷ MANAGHAN, *Encyclopedia of Celtic Mythology*, 132.

¹⁰⁸ See JENKINS, *Role of the Dog*.

¹⁰⁹ See BURRISS, *Place of the Dog*, 32.

¹¹⁰ LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 177.

¹¹¹ LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 282.

¹¹² LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 293.

¹¹³ LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 299.

¹¹⁴ THOMPSON, *Motif-index*, [accessed online, September 12, 2013] <http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/thompson/index.htm>; an example is given from the folklore of Greenland.

¹¹⁵ LEACH, *God Had a Dog*, 175.

¹¹⁶ BARR, *Question of Religious Influence*: "The fact that a dog goes with Tobias and the angel is hardly evidence of Zoroastrian honoring of the dog."

Gula being linked to a dog is an example of the link between dogs and healing that in all likelihood goes back to Paleolithic times. But even were there some remaining influence of Gula's cult at the time(s) of Tobit's composition, one still cannot prove that Gula's cult is the reason for the dog's presence, although along with other evidence, the link between the dog and healing is important information.

All in all our examination of Explanations 4, 5, and 6 have revealed that the symbolic and religious associations with dogs are profound but they need not be attributed to a specific culture, especially when evidence of said culture is difficult to otherwise substantiate.

The final explanation is that the dog is a truncation of a more prominent element in a folktale. It is not surprising, given the dog's significance in world culture, that it would also be prominent in folklore and fairy tale; we have already seen that the dog's powers against evil spirits is a folklore motif. Many readers may be aware of the Aarne-Thompson Folklore Index cataloguing European tales.¹¹⁷ This system assigns a number to each type of folktale narrative. The system has more recently been updated by Hans-Jörg Uther and now includes international tales.¹¹⁸ In the updated ATU system, a notable entry is ATU 300, which refers to tales of dragon-slaying.¹¹⁹ The theme of dragon/water creature slaying is extremely ancient, notable in Marduk's defeat of Tiamat, Baal's defeat of Yam and YHWH's defeat of Leviathan not to mention all kinds of slaying of monsters and dragons in tales, such as in the story of St. George. As presented in ATU 300, the tale of the dragon slaying almost always includes having the dog as helper in defeating the monster. The particular motif associated with helping dogs is identified in the Stith Thompson Motif-Index as B.524.1.1.¹²⁰

This would seem to proceed out of the wider cultural idea of the dog helping in exorcism, or helping against the devil. Zimmermann states that the dog does not exhibit this role fully because Asmodeus

¹¹⁷ AARNE, *Types of the Folktale*.

¹¹⁸ UTHER, *Types of International Folktales*.

¹¹⁹ UTHER, *Types of International Folktales*, 175. Among the tale-types outlined in Uther's work the story of Tobit also fits under ATU 505, The Grateful Dead, in which the ghost of a corpse aids the hero who has helped the corpse (289), ATU 551, in which a son goes on a quest for father's healing (321) and ATU 305 in which part of a dragon's body such as the heart is used for healing (187, which includes a subtype in which a son brings the body part to his father).

¹²⁰ THOMPSON, Motif-index, [accessed online, September 12, 2013] <http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/thompson/index.htm>. Thompson notes that this motif is attested in Irish myth, in French Canadian tales and among the Basutu, Zulu and Kaffir.

replaces the dragon and is now a spirit,¹²¹ but there is ample evidence that the large fish is equally standing in place of the sea monster/dragon. It would seem that Raphael is doing the job one would expect of the dog. One could almost see the dog as a kind of animal counterpart/emblem of Raphael, just as many ancient gods were associated with animals. The dog always seems to be present when Raphael is also. But there is no way to prove that the dog is tied to the archangel.

Despite the importance of the dog in folktales involving dragon-slaying, the dog in Tobit cannot be linked to a specific folktale. And although it is a strong possibility that the dog may derive from the world of folklore, even that cannot be proven definitively. Like the large fish/sea monster, the dog is an ancient symbol, a figure of many meanings; one cannot ascertain how it figured in the composition of Tobit, for the reason that we are not privy to the composition process nor can we reconstruct it.

