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VISIONARY ASCENTS OF MOSES IN PSEUDO-PHILO'S *LIBER ANTIQUITATUM*
BIBLICARUM: APOCALYPTIC MOTIFS AND THE GROWTH
OF VISIONARY MOSES TRADITION

by

Kristine J. Ruffatto, B.A., M.Div.

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University,
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the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT
VISIONARY ASCENTS OF MOSES IN PSEUDO-PHILO'S *LIBER ANTIQUITATUM
BIBLICARUM*: APOCALYPTIC MOTIFS AND THE GROWTH
OF VISIONARY MOSES TRADITION

Kristine J. Ruffatto, B.A., M.Div.

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This dissertation explores the development of visionary Moses tradition from its origins in the Hebrew Bible through pro-Mosaic Second Temple literature and rabbinic texts. It demonstrates that throughout this variegated literature, there is a developing tendency to portray Moses as an apocalyptic seer. In the non-biblical Mosaic texts that were analyzed, Moses' revelation on Sinai and Nebo is increasingly invested with esoteric content, and Moses' ascents are often depicted as heavenly journeys. These revelatory developments have conceptual roots in alternative visionary traditions, notably Enochic lore. The texts investigated contain a discernible thread of dialogue with Enochic revelatory claims; Moses' ascents and revelation were embellished to include speculative elements and motifs typical of Enochic traditions. Pro-Mosaic texts and traditions responded to alternative visionary developments by re-envisioning Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo in similar transcendent terms. Moses' presentation in these texts often appears to be a polemical positioning of Moses over Enoch.

The second part of this dissertation considers the place of Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (*LAB*) in the trajectory of visionary Moses tradition. Analysis of the apocalyptic features of *LAB* reveals the formative role of alternative visionary traditions in Pseudo-Philo's portrayal of Moses. Moses often takes on the exalted qualities of Enoch in the text, including the experience of heavenly ascent, journey to paradise, and esoteric disclosure of heavenly, cosmic, meteorological, protological, and eschatological secrets. *LAB* not only demonstrates awareness of Enochic tradition; it provides evidence of polemical dialogue with Enochic revelatory claims. This assertion contributes to the deciphering of some puzzling passages in *LAB*. The investigation concludes that Pseudo-Philo's depiction of Moses' ascents and revelation were re-crafted with apocalyptic characteristics in order to underscore Moses' authority and pre-eminent position as Israel's visionary *par excellence*. *LAB* links *all* truth, exoteric (law and covenant) and esoteric, to Moses.

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Soli Deo Gloria

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“How small Sinai appears when Moses stands upon it!” Heinrich Heine¹

1.1 Pseudo-Philo and Visionary Moses Tradition

Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (hereafter *LAB*) is a Jewish text from the first century C.E. that rewrites the history of Israel from Adam to the death of Saul. *LAB* emphasizes God’s covenant with Israel and Israel’s failure to live up to it. It is not surprising that Moses, as mediator of the covenant, is the central figure in the narrative. In his portrayal of Moses, Pseudo-Philo follows the biblical account quite closely, focusing on key chapters from Exodus through Deuteronomy (Exod 1-2, 14-15, 9-20, 32-33; Lev 23; Num 1, 13, 16-17, 21; Deut 32-34). But Pseudo-Philo freely embellishes Moses’ story, making no distinction between the biblical text and interpretive expansions of it. *LAB* ascribes to Moses visionary ascents that go beyond the written Torah and that take on the features and motifs of visions and heavenly journeys such as are found in apocalypses. Moses ascends Sinai and Nebo: in both ascents Moses enters the celestial realm and receives esoteric revelation; in both ascents Moses becomes luminous. The visionary ascent accounts of *LAB* have considerable parallels in contemporary apocalypses, notably *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*.

The apocalyptic features of *LAB*’s claims about Moses call for a closer look.

Pseudo-Philo enhances Moses’ traditional canonical portrayal, incorporating apocalyptic

¹ Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Schriften* (6 vols.; ed. Klaus Briegleb et al.; Munich: Hanser, 1975), 4.45. Quoted in Bluma Goldstein, *Reinscribing Moses: Heine, Kafka, Freud, and Schoenberg in a European Wilderness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 31.

elements and motifs in order to present Moses as an apocalyptic seer. The import of Pseudo-Philo's narrative expansions about Moses has been underexplored, for scholarship on *LAB* has been limited. As Nickelsburg recently wrote, "Among the writings of the Jewish Pseudepigrapha the Antiquities of Pseudo-Philo has received relatively little treatment."² This dissertation is an attempt to fill that need. It provides an analysis of *LAB*'s apocalyptic claims about Moses, the text's interaction with other exalted visionary traditions, and *LAB*'s place in the wider visionary Moses tradition.

1.2 Moses the Visionary

It would be difficult to overstate Moses' status as visionary in Jewish tradition. The law and covenant given to Moses in his ascent of Sinai are central to the Hebrew Bible and to the traditions of the dominant strand of Judaism in the Second Temple period. As recipient of revelation, Moses is without peer. All of the legal and cultic material in the written Torah (the Five Books) is presented as having originated in his revelation on the mountain. In the Jewish canon, the history of revelation begins with Moses on Sinai and concludes with Ezra, the champion of the Mosaic Torah. Only prophets and visionaries in the Mosaic tradition were considered acceptable. Moses was revered as the visionary *par excellence*, for to him God directly revealed the law and covenant that defined Jewish identity.

Moses' superlative and authoritative status in the Hebrew Bible is thus inextricably linked to his visionary ascent of Sinai: Moses encountered God on the mountain, and the revelation he received was unmediated. These were not small claims.

² George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 269.

Moses had been granted unparalleled access to the divine: he ascended to the place where the Lord descended. Moses alone was entrusted with God's definitive and all-encompassing revelation, which he—the perfect messenger—then mediated to the people. In the Hebrew Bible, the centrality of the Sinai tradition witnesses to the cruciality of Moses' ascent and vision. The Hebrew Bible consists largely of documents that were “written, edited, or collected by the Jerusalem priesthood of the early Second Temple period.”³ This powerful group stressed the importance of Moses and the covenant he mediated, especially the institution of the priesthood and temple/sanctuary as rooted in the Sinai revelation.

It is now understood that the Judaism of the Second Temple period was far from monolithic.⁴ Although the Moses-centered tradition emerged as dominant, particularly during the development of the Hebrew canon and the rabbinic period, the existence of pseudepigraphic and Qumran literature witnesses to the diversity in the Judaism of the era. It is now clear that there were Jewish groups or movements that challenged Moses-centered Judaism and provided alternatives to it. One cannot therefore speak of a uniform “Judaism” in this period; there were rather multiple expressions of Judaism that differed in belief and practice. Parallel and often competing strands of Judaism flourished side-by-side, and they did not all appeal to the same canon of scriptures. Many pseudepigraphic writings do not focus on Moses or the primacy of the Sinai

³ Gabriele Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), xvi-xvii.

⁴ See esp. Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 1-36; Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (2nd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 12-14; Helge S. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man* (WMANT 61; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), 17-23; Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, and Ernest S. Frerichs, eds., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Lawrence H. Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple Rabbinic Judaism* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1991), esp. 2-5.

covenant and are attributed to visionary figures (patriarchs) who pre-date Moses. This literature sought to establish the legitimacy of a Judaism *not* centered on the Mosaic tradition: it appealed to revelation in the name of ancient figures such as Enoch, Noah, or Jacob who lived before Moses ascended the mountain of God and received the law and covenant. The authors of these pseudepigrapha ascribed their versions of authoritative truth to their own favored ancestors, claiming that these patriarchs not only had access to the divine, as did Moses: they were recipients of revelation that eclipsed that of Moses. The exalted visionaries were granted knowledge of heavenly secrets, often in an ascent to heaven and the divine throne. Such exalted patriarch traditions reveal dialogue with, and sometimes even resistance to, Moses-centered Judaism.

Enochic literature is one major example. It has long been acknowledged that the Enochic literature contains polemics against Mosaic traditions. The Enochic writings did not emerge in a vacuum; they challenge the assumptions of Mosaic Judaism.⁵ The

⁵ Alexander demonstrates that “a powerful subtext can be detected in the Enochic tradition, implying a contrast between Enoch and Moses. Moses, the lawgiver of Israel, was the founder of the Jewish polity. The circles which looked to Enoch as their patron were, at least to some extent, challenging Moses’ primacy.” Philip S. Alexander, “From Son of Adam to Second God: Transformations of the Biblical Enoch,” in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible* (ed. M. E. Stone and T. A. Bergren; Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Press International, 1998), 107-8. See also George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Enochic Wisdom: An Alternative to the Mosaic Torah?” in *Hesed ve-Emet. Studies in Honor of Ernest D. Frerichs* (ed. J. Magness and S. Gitin; BJS 320; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 123-32. On the polemics between Mosaic and Enochic traditions in the Second Temple period, see Philip S. Alexander, “Enoch and the Beginnings of Jewish Interest in Natural Science,” in *The Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought* (ed. C. Hempel et al.; BETL 159; Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 223-43, esp. 233; idem, “From Son of Adam to Second God,” 87-122; Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways Between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* (TSAJ 107; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 254-303; James C. VanderKam, “The Interpretation of Genesis in 1 Enoch,” in *The Bible at Qumran* (ed. P. W. Flint and T. H. Kim; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 129-48. On the devaluing of Moses and the Mosaic Pentateuch in *1 En.*, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, “The Nature and Function of Revelation in 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and Some Qumranic Documents,” in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12-14 January, 1997* (ed. E. G. Chazon and M. Stone; STDJ 31; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 101. Collins, however, writes that “there is no necessary opposition between Enoch and Moses” in *1 En.*; John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 47.

Enochic narratives, with their conspicuous paucity of references to Moses and the revelation at Sinai, offer an alternative to the form of Judaism centered upon the Mosaic covenant. According to James VanderKam, the Enochic alternative “finds its cornerstone not in the Sinaitic covenant and law but in events around the time of the flood,”⁶ i.e., in the primeval period. Enoch, the ancient patriarch who never died but was taken directly to heaven, is exalted over Moses, who lived generations later and knew death. The esoteric revelation received by Enoch in an ascent to heaven is presented as superior to the exoteric covenantal law received by Moses in a descent by God to earth. The antiquity and celestial origin of Enoch’s revelation challenges the primacy of Moses and his revelation at Sinai.

The Mosaic tradition responded to the claims of Enoch’s greatness by elevating Moses’ status above that of the biblical narrative. Claims made about Enoch were now conferred upon Moses.⁷ Apocalyptic features and motifs, including visionary ascents to heaven and knowledge of heavenly secrets, were increasingly attributed to Moses.⁸ The

Kvanvig has established that the time span between the earliest Enochic literature and the work of the Priestly writer is not great enough to rule out a common background. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic*, 33. Yet the Enochic and traditional canonical Mosaic trajectories developed in markedly different ways, particularly in their understanding of the content and means of revelation.

⁶ VanderKam, “The Interpretation of Genesis in 1 Enoch,” 142-43.

⁷ The exaltation of Enoch in Enochic lore pre-dates the similar exaltation of Moses, which came as a response to Enochic claims. Alexander, “From Son of Adam to Second God,” 107-8. On the Mosaic response to Enochic claims, Orlov writes, “the Mosaic tradition, in its dialogue with the Enochic lore and other Second Temple mediatorial developments, could not rest on its laurels but had to develop further and adjust the story of its character, investing him with and angelic and even divine status comparable with the elevated status of the rivals.” Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, 259.

The *Book of the Watchers* (1 En. 1-36) is dated as early as the 4th cent. B.C.E. On the dating of the early Enochic literature and its prehistory, see Alexander, “From Son of Adam to a Second God,” 88; Michael A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments* (2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 2.6-15; James VanderKam, *Enoch: A Man for all Generations* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1995), 14; idem, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (CBQMS 16; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), 111-14.