It is however noteworthy that the dog in Tobit, although described right before the scene with the fish and although appearing right before a healing, has so little to do compared to what is otherwise described in other cultures and in many other tales. We see this as well in a Slovak-Gypsy dragon slaying tale in which the hero has a big wise dog, yet the dog is not mentioned elsewhere in the story.¹²² For Tobit, however, the dog is not the only muted aspect; the demon is also muted. With Tobit; the reader never is given the opportunity to see where Asmodeus is actually located. Is he in Sarah's body? How exactly does he kill the seven bridegrooms that have proceeded Tobiah? Uther explicitly identifies Tobit as being a version of the Monster's Bride (ATU 507) also called by some The Dangerous Bride and by others The Poisoned Maiden. ATU 507 typically includes serpents coming out of the princess's mouth to kill her rescuer and in some versions requires that as part of the her cure, the princess be bathed three times.¹²³ Tobit has Tobiah fumigate the entire bedroom but three Jewish Medieval versions clearly see the demon as in Sarah's body, when in 8:3 they have the fumigation take place under her clothes.¹²⁴ One also sees a similar motif in the Talmud which has what seems to be a strange obsession

¹²¹ ZIMMERMANN, Tobit, 78-79.

¹²² GROOME, Tobit and Jack, 243.

¹²³ Uther, Types of International Folktales, 291-293.

¹²⁴ The three versions are Constantinople 1516, Codex Gaster and the Bodleian Aramaic. For more information on these and other Jewish Medieval versions see WEEKS/GATHERCOLE/STUCKENBRUCK, Book of Tobit, 32-46.

with snakes climbing into women's vaginas and can involve fumigation as a remedy.¹²⁵

A far more ancient version of the Dangerous Bride may be found on a 4th/3rd B.C.E Egyptian stele in a Temple of Amun at Karnak. In this case, instead of having the monster inside of her mouth or vagina, the woman is possessed by an evil spirit.¹²⁶ Again, Tobit never makes it clear whether or not Sarah is in fact possessed, although her beating of slaves raises many questions. The recipe for removing the demon given in Tob 6:8 merely speaks of the demon fleeing the person and not remaining with him or her; Tob 6:18 is even further removed from the body, stating that demon will not be seen around her and Tob. 8:3 speaks of "hindering" the demon, without specifying what that exactly entails and states that it flees.

Tobit's presentation is thus less graphic and less disturbing; Sarah is neither depicted with the demon directly in her body nor is she clearly depicted as being possessed. What does it mean for helper, victim and foe to be presented less vividly? It certainly makes the story less scary. It makes Sarah's cure seem less disgusting. It also makes her sexual purity more assured. It certainly shows that Tobit as a narrative was in control of its "sources" and not controlled by them. Much more can be said about the muted quality of the exorcism, but what cannot be said is that the dog is there because the narrative was at the mercy of an outside influence.

An awareness of the incredible background of the dog in religion and folklore opens up our appreciation of the dog in Tobit. The coalescence of the dog as a companion of divine being and as a helper in healing and exorcism enriches our reading of the tale. Knowing that dogs accompany healing deities such as Gula and Asclepius may lead us to think anew about how the dog is present only when the healing archangel Raphael is present. Knowing how the dog is linked with healing and with powers against evil forces adds added depth to the fact that the dog is present when the fish is defeated and its medicinal organs gathered as well as just before one of those organs is used in a healing. Such knowledge does not demand that dog is present for those reasons, but does add a richer dimension that informs one's reading.

There are other instances in Tobit in which further information can add depth to a reading. Knowing that even as far back to Ugaritic literature sea creatures were linked with death opens up how the large

¹²⁵ See for instance, *b. Shabbat 110a*.