⁸ For a definition of the genre apocalypse, and a listing of the defining characteristics of apocalyptic literature, including the form of revelation and the content of things revealed, see John J. Collins, “Toward the Morphology of a Genre,” *Semeia* 14 (1979): 1-19. Characteristic elements or motifs

Exagoge of Ezekiel the Tragedian is an early (second century B.C.E.) attempt to claim for Moses the visionary status of Enoch.⁹ In the drama, Moses has a dream vision of his heavenly enthronement on Sinai. Moses' ascent of the mountain is an Enochic-style inauguration into the heavenly realm and its secrets. Philo of Alexandria denigrated Enoch's status and attributed to Moses the exalted qualities of Enoch.¹⁰ Philo read a mystic heavenly ascent into Moses' ascent of Sinai, thus granting Moses a visionary ascent *à la* Enoch. Philo elevated Moses as both god and ideal king.¹¹ Rabbinic tradition, ever faithful to Moses, was either silent about or negative toward Enoch.¹² Some rabbinic sources claimed that Moses received both the Torah and secret knowledge in his ascent of Sinai.¹³ The apocalypses of *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* ascribe visionary ascent and transcendent revelation to Moses; both of these writings display interaction with

include otherworldly journeys, visions of heaven or hell, an angelic mediator, revelation recorded on heavenly books or tablets, concern for protology and/or eschatology, periodization of history, and cosmological speculation. No single apocalypse contains of all these elements. "Apocalypse" is defined by Collins as "a genre of revelatory literature within a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another supernatural world." Ibid., 9, and, more recently, idem, "Genre, Ideology and Social Movements," in *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium* (ed. J. J. Collins and J. H. Charlesworth; JSPSup 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 19. See also idem, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 1-14; Morton Smith, "On the History of ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ and ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ," in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism, Uppsala, August 12-17, 1979* (ed. D. Hellholm; International Colloquium on Apocalypticism; Uppsala, 1979; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 9-20; Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, "More on Apocalyptic and Apocalypses," *JSJ* 17 (1987): 137-44.

⁹ I develop this position in my article, "Polemics with Enochic Traditions in the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian," *JSP* 15 (2006): 195-210.

¹⁰ *Abr.* 47. See Alexander, *From Son of Adam to a Second God*, 108, and discussion in Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (2nd ed.; London: T & T Clark/Continuum, 1998), 51-70. See also *QG* 1.86.

¹¹ See Wayne A. Meeks, "Moses as God and King," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (ed. J. Neusner; SHR 14; Leiden: Brill, 1968), 354-71. According to Meeks, Philo incorporates the Hellenistic model of ideal kingship, but connects it to the designation of Moses as "god" in Exod 7:1. Ibid., 355.

¹² See esp. *Gen. Rab.* 25:1. Alexander also notes *Tg. Onq.* Gen 5:24: "And Enoch walked in the fear of the Lord; and he was not for the Lord caused him to die." Alexander, "From Son of Adam to Second God," 109.

¹³ *Lev. Rab.* 26:7; *Num. Rab.* on Num 34.2; see also section 2.7 below.

Enochic claims.¹⁴ Moses, like Enoch, becomes an authority on esoteric as well as exoteric knowledge.

Some Second Temple writings sought to mediate between the Enochic and Mosaic traditions. The book of *Jubilees*, for example, ascribes secret revelation to Moses on Sinai, but uses the figure of Moses to emphasize the importance of Enoch.¹⁵ The author of *Jubilees* moves Mosaic law back to the patriarchal and primeval periods, positing successive divine revelation. Other traditions elevated their own favorite patriarchs as superlative visionaries, conferring upon them the apocalyptic characteristics of ascent and esoteric revelation. In pseudepigraphic literature, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Levi, Baruch, and Ezra all become visionary figures to whom transcendent knowledge is disclosed.

These parallel and often competing claims of exalted patriarchs affirm the diverse nature of Judaism in the Second Temple period. Although Moses and his revelation emerge as authoritative in what becomes the dominant tradition of Judaism, this did not occur all at once or without struggle.¹⁶ Jack Sanders writes, “Since the Jewish people of the early second-temple period possessed a variety of religious traditions, it was by no means a foregone conclusion that the Mosaic Torah would become (the) dominant source” in Jewish religion.¹⁷ Although rooted in common elements of tradition, the various strands of Judaism offered their own versions of the definitive revelation that was

¹⁴ 4 *Ezra* 14:4-6; 2 *Bar.* 59:4-11. Ezra and Baruch are each portrayed as a “second Moses.” Cf. 2 *Bar.* 59:5-12 where esoteric revelation associated with Enoch is transferred to Moses.

¹⁵ Helge S. Kvanvig, “*Jubilees*: Between Enoch and Moses. A Narrative Reading,” *JSJ* 35.3 (2004): 243-61.

¹⁶ On the struggle in general, see Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, esp. 73-111.

¹⁷ Jack T. Sanders, “When Sacred Canopies Collide: The Reception of the Torah of Moses in the Wisdom Literature of the Second Temple Period,” *JSJ* 32 (2001): 122.

crucial to Jewish identity.¹⁸ Pseudepigraphic writings assert divine truths by appealing to revelation in the name of ancient figures from the past to whom God disclosed secrets of the divine will and purposes. This is especially true of the apocalypses or texts that contain apocalyptic material: this literature claims direct communication of divine secrets to a chosen visionary, either in a dream vision or an actual ascent to the heavenly realm, usually with angelic mediation.¹⁹ The authors of these works clearly intended the visionary's transcendent revelation to be considered authoritative because of its divine origin; it was even, in their view, to be accepted as scripture.²⁰ Although these works with their often competing revelatory claims did not find acceptance into the traditional Jewish canon,²¹ they provide evidence of a lively dialogue between pro-Moses/pro-Torah traditions (e.g. as exhibited in the *Exagoge*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*; cf. also Philo and Qumran literature) and alternatives to Mosaic primacy (Enochic and other exalted patriarch traditions). It is well known that rabbinic Judaism, with its emphasis on practical matters, was wary of excessive delving into divine secrets; it elevated the Mosaic Torah above

¹⁸ It is important to note here, however, the caveat of Charlesworth in his introduction to *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*: it is “unwise to exaggerate the diversity in Early Judaism. In the first century Judaism was neither uniformly normative nor chaotically diverse.” James H. Charlesworth, Introduction to *OTP* 1.xxix.

¹⁹ Collins writes that there are basically two different strands of tradition in Jewish apocalypses, “one of which is characterized by visions, with an interest in the development of history, while the other is marked by otherworldly journeys with a stronger interest in cosmological speculation.” Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 6.

²⁰ Cf. *4 Ezra* 14:37-48. See discussion in Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982; repr., Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 19-20. On *1 En.* as scripture, see G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “Scripture in 1 Enoch and 1 Enoch as Scripture,” in *Texts and Contexts: Biblical Texts in their Textual and Situational Contexts, Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman* (ed. T. Fornberg and D. Hellholm; Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995), 333-54.

²¹ The development of the Hebrew canon is a complex and debated issue. It is historically anachronistic to use the terms “canonical” or “non-canonical” prior to 100 C.E. With regard to the Pseudepigrapha, Charlesworth summarizes that “the early pseudepigrapha were composed during a period in which the limits of the canon apparently remained fluid at least to some Jews, and that some Jews and Christians inherited and passed on these documents as inspired. They did not necessarily regard them as apocryphal, or outside a canon.” Charlesworth, “Introduction for the General Reader,” *OTP* 1.xxiii.

any other speculative revelation.²² In the rabbinic period, literature that suggested revelation from sources other than Moses, or in the tradition of Moses, was suppressed.²³

The interaction between exalted patriarch traditions in the Second Temple and rabbinic periods—particularly between the Mosaic and Enochic traditions with their increasingly escalating revelatory claims about Moses and Enoch—informs our understanding of Jewish presentations of an exalted Moses. In response to alternatives to the importance of Moses and Torah in this period, certain writings seek to give Moses and Torah primary place. As we have seen, some pseudepigraphic literature elevates Moses' visionary status by attributing to him esoteric revelation of heavenly secrets on Sinai, in addition to the exoteric revelation of the law and covenant. In these texts, older Mosaic traditions are re-worked and expanded in increasingly apocalyptic and transcendent terms, in order to present Moses as the ultimate patriarch, the sole recipient of and revealer of *all* knowledge. Such apocalyptic visionary claims about Moses are most evident in narratives about his ascent and experience of theophany on Sinai, but also in tales of his birth and death. Visionary Moses traditions, which idealize Moses and exalt him above his biblical portrayal, demonstrate an attempt to reclaim Moses and Torah as authoritative for Judaism. The re-presentation of Moses and Sinai was a means of updating tradition to address the needs of new times and circumstances, when

²² Rabbinic tradition was not so much anti-apocalyptic as wary of apocalyptic speculation. Cf. the strong warning to those who engage in esoteric speculation in *m. Hag. 2:1*. Secret matters were reserved for an elect, well-versed few. “Knowledge of such things was something for those who were in a position to appreciate the mystery of God and safeguard these mysteries from abuse.” Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 277. See the extended discussion in his chapter in the same book, “Esoteric Tradition in Early Rabbinic Judaism,” 271-305; also Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (AGJU 14; Leiden: Brill, 1980), 73-97. For the belief that the Torah itself contains secrets of God, see *m. 'Abot 6:1*.

²³ Pseudepigraphic literature was preserved almost exclusively in Christian circles and by Jewish groups that opposed rabbinic tradition.

challenges to the integrity and status of Moses and his revelation were current.²⁴ The re-creation of legends about Moses in God's presence on Sinai was also a way to claim a new text's authoritative status, as authors sought to legitimize their work and message through connection to the great patriarch. The ultimate visionary was Moses and no other.²⁵

In the Hebrew Bible, Moses' superlative visionary status was secure. Yet as towering and unparalleled as Moses was, portrayals of his ascent and visionary encounter on Sinai become increasingly dramatic and esoteric in pro-Mosaic Second Temple literature. What prompted this significant expansion upon visionary Moses tradition? It is my view that the exceptional and extra-biblical assertions about Moses on Sinai, which serve to augment his already lofty status, are more fully understood in dialogue with, and often even polemics with, other exalted patriarch traditions. This dissertation explores the trajectory of elevated claims about Moses and his revelation, and seeks to establish its dialogue with alternative, non-Mosaic visionary traditions.

The centrality of Moses and Sinai proved problematic to some early Jewish interpreters of the Mosaic Torah. They struggled to understand how patriarchs such as Noah and Abraham were able to know and observe Torah laws centuries before the revelation to Moses on Sinai. In his article, "The Status of the Torah Before Sinai," Gary

²⁴ Hindy Najman summarizes, "These re-presentations of Sinai serve to authorize the re-introduction of Torah into the Jewish community at times of legal reform and covenant renewal. The revelation at Sinai is not a one-time event, but rather an event that can be re-presented, even in exile." Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (JSOTSup 77; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 36.

²⁵ Burton Mack suggests that Moses' growing importance in the Second Temple period was due to the increasing importance of the writings associated with him. Authors, indebted to Greek ideas, saw authorship as conferring authority on a text, and it became more and more difficult for them to present their works as original compositions. It became increasingly necessary to connect their own writing to the authority of Moses and the Torah. Burton L. Mack, "Under the Shadow of Moses: Authorship and Authority in Hellenistic Judaism," *SBLSP* 21 (1982): 299-318.

A. Anderson observes the apparent discomfort ancient writers had with the “singularity of Sinai”:

At one level the text gave the impression that all of Israel’s most sacred laws were revealed at Sinai. But, at a deeper level these readers were cognizant of the fact that the singularity of Sinai was not without its uneven moments. However momentous the unveiling of the divine liturgy was, parts of it were fore-known. Not only Noah, but Abraham and several other Patriarchal figures are fully capable of offering sacrifices in the manner to be prescribed later in Leviticus and Numbers. *The only possible solution to this datum was to conceive of the Torah’s revelation in both exoteric and esoteric terms.* Some knowledge of the Sinaitic revelation had been mysteriously vouchsafed to particular Patriarchal figures; but in the main, Israel at large only becomes fully knowledgeable during the life of Moses.²⁶

As challenges to the centrality of Moses and Sinai arose, I suggest in this dissertation that some Jewish authors in the Second Temple period appropriated the same solution in their defense of Mosaic primacy: they conceived of the Sinai revelation in *both exoteric and esoteric terms*, as they claimed for Moses the transcendent knowledge ascribed to alternative exalted seers in non-Mosaic traditions. The Sinai revelation was invested with ever-increasing esoteric import, as authors—aware of other visionary claims of transcendent truth—sought to channel *all* revelation through Moses on the mountain. In order to re-claim Moses and Torah as authoritative for Judaism, some pro-Mosaic authors expanded the traditional canonical portrayal of the Sinai revelation to link Moses not just to law and covenant and to the particular history of Israel, but to greater mysteries of heaven, human history, and the cosmos as well, such as was claimed in non-Mosaic (especially Enochic) visionary traditions. The re-shaping of Moses’ Sinai experience to include new revelatory elements was not only a way of legitimizing new truths for new circumstances through ascription to the authority of Moses. In some cases such elevated assertions were occasioned by a desire to assimilate the claims of

²⁶ Gary A. Anderson, “The Status of the Torah Before Sinai: The Retelling of the Bible in the Damascus Covenant and the Book of Jubilees,” *DSD* 1.1 (1994): 3. Emphasis mine.

alternative visionary patriarch traditions into narratives about Moses. It is my view that the increasingly apocalyptic and esoteric assertions about Moses on Sinai often signal an awareness of, and dialogue with, other exalted patriarch revelatory claims. Although not every enhanced presentation of Moses on Sinai is polemical (often the desire of the author is to supplement rather than replace prior tradition), dialogue with other seer traditions in a dynamic and interactive relationship is often in evidence. Analysis of an author's awareness of, and appropriation of, other apocalyptic revelatory traditions can inform our understanding of why Moses and Sinai are depicted the way they are in a text. The Sinai ascent and revelation, in many ways ambiguous in the written Torah, offered the ideal vehicle to connect new truths to the beloved figure of Moses and to re-establish him as the definitive, authoritative seer.

George W. E. Nickelsburg writes that "literature is rooted in history," and "theological conceptions arise not in a vacuum but in response to historical circumstances and events."²⁷ Theological reflection is often the result of a need to address alternative presentations of truth. Revelation not only forms and authenticates a community's self-identity; it also serves to define what that community *is not*, functioning polemically to distinguish the community's understanding of transcendent, authoritative truth from the claims of other, rival groups.²⁸ As elevated and apocalyptic traditions about heroes from the primeval and patriarchal period arose, positing superior revelation ante-dating Moses and Sinai, certain pro-Mosaic authors re-presented the Sinai experience to ascribe speculative knowledge to Moses, including secrets of the heavenly realm and God's celestial throne, of human history (including creation and end times), and of calendrical,

²⁷ Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 3.

²⁸ On this topic, see especially Nickelsburg, "The Nature and Function of Revelation in 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and Some Qumranic Documents," 91-119.

astronomical, and meteorological matters. In so doing, the prestige of Moses and Sinai was assured *vis-à-vis* potentially fractious, Torah-denigrating alternatives. Whereas other traditions exalted seers for their extraordinary visions and esoteric revelation, the Mosaic tradition could claim visionary ascent and esoteric revelation *and* faithfulness to the Sinai covenant. The status of Moses and Torah was thus solidified.

This dissertation explores the trajectory of esoteric and apocalyptic revelatory claims about Moses on Mt. Sinai and Mt. Nebo in pro-Mosaic Second Temple writings. Through this variegated literature, created at different times and in different places, there is a discernible thread of dialogue with non-Mosaic, especially Enochic, developments. Each new presentation of Moses on Sinai not only witnesses to new assumptions about appropriate revelation, but also expresses interaction with alternative and often competing revelatory claims. The primary focus of this study is Pseudo-Philo's *LAB*, a first century C.E. pro-Moses and pro-Torah text that lifts up Moses' pre-eminent position in Jewish history. I examine the portrayal of Moses in *LAB* in comparison with other exalted claims of Moses' visionary status, as well as in dialogue with alternative visionary seer traditions. In his depiction of an exalted Moses, Pseudo-Philo is clearly drawing on motifs, themes, and vocabulary common to apocalyptic literature. Although *LAB* is not an apocalypse, its narratives of Moses' visionary ascents contain important and under-explored apocalyptic elements that inform our interpretation of the author's purpose and message. I assert that exalted visionary patriarch traditions were formative in the author's writing.

1.3 Apocalyptic Revelation to Moses in Pseudo-Philo

Revelation to Moses takes on a decidedly apocalyptic bent in *LAB*. In Pseudo-Philo's retelling of Moses' visionary ascents and revelation, Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo become journeys to the extremities of the cosmos and to the heavenly realm. God shows Moses the celestial archetype of the temple, perhaps even the divine throne. On both Sinai and Nebo, Moses becomes luminous: his body is transformed into radiant light. Pseudo-Philo exhibits a concern for protology and eschatology that is not present in the written Torah narratives: *LAB* grants to Moses the direct revelation of primeval and eschatological secrets that is characteristic of apocalypses. Moses' mountain ascents become otherworldly tours and the occasion of speculative revelation. Although the genre of *LAB* is not apocalypse, the apocalyptic motifs and technical terminology of the narratives is undeniable. The expanded appropriation of the luminosity and heavenly/cosmic journey motifs, in addition to the protological, eschatological, cosmological and meteorological disclosure in the context of Moses' received transcendent revelation, places Pseudo-Philo's visionary ascents of Moses securely in Jewish apocalyptic tradition. It is my view that these characteristics attest that dialogue with other exalted patriarch traditions is far greater than has previously been demonstrated.

In this dissertation I attempt to establish that Pseudo-Philo's re-shaping of the biblical account to include apocalyptic features reveals familiarity with the developing tour apocalypse tradition, in which an exalted ancestral figure ascends to the celestial realm (either in a vision or an otherworldly journey) and is granted esoteric revelation.

Although *literary* dependence on other texts is difficult to assess or prove, it is clear that Pseudo-Philo has utilized the conceptual roots and forms characteristic of apocalyptic ascent traditions, in some cases transferring to Moses claims previously made for other exalted patriarchs, notably Enoch. I suggest that our author has expanded biblical and midrashic tradition to include these esoteric elements in order to elevate Moses' role as visionary, to ascribe to him the pertinent divine truths that Pseudo-Philo believes are appropriate for his day.

In Pseudo-Philo's view, the challenging times called for a return to Moses and Torah. Making use of a pool of themes, motifs, and vocabulary that recur throughout apocalyptic literature, Pseudo-Philo establishes Moses' authority for his community by ascribing to him the transcendent knowledge of heavenly secrets that was claimed for other ascended visionaries, especially Enoch. Moses' visionary ascents of Sinai and Nebo thus become the vehicle through which not only the Torah is revealed, but also the fullness of speculative knowledge necessary to endure contemporary difficult circumstances. Moses becomes the all-encompassing, once-for-all visionary whom Pseudo-Philo wants his community to honor and obey. In his portrayal of Moses' extraordinary visionary ascents, Pseudo-Philo asserts that God spoke relevant and eternal truths about heaven, human history and the cosmos directly through Moses, the incomparable and non-repeatable patriarch, and not through the mediation of any lesser challenger. *LAB*'s presentation of Moses can best be understood as the attempt of a devout Jew to bolster the preeminent position of Moses, and the covenant mediated by him, by enhancing Moses' visionary status *vis-à-vis* other seer traditions. The apocalyptic import of *LAB*'s claims about Moses enlightens our understanding of Jewish

apocalypticism, and yields important information about the growth of the wider visionary Moses tradition exhibited in other works, including Philo of Alexandria, the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian, the Dead Sea Scrolls, *4 Ezra*, and *2 Baruch*.

This study is divided into two sections. First, I examine the history of Jewish portrayals of Moses as ascended visionary and recipient of esoteric knowledge, from the written Torah (the Five Books of Moses) through *2 Baruch*. To my knowledge, no one has yet traced the trajectory of these Mosaic visionary claims throughout the relevant literature, particularly with respect to the texts' dialogue with exalted Enochic accounts. The dissertation then provides an analysis of *LAB*'s portrayal of Moses as visionary seer: the incorporation of apocalyptic features in the accounts of Moses' mountain ascents, possible interaction with other visionary claims, and a summary of *LAB*'s place in the wider visionary Moses tradition.

CHAPTER TWO

VISIONARY ASCENTS OF MOSES IN JEWISH TRADITION

2.1 Hebrew Bible: Key Texts in the Visionary Moses Tradition

Moses is a towering and incomparable figure in the written Torah. Although a wide variety of leadership roles are attributed to him, Moses' unique and ultimate status in the Hebrew Bible is grounded primarily in his roles as deliverer in the exodus and recipient of the revelation of God's law and covenant.²⁹ Moses plays a pivotal role in these two important events that defined Israel's identity. Moses' five theophanic encounters on Sinai (Exod 3, 19, 24 [bis], 33-34), and the divine revelation he receives in his ascents of the mountain, secure his status as visionary *par excellence*.

The revelation of God to Moses on the mountain encompasses a significant portion of the Torah. The core story of the Sinai revelation is found in Exod 19-24, 32-34. These chapters combine narrative and law, and are clearly composite.³⁰ To this core story, Priestly legislation (Exod 25-Num 10) was added; Deuteronomic legislation (Deuteronomy) was also incorporated and presented as rooted in the Sinai revelation. These later strands of tradition gained legitimacy by establishing a link to Moses and the Sinai tradition. Broadly defined, then, the Sinai revelation makes up over half of the

²⁹ On Moses' multiplicity of roles in the Pentateuch, see especially Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (trans. J. A. Baker; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 289; Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 197.

³⁰ The authorial and redactional complexity of Exod 19-24, 32-34 is evident in the numerous references to Moses ascending and descending the mountain. On the complex redaction history of the Sinai narrative, including a summary of earlier theories, see Thomas B. Dozeman, *God on the Mountain: A Study of Redaction, Theology, and Canon in Exodus 19-24* (SBLMS 37; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989). The core story is thought to be a conflation of J and E, with a few verses from P. See William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19-40* (AB 2A; New York: Doubleday, 2006), 141-53.

written Torah.³¹ In the Five Books, the Sinai event becomes the context of all ethical and cultic material: all legislation was directly revealed by God to Moses in his ascents of Sinai. The compilers and redactors of the Hebrew Bible have enhanced the profile of Moses and his revelation, presenting the Mosaic age as fundamental and normative. Joseph Blenkinsopp summarizes that “all the laws, no matter when promulgated” are backdated as having originated in the Sinai revelation.³² All revelatory knowledge is concentrated in the Sinai experience. God alone had revealed these truths on the mountain, and Moses alone, without mediation, received them. The supreme importance of Moses and his visionary ascents is affirmed by the final shape of the Hebrew Bible.

Let us look at the visionary ascent texts in detail, for many of the biblical claims about Moses and his visionary experiences are taken up and expanded in advanced Moses traditions.

2.1.1 Exodus 19

There are five theophanies in Exodus.³³ Moses is privileged to experience all five; three of the theophanies are for Moses alone. In Exod 3, Sinai/Horeb is established as the locus of theophanic encounter: God (“the angel of the LORD,” “the LORD”) appears to Moses in the burning bush. Moses’ ascent of Sinai in Exod 19 combines the older theophany tradition from Exod 3 with the revelation of the Torah. The redactional

³¹ See discussion in Dozeman, *God on the Mountain*, 2-12.

³² Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible*. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 51-52.

³³ Exod 3:1-6; 19:16-19; 24:9-11; 24:15-18; 33:17-34:9.

complexity of this chapter is evident: a wide variety of traditions have been blended rather inharmoniously.³⁴ Moses ascends and descends the mountain multiple times:

19:3 “Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain”³⁵

19:14 “So Moses went down from the mountain to the people”

19:20 “...the LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up”

19:25 “So Moses went down to the people and told them.”

Moses ascends Mount Sinai to receive revelation.³⁶ The mountain setting is important here and throughout Exod 19-24, for Sinai functions symbolically in this section as a cosmic mountain linking heaven and earth.³⁷ The imagery has roots in Canaanite beliefs. There is a mythic geography underlying the tradition: Sinai is the intersection between God and Israel, between the divine and the human. Sinai is a place set apart for divine encounter. It is a cosmic, rather than merely geographic, location.³⁸

³⁴ Brevard Childs sums up the difficulty in analyzing this chapter: “Even from a cursory reading of Ex. 19 one can observe tensions in the text which have caused the perplexity. Moses is pictured as ascending and descending Mount Sinai at least three times without any apparent purpose. At times the people are pictured as fearful and standing at a great distance from the mountain, whereas at other times there are repeated warnings which are intended to prevent any of them from breaking forth and desecrating the sacred mountain. Again, the description of God seems to fluctuate between his actually dwelling on the mountain and only descending in periodical visits. Finally, the theophany is portrayed both with the imagery of volcanic smoke and fire as well as with that of the clouds and thunder of a rainstorm.” Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster, 1974), 344. On the difficulty of reading Exod 19-24 as one continuous narrative, see Baruch Schwartz, “What Really Happened at Mount Sinai? Four Biblical Answers to One Question,” *BR* 12.5 (1997): 20-46, esp. 23-25. Schwartz notes tensions between the auditory and visual elements in the Sinai revelatory traditions.

³⁵ All translations of the Hebrew Bible are from the NRSV, unless otherwise noted.

³⁶ Sinai is the locus of divine revelation in Exod 3; 19:18, 20, 23; 24:16; Deut 33:2; Judg 5:5; Ps 68:8.

³⁷ On Sinai as a cosmic mountain, and the origin of such thought in Canaanite tradition, see Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (HSM 4; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 107-131. For further discussion of the understanding of the cosmic mountain in ancient Israel, see Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: Winston, 1985; repr., San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 145-76.