¹²⁶ PORTER, *Folklore*, 140.

fish is presented, not to mention its association with Jonah.¹²⁷ The presence of the salt on the fish similarly is enhanced when one knows of the widely attested magical quality of salt¹²⁸ even though the salt in Tobit is not described as having magical properties.¹²⁹

From this, and what we have said about the muted quality of dog, demon, and Sarah's body, one might draw some conclusions about the style of Tobit. In many ways it renders the story a lot less magical than it could have been.¹³⁰ There is the ease with which the demon is dispatched and the fact that the medicinal fish organs are combined with prayer, not incantation.¹³¹ There is a matter-of-a-factness to much of the story and the removal of the demon is a forgone conclusion a little less than halfway through, thus limiting the suspense. A full exploration of this important quality is beyond the scope of this study, but one may suggest that the reduction of the magical was a consequence of the strong focus upon Jewish religion. In any case, the fact that the narrative is so much blander than other tales of its type is of extreme importance to the study of the story as a whole and to the wider project of understanding how Jews have taken upon worldwide motifs yet at the same time have made the stories their own. In terms of the history of Jewish ideas, one might see a similar move, even to a greater extreme, in the treatment of the demonic in priestly writings in the Torah.

Studying the problem of the dog in Tobit has not only revealed fascinating information about dogs in human culture, including Israelite and Jewish culture, it has also led to a wider discussion of the way the narrative of Tobit integrates motifs of the wider world into a Jewish narrative. It seems likely that the narrative would not include a dog in the story if it really were a problem simply because of exposure to a specific text or a specific culture. Indeed, this research has shown that despite the negative language, dogs could have an important place in the larger Israelite and Jewish worlds. Although, we cannot pinpoint a definitive reason for the dog's presence, the existence of other muted elements in the story places the presentation of the dog within a wider context.

¹²⁷ In KTU 1.5 I 15, Mot's appetite is compared to that of sea monster.

¹²⁸ See for instance, *Maqlu* VI 111-113, IX 118-120, 2 Kings 2:21 and *T.Sol.* A 18:34. See further LANTHAM, *Salt*, 23-24.

¹²⁹ ZIMMERMANN, *Tobit*, 80-81, states outright that the purpose of the salt is magical, particularly against demons. Such a view, although not supportable, shows how a well-versed reader's sensitivities would expect salt to have such powers in Tobit.

¹³⁰ Cf. BARR, *Question of Religious Influence*, 217.

¹³¹ The boundary between prayer and incantation is not always clear, but is in this case.

Several methodological considerations have also arisen in the course of this study. First of all, it seems very important to keep in mind that an apparent problem in a narrative may be a problem only in the eyes of the interpreter; narrative and cultural conventions exhibited in a text may simply be unfamiliar to the interpreter. Secondly it would seem that any perceived problem in a text based on a claim that some element of culture is despised or forbidden (or the opposite) requires careful research to verify said claim.

Thirdly, where there really seems to be a problem, the assumption that an outside influence, be it a text or a culture can definitively explain the presence of the problematic element requires intense scrutiny. One may come to such a conclusion, but only after very careful analysis and research. And even if such a conclusion is made, it is important to keep in mind that the relationship between a text and something outside of it may be dynamic and complex. This is seen for instance in the ways the stories of creation and the flood in Genesis dramatically rework the Mesopotamian traditions they incorporate.

Indeed, sometimes it may not be easy to make a neat separation between internal elements and external elements. Like a living cell, a culture or narrative is constantly taking in and giving out and yesterday's cultural "borrowing" is tomorrow's "core culture." Another image might be of a Möbius strip, a band that seems to have two sides, but really only has one. For example, a culture or narrative might incorporate an element from another source in part because it reminds them of something already present in their own culture.

Fourthly, it would seem that when there is a clear case of a dependence upon an external source, such as the use of Genesis 18 in Tobit, one can generate a great deal of insight through detailed analysis, with the awareness that even if the external text was not availed of in a fully conscious manner the associations made were nonetheless meaningful. Where there is no such clarity, however, rather than posit direct transmission, something that one may never be able to demonstrate with full confidence, it may be more productive to use the process of comparison and contrast so as better to situate the element in the target text within the wider web of narrative possibility. For instance, both the *Odyssey* and Tobit interestingly present the dog as companion to major characters without magical elements, even though dogs have a rich relationship to magic in human history.

Lastly, even when there is a clear case of a relationship between the target text and other narrative, it is entirely possible a simultaneous use of ancient motifs or even other sources is also at work. Again, caution is advised before crafting an all-in-one grand explanation of why some-

thing is so. Like the dog in Tobit, great narratives tend to retain a sense of mysterious. Just when one thinks one understands what is going on, something comes up that surprises, delights, and confounds. And we wouldn't have it any other way.

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