³⁸ Levenson notes that there is a “mysterious extraterrestrial quality to the mountain” in the narratives of the Hebrew Bible; *Sinai and Zion*, 21. He further asserts, “The Sinaitic experience is not narrated as if it occurred on the level of mere fact.” *Ibid.*, 17.

When Moses ascends to receive divine revelation and descends to bring it to the Israelites, he functions as the mediator between the heavenly and the earthly realms.³⁹

Several further observations must be made. The mountain of Sinai is the locus of theophany and revelation. In order to approach the divine presence, ritual preparation is necessary (Exod 19:10-15). Boundaries are set around the mountain, the transgression of which results in death (vv. 12-13), suggesting that Sinai is a sanctuary, at least temporarily.⁴⁰ Only Moses, the uniquely privileged human, may ascend to the top of the mountain (v. 20); this ascent is “up to God” (v. 3). Yet it is stressed that Moses did not ascend all the way to heaven to receive revelation; God *descended* to him on Mt. Sinai:⁴¹

19:11 “the LORD will come down (יֵרֵד) upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people”

19:18 “the LORD had descended (יֵרֵד) upon it (Sinai) in fire”

19:20 “When the LORD descended (וַיֵּרֵד) upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain”

In its present redactional context, the revelation that Moses receives in his first ascent of Sinai is exoteric, consisting of two bodies of covenant law, the Ten Words (ch. 20) and a collection of legal material (chs. 21-23), which Moses conveys to the people (19:25). The law and covenant do not contain speculative knowledge; there is no revelation of secrets of cosmology, creation, or eschatology. The narrative of Moses’ encounter with God is not without esoteric elements, however. There is a hint that Moses has a more transcendent experience of the divine presence. In Exod 19:9, God declares

³⁹ Some commentators have noted that both God and Israel are stationary in the account. Moses is the one who moves up and down the mountain and mediates between the two parties. See especially R. Rivard, “Pour une relecture d’Ex 19 et 20. Analyse Sémiotique d’Ex 19, 1-8,” *ScEs* 33 (1981): 335-56. Moses’ mediatorial role is affirmed by the people in Exod 20:16.

⁴⁰ See Nahum Sarna, *Exodus: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 105-7.

⁴¹ Cf. the similar emphasis in Deut 30:12. There may be an implication that God dwells on the mountain. See Exod 3:1-6; 19:3b; Judg 5:4-5; 1 Kgs 19; Ps 68:17. But God’s descent to the mountain (esp. Exod 19:18a) seems to preclude identification of Sinai as God’s permanent dwelling place. Cf. Neh 9:13a: “You came down also upon Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven.”

to Moses that he will come “in a dense cloud” (בעב הענן).⁴² It is possible that there is throne chariot imagery here, for עב refers to the divine chariot in Ps 104:3 and Isa 19:1.⁴³ Moses is thus ascending to the place where God descends, Baal-like, riding the clouds as a throne.⁴⁴ Moses’ visionary ascent may be understood in a mythic rather than purely historical sense. The ascent of Sinai as an approach to God’s throne is confirmed in ch. 24 with its vision of the divine throne room atop the mountain.

The conceptual roots of this account of Moses’ visionary ascent are clearly Canaanite in origin. The author/s have appropriated the forms and motifs of Canaanite thought and have presented Moses’ divine encounter on the mountain as cosmic in scope. Yet there is an obvious effort to resist any hint of speculative content with respect to Moses’ received knowledge, despite its heavenly origin. While Moses has a transcendent experience of the divine on Sinai, the critical revelation that Moses mediates to the people is decidedly practical and exoteric. The redactors/compiler are not interested in presenting Moses as a conduit of esoteric secrets.

2.1.2 Exodus 24

Exodus 24 appears to be Moses’ second visionary ascent of Sinai. In v. 1 God tells Moses, “Come up to the LORD” (עלה אליהוה), and twice it is said that Moses went up the mountain (vv. 13 and 15). There has been no previous statement, however, that Moses ever descended the mountain from his initial ascent. Moses is already up the mountain (20:18) when he receives the laws of 20:19-23:33. The interweaving of various versions

⁴² So NRSV, NIV; JPS has “in a thick cloud.”

⁴³ “You makes the clouds your chariot” (השם־עבים רכובו), “you ride on the wings of the wind” (יהוה רכב על־עב קל) (המהלך על־כנפ־ירוה) in Ps 104:3; in Isa 19:1, the Lord is “riding a swift cloud” (יהוה רכב על־עב קל).

⁴⁴ Baal is often referred to as the “rider of the clouds” (*rkb 'rpt*). See discussion in Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 111-12.

of the ascent makes the sequence of events difficult to follow, but the repetitions in the text (with seven references to ascent) serve to accent the fact that select humans can ascend to God. Of those privileged to ascend, only Moses has the status that allows him unparalleled access to God at the summit of Sinai. The narrative highlights two important claims: the uniqueness of Moses as one who ascends to meet God,⁴⁵ and Sinai as the unique place where God is revealed.

In Exod 24, Sinai is the locus of two theophanies, one public (24:9-11) and one private (24:15-18). Prior to the two theophanies, there is a sacrificial ritual at the base of the mountain (vv. 3-8). In this cultic narrative, Moses functions as a priest, dashing the sacrificial blood on the altar and the people.⁴⁶ This blood rite is a ratification of the covenant.

In the first theophany, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders ascend the mountain and a surprising assertion is made: “they saw the God of Israel” (וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – v. 10); “they beheld God” (וַיַּחֲזוּ אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים – v. 11).⁴⁷ Although a cloud conceals God from the people (20:21), Moses and the elders ascend and experience a direct vision of God. The extraordinary nature of this claim is summed up by Cohn:

This statement, unique in the Bible, sounds all the more remarkable following, as it does, the theophany where great precautions are taken to block the people’s vision of Yahweh. The verb “beheld” (*hāzāh*) connotes especially intense seeing with the eyes or the intelligence (cf. Ps. 11:7; 17:14; 63:3) and is used of a seer in ecstasy.⁴⁸ Because it

⁴⁵ See esp. v. 2: “Moses alone shall come near the Lord.”

⁴⁶ The dominant theme of this section, with its emphasis on Moses’ priestly and mediatorial function, has been attributed to the Elohist. The later Priestly tradition lessens Moses’ status and ascribes all priestly functions to Aaron.

⁴⁷ The LXX renders these verses, “And they saw the place where the God of Israel stood” (καὶ εἶδον τὸν τόπον οὗ εἰστήκει ἐκεῖ ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραηλ)... “and they appeared in the place of God” (καὶ ὤφθησαν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ).

⁴⁸ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (London: Oxford University Press, 1907), 302. This is footnoted in Cohn’s text.

occurs almost exclusively in poetry, its unusual employment here underscores the uniqueness of the event.⁴⁹

Sinai is distinguished as the place of direct access to the divine presence. Moses and the elders are privileged to encounter God; Sinai is the holy place where such an encounter is possible. This visual experience on Sinai is exceptional. There is no mention of a cloud hiding God's form, as previously (19:9; 20:21), nor of God's glory concealing his physical presence (as in 33:22). Yet despite the dramatic claim of direct vision, it appears that Moses and the elders are able only to behold God "from below," for what they see is "under his feet" (v. 10). They are given a vision of a pavement of sapphire-colored stone, probably lapis lazuli, "like the very heaven for clearness (טהר)." ⁵⁰ This blue pavement is the floor of God's palace or temple, a reference to the lower firmament of heaven on which God's feet rest.⁵¹ This platform is apparently transparent: through it Moses and the elders see both God and the divine throne room, although there is no description of the throne itself.⁵² The statement that the pavement is under God's feet suggests a vision of God enthroned in his heavenly temple. The use of the verb *הרה*, a *terminus technicus* for prophetic seeing in the ecstatic state, rather than the more common *האיר*, emphasizes the extraordinary nature of this vision. It is in fact stated with amazement that no harm came to the elders after this vision (v. 11).

Although the select group of elders ascends partway up Sinai and sees God, only Moses experiences the climactic theophany at the summit of Sinai (vv. 15-18). There is

⁴⁹ Robert L. Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space: Four Biblical Studies* (American Academy of Religion Studies in Religion 23; Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), 51.

⁵⁰ Cf. Ezek 1:26-28; 10:1-2.

⁵¹ Baal's palace in Zaphon was also made of lapis lazuli. For parallels between Exod 24:9-11 and descriptions of Baal's palace, see Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 112, and Dozeman, *God on the Mountain*, 114. The reference to blue explains the color of the sky.

⁵² Cf. Isa 6:1 and Ezek 1:26-28; 10:1-2 where God's throne is described. The Ugaritic parallels to Exod 24:9-11 suggest that this is a description of the heavenly temple. Cf. Isa 66:1.

an intentional gradation in the movement in stages up the mountain. As the elders ascend, they are separated from the people who remain at the base of the mountain; now Moses is separated from the elders, and then from Joshua, as Moses alone goes up the mountain to approach God. Here again Moses is singled out for his special role as visionary. As Moses ascends, God's theophanic cloud covers the mountain and the glory of the LORD (כבוד־יהוה) abides (וישכן) on the mountain. After six days of preparation, Moses enters the cloud and remains with God on Sinai for forty days and forty nights (v. 18). During this encounter, Moses receives the tablets of the Decalogue as well as other instruction (chs. 25-32), mostly about the construction of the tabernacle (משכן) where God will abide (שכן). In the Priestly theology, the tabernacle will replace Sinai as the place where God is manifest.⁵³

In the two theophanic encounters of ch. 24, the mountain of Sinai is the locus of God's presence and the vehicle for revelation of God, God's throne room, the Decalogue, and the tabernacle; Moses is the extraordinary visionary who ascends to God and mediates between God and the people.

2.1.3 Exodus 25

While Moses is alone with God on Sinai, he receives instructions about the tabernacle and its furnishings, which are to be constructed according to divine specifications. The Lord tells Moses, "In accordance with all that I show you (ככל אשר אני מראה אותך) concerning the pattern (תבנית) of the tabernacle and of its furniture, so shall you make it" (v. 9). After the instructions about the ark, the table, and the lampstand, God declares,

⁵³ Jeffrey H. Tigay, in his annotations to the JPS Jewish Study Bible, writes, "The Tabernacle, in other words, is essentially a portable Mt. Sinai, the locus of God's presence." *The Jewish Study Bible* (ed. A. Berlin and M. Z. Brettler; New York: Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 163.

“And see that you make them according to the pattern for them (בתבניתם), which is being shown you on the mountain” (v. 40). The revelation to Moses on Sinai includes a vision of the “pattern” (תבנית) of the tabernacle and its furnishings, of which the Israelites must make an exact replica.⁵⁴ Moses “sees” this pattern/ תבנית, but what exactly he sees is uncertain. The precise interpretation of תבנית is not clear. It could mean blueprints, i.e. drawings or plans, which are divinely composed.⁵⁵ But תבנית may also refer to the heavenly original or prototype of the sanctuary, which the Israelites are to replicate on earth.⁵⁶ In other words, Moses does not just receive instructions: he has a direct visual experience of God’s celestial temple, the model for the earthly tabernacle.⁵⁷ This interpretation is consistent with ancient Near Eastern ideas of analogous relationships between heavenly originals and earthly counterparts, particularly concerning temples.⁵⁸ Moses’ vision of the heavenly temple, however, occurs on earth, for he is shown the תבנית “on the mountain” (25:40), not in a heavenly ascent.

In Exod 25, Sinai is again the place of extraordinary revelation: Moses “sees” a heavenly image, likely the heavenly temple that is the prototype of the tabernacle (also

⁵⁴ Cf. Exod 26:8, 30; 27:8; Num 8:4; 1 Chron 28:11-19; Ezek 40-48.

⁵⁵ This is the opinion of R. L. Cohn, who sees the תבנית in 24:9, 40 as equivalent to the word משפת (“rule”) in Exod 26:30 (“And you shall erect the tabernacle according to its rule [כמשפנת] which has been shown you on the mountain”). Cohn notes that David gives Solomon the divinely written plans (תבנית) for the temple in 1 Chron 28:11, 19. Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space*, 52-53, n. 31.

⁵⁶ Hamerton-Kelly contends that the תבנית is the pre-existent heavenly prototype. R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, “The Temple and the Origins of Jewish Apocalyptic,” *VT* 20 (1970): 5-6. On later Jewish interpretations of תבנית, see Michael E. Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God* (ed. F. M. Cross, W. E. Lemke, and P. D. Miller; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 445.

⁵⁷ Childs notes the puzzling nature of the “pattern” language here. He sees the idea of a pattern of a heavenly sanctuary as coming from an older, pre-Priestly tabernacle tradition, which is confirmed by many Ancient Near Eastern parallels to the idea of a heavenly pattern of a divine temple. Childs writes, “It seems probable that originally the divine legitimation lay in the heavenly vision and in its being received on Mount Sinai. In other words, the Priestly account of the tabernacle in chs. 25-31 reflects a variety of tensions with the older traditions which it incorporated. On the one hand, one can see elements from the older tent tradition which related to Moses’ office. On the other hand, there are traces of an ancient tabernacle tradition which legitimated its divine authority through a heavenly vision rather than from instructions on Sinai.” Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 535.

⁵⁸ See discussion in Leonhard Goppelt, “τύπος, ἀντίτυπος, κτλ,” *TDNT* 7:246-59.

26:30; 27:8; cf. *1 En.* 14:10-20; Wis 9:8; Heb 8:2-5; Rev 11:19). Sinai is “the place where the divine plan is communicated and transmitted to the human world.”⁵⁹ Moses’ extraordinary vision allows the Israelites to build the tabernacle according to exact divine specifications, so that God may indeed dwell among them (25:8).

2.1.4 Exodus 33-34

The fifth and final theophany of Exodus is in 33:17-34:9. In this passage, Moses requests a direct visual experience of God’s glory (כבוד): “Show me your glory (כבוד), I pray” (33:18). In the Priestly view, the manifestation of God’s glory is an experience of fire or radiant light (cf. Exod 16:6-7).⁶⁰ God’s glory hides God’s form while signifying God’s presence.⁶¹ In 33:18-23, God’s face (פנים) is connected with God’s glory (כבוד). Moses requests to see God’s glory; he is allowed a vision of God’s glory but not of God’s face. The revelation given to Moses is partial: it is God’s “goodness” (טובי – v. 19) that passes by, later equated with God’s “glory” (כבודי – v. 22). Having stationed himself “on the rock” (i.e., on top of Sinai), as God has instructed (v. 21), Moses gets a glimpse of God’s backside but is not permitted a vision of God’s unmediated form. Moses has an experience of the divine presence, but God’s form remains hidden, for “no one shall see me (lit. ‘my face’ – פני) and live” (v. 20). Not even Moses, God’s chosen visionary, is able to see God directly.

Moses had descended from Sinai with the first tablets to address the incident of the golden calf (32:15); in anger Moses shattered the tablets. In chapter 34, God now

⁵⁹ R. L. Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space*, 53.

⁶⁰ In biblical theophanies, the divine presence often appears surrounded by fire or radiant light. See Deut 33:2; Ps 18:8; 104:2; Ezek 1:27-28; Hab 3:4.

⁶¹ Exod 40:34-35; Num 14:10b, 22; 16:19; 1 Kgs 8:10-11.

tells Moses to make new tablets, and says to him, “Come up to Mount Sinai and present yourself there to me, on the top of the mountain” (34:2). Moses’ uniqueness is again stressed: he alone is to ascend (v. 3). The description of the theophanic encounter emphasizes God’s descent to the mountain and God’s mediated form, concealed by a cloud (v. 5). The revelation to Moses includes a proclamation of the divine name and attributes (vv. 5-9), and a ritual law code (vv. 11-26); it is not speculative knowledge but has to do with God’s covenantal relationship with Israel, mediated through Moses. Moses remains on Sinai for forty days and forty nights (34:28).

When Moses descends Sinai, his face is radiant (קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו: lit. “the skin of his face was shining/radiating light”).⁶² Having intimately experienced God’s glory for an extended period, Moses comes to exhibit the radiance of the divine presence. Moses takes on some aspects of divinity: his transformed countenance reflects God’s own luminous glory and is the consequence of exposure to the divine.⁶³

Moses’ ongoing communication with God results in his continued radiance, necessitating the use of a veil whenever he was not relaying God’s commands to Israel.⁶⁴ Whenever Moses encountered God again in the tabernacle (which replaces Sinai as the place of revelation), or functioned in his role as mediator of revelation, the veil was removed so that Moses’ glorified face could witness to God’s presence. Moses’ face becomes the locus of theophany for Israel. Moses’ luminosity is exceptional and is

⁶² Cf. Hab 3:4.

⁶³ For a summary of past interpretations of this puzzling passage, see William H. C. Propp, “The Skin of Moses’ Face—Transfigured or Disfigured?” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 375-86. The legend of Moses’ shining face influenced later writings. Just as Moses’ luminous face reflected God’s glory, so those who are righteous will exhibit a similar radiant countenance in the world to come. The idea that the righteous will “shine” is found in Dan 12:3: “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever.” Cf. Judg 5:31: “But may your friends be like the sun as it rises.”

⁶⁴ Exod 34:33-35. Exod 33:7-11 also sees Moses’ communication with God as an ongoing activity.

linked to his extraordinary visionary and mediatorial roles. This transformation of Moses' face affirms Moses' transcendent experience in the presence of God's glory, as does the statement that he did not need to eat or drink while on the mountain (34:28). It is difficult to know what exactly is being claimed with the luminosity motif. The narrative is remarkable but also ambiguous and not without inconsistencies. It can perhaps be said that it is Moses' visionary and mediatorial authority, not his person, that is transcendent.⁶⁵ Moses is not transformed into a divine being (although later Mosaic traditions will claim this, as we shall see below), but the light emanating from his face is a theophanic witness to the divine glory. The point is that Moses is the one through whom the Israelites have access to the divine. Having ascended to encounter God, Moses descends to represent God to the people and mediate the covenant.

McBride has observed that the portrayal of Moses as extraordinary human serves to elevate him in a dramatic way: "Because God speaks directly with and through Moses (cf. 33:7-11), Moses' guidance of the people replaces and surpasses that of the angelic 'messenger' (33:2; cf. 23:20-34). The Priestly supplement in 34:29-35 underscores this point: Moses' own 'face' reflects the radiance of God's splendor."⁶⁶ After the golden calf incident, God declines to accompany Israel personally, stating that only "my angel

⁶⁵ George Coats sees the shining face episode as Moses' transfiguration, establishing Moses' unique authority from God for his community. Moses is the heroic man. George W. Coats, *Moses: Heroic Man, Man of God* (JSOTSup 57; Sheffield: JSOT, 1988), 138. S. Dean McBride, however, contends that Moses is not portrayed as a hero. Moses' shining face transforms him to represent God, not himself. S. Dean McBride, "Transcendent Authority: The Role of Moses in Old Testament Traditions," *Int* 44 (1990): 230-31. Dozeman concurs with McBride, noting that Moses' shining face signifies invasion by divine power, concealing Moses' everyday identity. The veil cloaks Moses' skin. "Although the veil directs attention to Moses as its wearer, removal reveals divine light, not the person. His idealization is at the cost of personal identity." Thomas B. Dozeman, "Masking Moses and Mosaic Authority in Torah," *JBL* 119.1 (2000): 21-45 (45).

⁶⁶ McBride, "Transcendent Authority: The Role of Moses in Old Testament Traditions," 236. After the golden calf incident, God declines to accompany Israel personally, stating that only "my angel will go before you" (32:34), as God's representative. Moses, however insists that only God's own presence will do (33:15). After the episode of Moses' luminosity (34:29-35), Moses himself exhibits the divine presence, for God's glory is manifest in his radiant face.

will go before you” (32:34), as God’s representative. Moses, however, insists that only God’s own presence will do (33:15). After the episode of Moses’ luminosity (34:29-35), Moses himself exhibits the divine presence, for God’s glory is manifest in his radiant face. Moses’ face becomes the place where God’s glory is present and visible in Israel’s midst.

Orlov has suggested that the motifs of the divine face and the luminosity of the visionary in Exod 33-34 have roots in Mesopotamian traditions about Enmeduranki, the hero who was “translated” and had access to the solar deity.⁶⁷ It has been well established that Mesopotamian traditions were the prototype of portrayals of Enoch.⁶⁸ Some have claimed that that the Priestly strand of Torah tradition was aware of Enochic developments.⁶⁹ Orlov notes that later Enochic traditions (*2 Enoch*) emphasize Enoch’s luminosity; he posits that “the idea that Exod 33 could actually contain the original Enochic motif is not inappropriate. The implicit link between the Enochic account of the divine presence and the Mosaic account of the divine *panim* may well reflect the conceptual world of the Priestly editor.”⁷⁰ If Orlov is correct, Exod 33-34 may be a very early example of Mosaic interaction with Enochic traditions. This conclusion is

⁶⁷ Andrei A. Orlov, “God’s Face in the Enochic Tradition,” in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism* (ed. A. D. DeConick; SBLSymS 11; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006): 179-93.

⁶⁸ Pierre Grelot, “La légende d’Hénoch dans les apocryphes et dans la Bible: origine et signification,” *RSR* 46 (1958): 5-26, 181-220; Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic*; VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*.

⁶⁹ E.g. Michael E. Stone, “Enoch, Aramaic Levi and Sectarian Origins,” *JSJ* 19 (1988): 162. Bedenbender has also shown that Enochic traditions were developing while the Mosaic Torah was still incomplete. He writes: “It seems not far-fetched to assume that at least some of the traditions in the background of Gen 5:22-24 are now gathered in the Book of the Watchers.” Andreas Bedenbender, “The Place of the Torah in the Early Enoch Literature,” in *The Early Enoch Literature* (ed. G. Boccaccini and J. J. Collins; *JSJSup* 121; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 73. Kvanvig shows that there could be a common background behind the early Enochic literature and the Priestly writer. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic*, 33.

⁷⁰ Orlov, “God’s Face in the Enochic Tradition,” 193.

suggestive but far from certain. It does, however, leave an open question as to whether, and to what extent, Mosaic dialogue with Enochic lore was present in the written Torah.

This final, private theophany to Moses in Exod 33-34 affirms Moses' superlative status as privileged visionary and mediator of revelation. The special revelation given to Moses has to do with God's restored relationship with his people: it entails a self-disclosure of God's name and relational attributes, and a code of ritual law. The transformation of Moses' face signifies his transcendent experience in the presence of God's glory on Sinai. It also establishes Moses' singular authority as God's representative, the one through whom Israel approaches God.

2.1.5 Numbers 12:6-8

This narrative is not a visionary ascent, but it is an important assertion of Moses' unique status as mediatory leader and visionary seer *par excellence*. In Num 12, Aaron and Miriam rebel against Moses' elevated position at the head of the Israelites; they complain, "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" (Num 12:2). Moses does not fight for his own position, but God, in theophanic display, unequivocally proclaims Moses' unique and ultimate role over all leaders. God stresses the unparalleled nature of Moses' status: only Moses speaks with the LORD face to face (פה אל־פה lit. "mouth to mouth"); only Moses beholds his form (ותמנת יהוה יביט); only to Moses does the LORD make himself clearly known in direct dialogue, not in dreams, visions, or riddles. This is a strong statement of the superiority of Moses' revelation over other, lesser forms of revelation. Moses' authority lies in the fact that he alone receives private revelation directly from God. It is God who legitimates Moses'

position of authority and pre-eminence as seer. Moses' experience and role are non-repeatable.

In his speech, God declares that Moses sees the “form” or “likeness” (תמונה) of the Lord (v. 8). This statement may be figurative. If it is meant literally, it is incompatible with the claim of Exod 33:20-22 that no one can see God's face (פנים) and live. It is noteworthy, however, that “form” (תמונה) and “face” (פנים) are in parallelism in Ps 17:15, both signifying God's physical presence (in the Temple). The intent of Num 12:8 seems to be to lift up Moses' prophetic singularity by accentuating his actual vision of God and direct, interactive dialogue with God. The “mouth” and “form” of God are deemed accessible to Moses alone: he speaks with God “mouth to mouth” (פה אל-פה) and beholds the divine form. The anthropomorphic portrayal of God is remarkable here. Num 12 and Exod 33 seem to represent differing traditions about God's visibility.

The account of Num 12 emphasizes Moses' unique relationship with God: only Moses speaks to God directly and can approach God's unmediated physical presence (which is not elaborated upon). This is the reason Moses is entrusted with leadership over God's “house”/people (v. 7).

2.1.6 Deuteronomy 34

Deuteronomy 34 is the account of Moses' ascent of Nebo prior to death. It is the continuation of Num 27:12 and Deut 32:49, where God commands Moses to go up the mountain of Abarim (Nebo) to survey the land.⁷¹ Moses ascends to the summit of Nebo, and from this height God shows him representative areas of the land that the Israelites

⁷¹ Deut 34:1 combines two different traditions about the place of Moses' death: Mount Nebo and Mount Pisgah.

will enter and possess. There may be an extraordinary element in the description of the vast expanses of land that Moses sees. Tigay notes, “Some parts of the panorama cannot be seen by the human eye from Mount Nebo. Dan, the Mediterranean, and Zoar are blocked by intervening mountains. Since verse 1 says, ‘The LORD showed him,’ perhaps the text means that God enabled Moses to see what would otherwise have been impossible.”⁷²

Although there is no theophany in this ascent narrative, God speaks to Moses and is physically present, for Moses dies on the mountain and God himself buries him (ויקבר אתו): lit. “he buried him”).⁷³ Moses’ prestige and intimate communion with God are emphasized as God alone attends Moses’ death and personally takes care of his burial. In the reasoning of the Deuteronomist, Moses can die because his work is completed: the law and covenant, revealed to Moses on Sinai, are his legacy.

Chapter 34 sums up the claim of the book as a whole: Moses is the ideal prophet and non-repeatable mediator of divine revelation. Deuteronomy begins with the claim that “Moses spoke to the Israelites just as the LORD had commanded him to speak to them” (1:3). Moses’ words are God’s words. The book presents itself as Moses’ final discourse on the plains of Moab, in effect a re-presentation of the revelation at Sinai.⁷⁴ Having accomplished the all-important task of mediating the Torah to Israel, Moses can make his final mountain ascent, to the heights of Nebo, where he dies “at the command of the LORD” (v. 5).

⁷² Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (The JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996/5756), 336.

⁷³ The antecedent for the verb in v. 6 is “the LORD” at the end of v. 5.

⁷⁴ On this topic, see esp. Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 39.

In Deut 34:10, Moses is remembered as the only human whom God knew “face to face” (פֶּה אֶל־פֶּה). Moses had direct access to God and was unequaled among humans for his stature and deeds of miraculous power (vv. 11-12). These verses affirm the supreme authority of Moses and his revelation.

2.1.7 Mosaic Visionary Typology Applied to Other Biblical Figures

Early traditions about Moses as the extraordinary visionary who ascended to encounter God on the mountain, and who mediated crucial divine revelation, influenced the portrayals of other figures of Israel’s history. In his book *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology*, Dale Allison summarizes how the Mosaic typology was applied to other figures in the Hebrew Bible, as authors “reactivated Mosaic memories and superimposed them on others.”⁷⁵ Allison identifies Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Elijah, Josiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Ezra, and Baruch as biblical figures who are depicted with Mosaic characteristics, using Moses as a “type” of heroic figure. For the purposes of this dissertation, the influence of Mosaic typology upon the prophetic portrayals of Elijah and Ezekiel will be briefly examined, as well as the influence that those profiles then had on Mosaic developments.

Elijah is presented in the Hebrew Bible as the “new Moses” who, after being miraculously fed in the wilderness (as was his predecessor), ascends a mountain (Carmel) to defend the covenant (1 Kgs 18). Elijah then experiences a kind of theophany on Horeb, including wind, earthquake, and fire (1 Kgs 19), an evocation of the account of Moses on Sinai. These and other numerous parallels between Elijah and Moses are not

⁷⁵ Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 23-62 (23).

coincidental. Allison summarizes scholarly opinion that “most of the relevant traditions about Moses were in circulation before most of the relevant traditions about Elijah.”⁷⁶ Elijah is cast in the books of Kings as a prophet like Moses, the prophetic visionary prototype. Yet the tradition of Elijah’s dramatic ascent to heaven before death appears also to have had an influence upon developing Mosaic traditions. Elijah’s ascent to heaven led some to believe that his prophetic predecessor must never have died, either. The insistence in Deut 34:6 that Moses did indeed die, and that God buried him, may well have been a polemical response to traditions that Moses, like Elijah, never knew death but was assumed to heaven. Deut 30:11-12 displays discomfort with ascent to heaven traditions, for Moses or any other visionary.

Jon D. Levenson has established that the portrayal of Ezekiel is modeled after Moses and Sinai typology.⁷⁷ Chapters 40-48 of Ezekiel attribute a law code to the prophet in a vision “upon a very high mountain” (40:2). Many scholars have observed that Ezek 40-48 is the only law code in the Hebrew Bible that is not connected to Moses on Sinai. The revelation to Ezekiel is striking, then, for although other biblical figures experience visions, outside of Moses only Ezekiel receives revelation of law. Allison summarizes the problematic nature of such a claim for Ezekiel:

If then someone other than Moses, in our case Ezekiel, made so bold as to hand down new Torah, the problem of his relationship to Sinai must have arisen. Ezekiel 40-48 confirms this and likewise shows us the course adopted. The chapters were not retrojected onto the Pentateuch or assigned to Moses (contrast *Jubilees*, which ascribes non-Pentateuchal legislation to Moses). The chapters were rather assigned to one *like* Moses, whose circumstances were reminiscent of Sinai...it was necessary for that prophet to simulate Moses, for Torah unrelated to the revelation of Sinai was simply unthinkable.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology*, 44.

⁷⁷ Jon D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48* (HSM 10; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), 37-53.

⁷⁸ Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology*, 53.

Although Ezekiel is depicted with Mosaic qualities and experiences in these chapters, the law code revealed to him contains surprising elements that led to a lessening of Moses' status in some traditions. Ezek 40-48 argues that the majority of Levites were guilty of sinful behavior that disqualified them from the priesthood (44:1-14). The sons of Zadok (Zadokites) are identified as the faithful ones who should perform priestly functions in the future temple (48:11). The ascendancy of the Zadokites,⁷⁹ who were ambivalent toward Moses and the prophets, resulted in a focus on Aaron as priest; Moses' role was limited to his prophetic revelation of the law, including the all-important divine instructions about the priesthood and the tabernacle.⁸⁰ The Priestly Writing, a product of the Zadokite movement, elevates Moses as prophetic visionary and mediator, but eliminates his priestly role. In early Mosaic tradition, however, Moses did perform priestly functions (e.g. Exod 24:3-8). Ezek 40-48 is "the earliest document in which we can read a claim for Zadokite supremacy."⁸¹ The Zadokite tradition, evident in Ezekiel's vision, influenced Priestly portrayals of Moses.

2.1.8 Summary

The ascent and vision accounts about Moses in the written Torah stress the preeminence of Moses as visionary and mediator of revelation, and the uniqueness of Sinai as the place of access to God and the approach to the heavenly realm and divine throne. The following points summarize key elements in these texts, many of which are taken up and expanded in later visionary Moses traditions:

⁷⁹ On this development, see discussion in Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 43- 72

⁸⁰ See Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 80-88

⁸¹ Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 44.

1. Sinai is the locus of theophany and divine revelation. It functions as a cosmic mountain, linking heaven and earth. Sinai is a mythic rather than merely geographic location.

2. Moses' ascents of Sinai are occasions of theophany and direct access to God. Only Moses can ascend to the summit of the mountain, where God is. Although Moses (and, in one instance, the elders) experiences the divine presence, the direct vision of God is often downplayed. There is a hesitancy to describe God's form. The theophany is not primarily revelation of God, but of God's law and covenant.⁸²

3. Moses ascended to God on the mountain, but not to the heavenly realm. The emphasis is on God's *descent* to the earthly mountain. While Moses may glimpse heaven, he does not actually ascend to heaven. There is a reluctance to expand upon the ascent motif.⁸³ (This may be a polemical response to developing Enochic traditions). Heaven is inaccessible to humans, even to Moses.

4. Moses alone receives the revelation of the law and covenant on Sinai; this makes him the sole mediator of the Torah.⁸⁴

5. The revelation to Moses is not esoteric or unintelligible.⁸⁵ It does not include mysteries of the cosmos or protological or eschatological secrets. Moses' visionary

⁸² See Steven D. Fraade, "Hearing and Seeing at Sinai: Interpretive Trajectories," in *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. G. J. Brooke, H. Najman, and L. T. Stuckenbruck; TBN 12; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 247-68. Fraade writes, however, that "auditory and ocular modes of revelatory reception at Sinai both accompany and remain in tension with one another." *Ibid.*, 247.

⁸³ Cf. the skepticism about ascent to heaven in Deut 30:12 and Prov 30:4. Cf. Sir 1:3.

⁸⁴ This oversimplification is the traditional interpretation of the narratives in Exod 19-24. Yet the text, with its various strands of source traditions, is ambiguous as to how much of the revelation the people actually heard or saw. See discussion in Benjamin D. Sommer, "Revelation at Sinai in the Hebrew Bible and in Jewish Theology," *JR* (1999): 422-51, esp. 432-35. Deuteronomy claims that the revelation of the Decalogue was entirely public and unmediated: Deut 4:10-14 and 5:2-5; Moses only mediates the subsequent legal material.

experience does, however, include some transcendent revelatory elements. On Sinai, God shows Moses the heavenly counterpart of the tabernacle. Moses and a select group are able to glimpse the heavenly throne room from their vantage point on Sinai.

6. Although in Deut 33:2 there is a suggestion that angelic beings were present at the Sinai revelation, the revelation to Moses is portrayed as direct, with no angelic mediation.

7. Moses encounters God's glory on Sinai, and his face is transformed as a result of this exposure. Moses' luminous face reflects the divine glory.

8. Moses is the only human with whom God spoke to "face to face." God spoke to Moses clearly and directly, not in visions, dreams, or riddles.

9. Moses functions as a priest, performing the blood ritual that ratifies the covenant.

10. Moses also has a visionary experience on Mount Nebo, where God is physically present with him and shows him the extent of the land. God attends Moses' death and buries him.

Moses' ascent and revelation on Sinai came to signify the beginning of Israel as the people of the covenant. In this sense, the events at Sinai are foundational, belonging to *illud tempus*, mythic, primal time (i.e., having to do with the beginning of things).⁸⁵

Moses and the Sinai revelation are presented in the final redaction of the written Torah as formative of, and crucial to, Israelite/Jewish identity. As the people gathered at Sinai,

⁸⁵ Deut 30:11 stresses that the revelation to Moses is clear and intelligible. The assertion has polemical overtones, contrasting Moses' revelation of the accessible, intelligible law and covenant with other claims to knowledge of esoteric mysteries.

⁸⁶ The term is that of Mircea Eliade, in *The Myth of the Eternal Return, or, Cosmos and History* (Bollington Series 46; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 20. See Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space*, 56.

and Moses ascended to encounter God and receive the divine revelation, Israel as a community is forged, its special relationship with God established. The law and covenant that defined Israel's life had divine origin: it came down to Israel directly from God on Sinai, through the mediation of Moses. Robert Cohn observes, "Law is thus conceived to be 'in the beginning,' not created by society but itself creating society."⁸⁷

As noted above, the writers and editors of the Hebrew Bible sought to link later, post-Mosaic laws to the all-important experience of Moses on the mountain. Levenson writes:

What their common ascription to Moses suggests is that the Sinaitic 'event' functioned as the prime pattern through which Israel could re-establish in every generation who she was, who she was meant to be. The experience of Sinai, whatever its historical basis, was perceived as so overwhelming, so charged with meaning, that Israel could not imagine that any truth or commandment from God could have been absent from Sinai.⁸⁸

All law, no matter when it was developed, was retrojected back to Moses on Sinai, and therefore rendered authoritative and sacred. The unique place of Moses as visionary and mediator of the covenant, and Sinai as the place of transcendent experience and revelation, was solidified.

Moses and Sinai, then, functioned symbolically for Israel, becoming a prototype for visionary experience and a vehicle for imparting transcendent truth.⁸⁹ In the Hebrew Bible, Moses' visionary ascent of Sinai becomes a *typos* of revelation. The observation of Levenson is again significant; he writes that the Sinaitic experience discloses:

the essential, normative relationship of YHWH to his people Israel. Sinai was a kind of archetype, a mold into which new experiences could be fit, hundreds of years after the original event, if such there was. That mold served as a source of continuity which enabled new norms to be promulgated with the authority of the old and enabled social

⁸⁷ Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space*, 56.

⁸⁸ Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 18-19.

⁸⁹ Zion, Davidic, and temple traditions were also important in the Hebrew Bible, but they are subordinate to Sinai and Moses traditions. The traditions about Zion absorbed the Sinai traditions, but did not replace them. On the relationship between Sinai and Zion in biblical tradition, see Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*.

change to take place without rupturing the sense of tradition and the continuity of historic identity.⁹⁰

It is no surprise that these foundational biblical texts about Moses' ascent and revelation on Sinai were developed and expanded in later Jewish (and Christian) literature. Later writers also turned to the archetypal Sinai event, retelling it for a new generation to impart important truths and to legitimate new claims by linking them to Moses and the revelation on the sacred mountain. What Levenson writes about biblical post-Mosaic law is thus true for later Mosaic developments as well: Jewish authors and their communities in the Second Temple period sought to make sense of their historical circumstance by reflecting on their Torah-centered heritage and by legitimating their current interpretations of definitive truth through ascription to Moses' visionary experience on Sinai. Mosaic authority was increasingly invoked, as later traditions appropriated and re-presented the Sinai event for their own purposes. Other writers used the Mosaic typology of visionary ascent and revelation and applied it to other figures from Israel's past, in order to elevate these patriarchs as exalted, authoritative seers whose revelation rivaled that of Moses.

In the literature of the Mosaic strand of Judaism that came to predominate in the Second Temple period, Moses was frequently elevated above his biblical portrayal.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 18. See also Michael Fishbane, *The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1989; repr., 1992), 110.

⁹¹ I use "biblical" here because there is increasingly widespread consensus that the Torah was closed and considered authoritative well before the second century B.C.E. See S. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 175-77. On the increasing importance and idealization of Moses in Second Temple literature, see the following: Scott J. Hafemann "Moses in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha: A Survey," *JSP* 7 (1990): 79-104; Mack, "Under the Shadow of Moses," 310-18; Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (NovTSup 14; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 100-175; Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 10-16; J. Sanders, "When Sacred Canopies Collide," 121-36; Geza Vermès, "La figure de Moïse au tournant des deux testaments," in *Moïse: l'homme de l'alliance* (ed. H. Cazelles et al.; Tournai: Desclée, 1955), 63-92.

Moses' stature grows until in the Second Temple period he becomes the all-purpose authority figure in the predominant tradition of Judaism. In the second and first centuries before the Christian era,

This was likely due to the increasing importance of the authoritative law associated with him, which came to be called the Torah of Moses.⁹² In advanced Moses traditions, the narratives in the written Torah about Moses' ascent and revelation on Sinai were combined with other visionary texts, especially Isa 6, Ezek 1, and 1 Kgs 22; these became key texts in the development of Jewish apocalypticism and mysticism. Speculation on Moses' revelatory experience on Sinai, as well as on Isaiah's vision of the divine glory and throne and Ezekiel's vision of the heavenly throne-chariot, became important elements in Second Temple apocalyptic writings; these visionary accounts invited speculation because of the ambiguous nature of revelation described in them. Moses' visionary ascent of Sinai came to be recast and invested with increasingly apocalyptic and esoteric claims, as authors used Moses and Sinai as a vehicle to convey new understandings of transcendent truth. In many instances these visionary Moses traditions idealized and enhanced Moses as the source of transcendent revelation in order to reclaim Moses and Torah as authoritative for Judaism. These advanced Moses traditions often expanded upon the references to Moses as God from Exod 7:1 ("I have made you like God [נתתיך אלהים] to Pharaoh") and Exod 4:16 ("you shall serve as God [לאלהים] for him [i.e., Aaron]"); these texts became central to a "divine Moses" tradition, which envisioned Moses as a divine or angelic being after his mystical ascent of Sinai. As I will

Moses' importance increases dramatically, especially in Hellenistic Jewish writings. Mack sums up this development: "He (Moses) was assigned a growing list of roles as the encomia, biographies, and myths about him developed. But at the center of the cluster of characterizations attributed to him appears to be those roles which cast him as the author of very significant literature. He is everywhere the legislator, but also the philosopher and sage, the one who discovered writing and wrote the epic history of the creation of the world. Inspired as prophet, and the very incarnation of virtue itself, Moses comes to be the leader the king of his people." Mack, "Under the Shadow of Moses," 310.

⁹² See Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 175-77; Mack, "Under the Shadow of Moses," 310-18; Hindy Najman, "Torah of Moses: Pseudonymous Attribution in Second Temple Writings," in *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition* (ed. C. A. Evans; JSPSup 33; SSEJC 7; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 202-16; idem, *Seconding Sinai*, 10-16; J. Sanders, "When Sacred Canopies Collide," 121-36.

argue below, this exaltation of Moses was often in response to competing claims about other exalted visionary patriarchs, such as Enoch.

Elevated claims about Moses' visionary status in the Second Temple period are rooted in reflection upon his biblical portrayal. The biblical tradition was not the only source, however.⁹³ There was a wide range of sources for the writings of this period. Exalted assertions about Moses in Second Temple literature increasingly incorporated the categories, motifs, and vocabulary of the pluralistic Hellenistic world.⁹⁴ As descriptions about Moses and his revelation take on apocalyptic features, the background of such thought in Mesopotamian or other Near Eastern sources must also be acknowledged.⁹⁵ Although most of the apocalyptic and esoteric motifs ascribed to Moses are from the Jewish tradition, it is recognized that "the matrix of the Jewish apocalypses is not any single tradition but the Hellenistic milieu, where motifs from various traditions circulated freely."⁹⁶

We now turn to Second Temple Jewish writings that contain esoteric accounts of Moses' visionary mountain ascents and revelation. Many of these accounts reveal awareness of, and interactive dialogue with, non-Mosaic exalted visionary traditions.

⁹³ The biblical authors themselves often borrowed from Canaanite, Mesopotamian, or other ancient Near Eastern sources.

⁹⁴ On this see esp. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 19-42; David Lenz Tiede, *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker* (SBLDS 1; Missoula, Mont.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972), 101-105.

⁹⁵ On the Mesopotamian roots of apocalyptic thought, see esp. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic*; Richard J. Clifford, "The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Eastern Myth," in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* (3 vols.; ed. J. J. Collins; New York: Continuum, 1998), 1.3-39. For Enochic literature specifically, see especially VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*.

⁹⁶ Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 34.

2.2 Dead Sea Scrolls

The Qumran scrolls display a high regard for Moses. In the literature discovered at Qumran, Moses is the biblical figure referred to more than any other.⁹⁷ Moses had authoritative and superlative status in the scrolls as prophet and mediator of the law; his leadership was “for all generations” (1QM X, 2).⁹⁸ Moses’ significance lay in the fact that he was the one who ascended Sinai, where God revealed to him the law, in which “all is defined” (בה הכל מדוקדק; CD XVI, 1-2). In the texts preserved at Qumran, the laws of Moses were seen as foundational for belief and practice for all time; most of the narrative references to Moses in the scrolls have to do with his reception of the law or his delivery of the words of the law to Aaron and the Israelites.

Nearly all of the references to Moses in the Qumran scrolls link him directly to the laws associated with him; there is little biographical interest in Moses.⁹⁹ Moses’ ascents of Sinai and Nebo are mentioned in only a few texts.¹⁰⁰ Several references are made to Moses’ experience of theophany on Sinai (including 4Q377 1 II, 6-12; 4Q158 4 4-8 on Exod 24:6; 4Q374 2 II, 6-10 on Exod 34:29-35). In 1Q22 I, 1-4, Moses is told by God to ascend Mount Nebo in order to interpret (impv. פשוּר) the words of God’s law. Moses is in the presence of God on Sinai (4Q158 7-8, 5), but his ascent of the mountain

⁹⁷ James E. Bowley, “Moses in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Living in the Shadow of God’s Anointed,” in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation* (ed. Peter W. Flint with Tae Hun Kim; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, c2001), 159-60. Bowley notes that Moses is referred to by name nearly one hundred times in the Qumran texts.

⁹⁸ All translations of Qumran literature in this study are from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1998).

⁹⁹ See discussion in Bowley, “Moses in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 170-71.

¹⁰⁰ In the extant non-biblical texts at Qumran, the name Sinai is mentioned only five times, and Horeb only once. See George J. Brooke, “Moving Mountains: From Sinai to Jerusalem,” in *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. G. J. Brooke, H. Najman, and L. T. Stuckenbruck; TBN 12; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 75-76. Brooke notes that the focus is on Moses as mediator, not on the locus of revelation.

is not to the heavenly realm; God speaks to Moses “from the heavens” (מן השמים) (4Q158 7-8, 6). Echoing the claims of Num 12 and Deut 34, Moses is singled out in the scrolls as the one who spoke with God “face to face” (פניו אל פניו).¹⁰¹ Moses’ special visionary role is affirmed: he is the one “having the knowledge of the Most High and [seeing] the vision [of Shaddai]” and to whose voice attention is paid by “the assembly of Elyon” (4Q378 26, 1-4).

In the Qumran literature, God’s revelation to Moses was the contents of the law. But the law was not necessarily what is preserved in the Hebrew Bible: the Temple Scroll (1Q19-20), for example, presents itself as authoritative law, a direct revelation either to Moses, or to a “new” Moses.¹⁰² The existence of fifteen copies of *Jubilees*, a re-writing/expansion of Moses’ farewell discourse in Deuteronomy (1Q22), numerous Moses apocrypha and pseudepigrapha (e.g. 1Q29, 4Q375, 4Q376), as well as five works classified as Pseudo-Moses^{a-c} that are apocalyptic in nature (4Q385a, 4Q387a, 4Q388a, 4Q389, 4Q390), suggest that the Sinai revelation to Moses was understood in broader terms than is preserved in the traditional written Torah.¹⁰³ The revelatory content of the

¹⁰¹ E.g. 4Q368 1 2; 4Q377 1 II, 6; 4Q504 3 II, 17.

¹⁰² Moses is not actually named in the scroll. Cohen sees the reformulations of the law in *Jub.* and the Temple Scroll as challenges to the biblical Torah’s status. In his view, the Temple Scroll presents itself as a replacement to the traditional written Torah. See Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 175-77. So also Ben Zion Wacholder, “*Jubilees* as the Super Canon: Torah-Admonition versus Torah-Commandment,” in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge 1995* (ed. M. Bernstein, F. García Martínez, and J. Kampen; *STDJ* 23; Leiden, Brill, 1997), 195-211. Najman and VanderKam disagree. They maintain that such reworkings of the traditional Mosaic Torah provide an authoritative interpretive framework for it; they do not replace the written Torah but clarify it. Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 45-50; VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 12. Najman concludes, however, that these texts “on the one hand...told biblical stories in ways that resolved apparent inconsistencies or solved puzzles for their readers. On the other hand, they wove their own versions of law, temple ritual, calendrical system and covenant, along with the very words of already authoritative traditions, into a single seamless whole. Thus they claimed, for their interpretations of authoritative texts, the already established authority of the texts themselves.” Emphasis mine. Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 45. See also discussion in James C. VanderKam, “Authoritative Literature in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *DSD* 5 (1998): 382-402.

¹⁰³ On pseudepigrapha in the Dead Sea Scrolls, including Moses pseudepigrapha, see Moshe Bernstein, “Pseudepigraphy in the Qumran Scrolls: Categories and Functions,” in *Pseudepigraphic*

Sinai experience in some scrolls included disclosure about the final eschatological struggle. The Moses pseudepigrapha, like some strands of apocalyptic literature, divide history into time periods (jubilees, weeks of years, seventy years), and are presented as revelation to an unnamed person who is almost certainly Moses. The Qumran materials viewed the Sinai revelation as eschatological, portending the events of apostasy and judgment in the last days (1Q22 I, 1-12; 4Q387a; 4Q388a; 4Q390). While the law, commanded through Moses, expressed the covenant relationship and defined “the way of the Lord” for all subsequent ages (1QS VIII, 15), it was ultimately pertinent to and fulfilled in the “end times,” i.e., the time of the sectarian Community (called הִיחָד) described in some of the Qumran texts.¹⁰⁴ The revelation to Moses on Sinai also included things “which were never created before or afterwards” (אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִבְרָאוּ {ל} מֵעוֹלָם וְלָעַד) (4Q377 1 II, 12), a highly suggestive phrase indicating more than auditory revelation.

Several texts from Qumran have led to speculation that Moses’ ascent of Sinai was understood in mystical terms.¹⁰⁵ Two fragmentary texts, 4Q374 (4QDiscourse on the

Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Proceedings of the [Second] International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature, 12-14 January 1997 (ed. E. G. Chazon and M. E. Stone; *STDJ* 31; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1-26. On Moses pseudepigrapha at Qumran, including the relationship between 1Q22, 4Q375 and 4Q376, see John Strugnell, “Moses-Pseudepigrapha at Qumran: 4Q375, 4Q376, and Similar Works,” in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. L. Schiffman; Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, 1990), 221-56; Eibert Tigchelaar, “A Cave 4 Fragment of Divre Moshe (4QDM) and the Text of 1Q22 1:7-10 and Jubilees 1:9, 14,” *DSD* 12.3 (Leiden: Brill, 2005): 303-12.

¹⁰⁴ See, e.g. 4Q504 1-2 III, 2-18; cf. 1QS I, 1-20, esp. 3; 1Q22 I, 1-12. The relationship between the Community (הִיחָד) described in some of the scrolls and the site of Qumran, as well as this community’s relationship to the Essenes, is unclear and remains a matter of scholarly debate.

¹⁰⁵ Elliot Wolfson defines “mysticism” in the Qumran scrolls in the following way: “In my opinion, the word ‘mysticism’ should be used only when there is evidence for specific practices that lead to an experience of ontic transformation, i.e., becoming divine or angelic. Accordingly, it is inappropriate to apply the word ‘mystical’ to the unison or harmony of human and angel if there is no technique or praxis that facilitates the idealization of a human being into a divine or angelic being in the celestial abode.” Elliot R. Wolfson, “Mysticism and the Poetic-Liturgical Compositions from Qumran: A Response to Bilhah Nitzan,” *JQR* 85 (1994), 187. In this dissertation, however, I follow the broader interpretation of mysticism espoused by Bilhah Nitzan and Philip Alexander, that is, praxis which creates the experience of communion or union with the divine, e.g. communion between earthly and heavenly worshippers. It *can* involve ascent, angelification, or even apotheosis. Bilhah Nitzan, “Harmonic and Mystical Characteristics

Exodus/Conquest Tradition) and 4Q377 (4QApocryphon of Moses C) exalt Moses' status. The allusion to Exod 7:1 and the mention of a shining face that heals in 4Q374, as well as the reference to Moses as "anointed one" in 4Q377, have led some scholars to claim that these scrolls envisaged Moses' ascent of Sinai as involving transfiguration into an angelic, glorious being.¹⁰⁶ Other scholars have posited that the exalted one who has "a mighty throne in the congregation of the gods (אֱלִים)" in 4Q491c 1, 5 is Moses, or someone like Moses, who has ascended to heaven.

We will examine these three texts separately.

2.2.1 4Q374

4Q374 (4QDiscourse on the Exodus/Conquest Tradition) describes the Exodus and conquest. The work integrates the narrative of the written Torah with other material, but because so little of the text is extant, it is difficult to determine its point.¹⁰⁷ The text emphasizes the Israelites' fear as they look to the conquest, and highlights God's compassion for Israel. Moses is apparently being lifted up as a source of encouragement for his people. Fragment 2 alludes to Exod 7:1 and states: "he made him like a God over the powerful ones, and a cause of reeli[ng] (?) for Pharaoh"

in Poetic and Liturgical Writings from Qumran," *JQR* 85 (1994): 183; Philip S. Alexander, *Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 85-92.

¹⁰⁶ Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 42; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 136-48. See also his earlier article, "4Q374: A Discourse on the Sinai Tradition: The Deification of Moses and Early Christology" *DSD* 3 (1996): 236-52. Orlov confirms Fletcher-Louis' conclusions. Andrei A. Orlov, "Moses' Heavenly Counterpart in the *Book of Jubilees* and the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian," *Bib* 88 (2007): 167-68; idem, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, 268.

¹⁰⁷ Vermès writes that there are sixteen fragments of this writing, but only fragment 2 is "large enough to provide an intelligible account." Geza Vermès, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin, 1962; repr., New York: Penguin, 1997), 539. Vermès states that the fragment is paleographically dated to the last third of the first century B.C.E.

([ו]יתגנו לאלוהים על אדירים ומחיג[ה] לפרעה) (4Q374 2 II, 6).¹⁰⁸

The extant fragments of 4Q374 contain no description of Moses' ascent, although it is clear from the previous column that the setting of the passage is Sinai: "and he took possession [...] Sinai [...]..." (4Q374 2 I, 6-7). The narrative mentions a shining face that heals, but it is textually unclear whether the face is that of God or of Moses:

...melted, and their hearts trembled, and [th]eir entrails dissolved. [But] he had pity with [...] and when he let his face to shine for them for healing, they strengthened [their] hearts again, and at the same time [...] and no one knew you, and they melted and trembled, they staggered at the so[und] [...] for them [...] for salvation... (4Q374 2 II, 7-9)

This narrative is most likely an allusion to Moses' shining face in Exod 34:30, combined with divine warrior language ("melted," "trembled," "staggered"), used with reference either to Israel or to God's/Israel's enemies. The language here may allude to Ps 107:26-27, which also uses "melt" (מוג) and "stagger" (נוע). In biblical theophanies, God often appears as a king or divine warrior, surrounded by fire or radiant light.¹⁰⁹ Those who witness the theophany respond with dread,¹¹⁰ and afterwards God rules or saves.¹¹¹ Fragment 2 of 4Q374 contains the elements of the same literary pattern. The shining face must be that of Moses who has experienced theophany on Sinai: his luminous countenance is evidence of his exposure to the divine glory (כבוד). God is portrayed as the divine warrior before whom people melt, hearts tremble, and entrails dissolve. The text appears to contrast the terror on the part of the Canaanites (or the Israelites?) with the healing effect of God's glory manifest in Moses' shining face. The healing and strengthening of hearts is one of God's saving acts.

¹⁰⁸ Carol Newsom, "374. 4QDiscourse on the Exodus/Conquest Tradition," in *Qumran Cave 4.XIV: Parabiblical Texts, Part 2* (ed. M. Broshi et al.; DJD 19; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 99-110 (102).

¹⁰⁹ Deut 33:2; Ps 18:8; 104:2; Ezek 1:27-28; Hab 3:4.

¹¹⁰ Gen 15:12; 28:17; Exod 3:6; Job 42:5-6; Isa 6:5; Hab 3:16.

¹¹¹ Deut 33:5; Judg 5; Ps 18:16-19; 29:10; 68:19-20; Isa 35:4-6; Hab 3:13.

Another text from Qumran, 4Q504 (4QWords of the Luminaries), witnesses to the understanding that God's glory is reflected in Moses' face:

And [...] [...] You are in our midst, in the column of fire and the cloud [...] [...] your [hol]y [...] walks in front of us, and your glory is in [our] midst (וּכְבוֹדָהּ בְּתוֹכָנוּ) [...] [...] the face of Moses (פְּנֵי מֹשֶׁה), [your] serv[ant]... (4Q504 6 II, 10-12)

This fragmentary passage links Moses' face to the divine glory. God is lauded for his presence in Israel's midst, and God's glory (כְּבוֹד) is manifest in Moses' transformed (presumably radiant) countenance. Moses' face, then, becomes the locus of theophany.¹¹² Because of his access to God's glory on Sinai, Moses' face can be a holy place where God is revealed. Moses' transformed visage is, for Israel, an assurance of the divine presence.

It is likely that the same idea is also present in 4Q374. Moses' radiant face encourages, heals, and strengthens because it is a theophanic witness to the presence of God's glory in Israel's midst. The text must be a reference to Moses' luminous face in his descent from Sinai in Exod 34:29-35, which has been creatively expanded to express the positive effect this incident has on the Israelites.

It is apparent that 4Q374 sees intimate communion between God and Moses on Sinai, resulting in the transformation of the visionary's face, consistent with the biblical narrative. Moses is indeed exalted in this Qumran text, but some scholars have argued that the text elevates Moses even more dramatically. Fletcher-Louis contends that Moses' luminosity in 4Q474 indicates his divinization or angelification, and claims that *Moses* is the divine warrior of the text. Fletcher-Louis cites this passage as a witness to an understanding of Moses' divinization on Sinai.¹¹³ Luminosity is one of the traits of

¹¹² Cf. Exod 34:29-35.

¹¹³ Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 137-38. He writes, "The Qumran sectarians knew and evidently whole-heartedly approved of the tradition that Moses was a divine man and that, in particular,

angels in Second Temple Judaism.¹¹⁴ The luminosity of the righteous is a widespread motif in apocalyptic literature: to shine is to achieve the status of angels.¹¹⁵ But Moses' radiance in the scrolls, as in Exodus, is derived: it comes through proximity to the divine glory and is a reflection of it (see esp. 4Q504 6 II, 10-12). To claim that the Qumran texts witness to a belief in Moses' celestial status based on this fragmentary apocryphon is problematic. The extant text contains no ascent or heavenly enthronement language. Moses is likened to an angel (he is luminous), but it cannot be proved that he is here envisaged as deified. While Fletcher-Louis' conclusions are intriguing, it is far more likely that 4Q374 is explicating the Exodus narrative in which Moses experiences the divine glory (כבוד) and manifests it in his transformed face. Moses has communion with the divine on Sinai, but it is difficult to claim apotheosis here; Moses reflects God's glory, not his own. Although there is evidence of exalted humans in the scrolls,¹¹⁶ perhaps even to divinity in the case of the Davidic messiah,¹¹⁷ Moses' shining face in 4Q374 attests his exposure to the divine, rather than his own divinization. Moses is the one who is privileged to encounter God's radiant glory on Sinai, and his shining face is a theophanic witness to that glory.

upon his ascent up Mount Sinai, he was transfigured to an angelic and glorious form." Ibid., 136. This view is shared by Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, 268-69. Fletcher-Louis even gives 4Q374 the title "4QDeification of Moses." *All the Glory of Adam*, 529.

¹¹⁴ In 2 Bar. 51:10, e.g., the righteous "will be like the angels and equal to the stars; they will be changed into any shape which they wished, from beauty to loveliness, and from light to the splendor of glory." All translations of 2 Bar. in this dissertation are by Albertus F. J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch," *OTP* 1.638. Cf. Dan 10:6; 2 En. 19:1.

¹¹⁵ Dan 10:6; 12:3; 1 En. 39:7; 62:13-16; 104:2; 2 En. 22:9-10; 37:2. Cf. Judg 5:31; LAB 12:7.

¹¹⁶ E.g. 4Q491c. See below.

¹¹⁷ See discussion in John J. Collins, "Powers in Heaven: God, Gods, and Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J. J. Collins and R. Kugler; Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 19-23. In 11Q13, Melchizedek seems always to have been a heavenly being (אלהים). Some Qumran scrolls envision the priests as elevated possibly to angelic status: see, e.g., the blessing of the "sons of Zadok, the priests" in 1Q28b IV, 24-25: "May you be like an angel of the face in the holy residence for the glory of the God of the Hos[ts...]" It is not evident, however, that *Moses* was seen as a celestial being.

This text makes impressive assertions about Moses' status. Many statements about him serve to exalt his prophetic role. Moses is indeed the prophet *par excellence*: to him God spoke face to face (line 6); Moses is the "man of God" (line 10). But the apocryphon goes beyond the Hebrew Bible in its claim that Moses on Sinai "spoke as an angel from his mouth" (וכמלאך ידבר מפיהו). Indeed, the text asks, "for who was a messen[ger] like him, a man of the pious ones?" (כיא מי מבשר [ר] כמהוהו איש חסדים) (lines 11-12). Moses is sanctified on Sinai (בהקדשו) (line 12); he is even God's messiah (משיחו) (line 5).

These assertions about Moses express his singular identity as God's confidant and chosen mediator. Moses is lauded in superlative terms, and some of the terminology invites conjecture. Is a more transcendent identity being claimed for Moses on Sinai in this narrative? Some scholars have argued that the references to Moses as messiah, to his speaking as an angel, and to his standing position reveal that Moses is envisaged in the text as suprahuman, i.e., angelomorphic and divine.¹¹⁸ But although the exaltation of Moses in 4Q377 expands upon the Hebrew Bible, a claim of apotheosis based on this text is far from certain. The fragment presents Moses as the incomparable prophet and

¹¹⁸ Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 141-48; also more recently, Jan Willem van Henten, "Moses as Heavenly Messenger in Assumptio Mosis 10:2 and Qumran Passages," *JJS* 54 (2003): 216-27 (226-27). Fletcher-Louis claims that Moses' standing posture is that of a heavenly, not earthly, being. He cites Samaritan and rabbinic literature in which standing indicates celestial status, especially *Memar Marqah* 4:12 (2nd-4th cent. C.E.) with its reference to Moses as "the (immutable) Standing One." Fletcher-Louis holds that Moses' standing in 4Q377 denotes his participation in divine or angelic nature; he notes a similar idea in Philo's *Dreams* 2.221-229. It is anachronistic, however, to read later Samaritan and rabbinic understandings into the Qumran scrolls and Philo. While it is true that in Exodus God is portrayed as standing (e.g. Exod 34:5; Num 12:5), in Deut 5:5 Moses explains that at Sinai "I was standing (עמד) between the Lord and you to declare to you the words of the Lord." Moses' standing is here linked to his mediatorial prophetic function. It is in fact Moses' interpretive and teaching function that is highlighted in 4Q377's reference to his "standing": "on earth he stood on the mountain to teach us that there is no God apart from him, and no Rock like him" (line 8). This is entirely consistent with the understanding of Moses as God's agent of communication and interpretation in the scrolls (cf. 1QS VIII, 15; CD V, 21-VI, 1; 1Q22 II, 8-9). It seems unnecessary to press Moses' standing posture as designating divinity, particularly since there is an obvious emphasis on Moses' prophetic role in 4Q377. Cf. Moses' standing in the presence of God in 4Q158 7-8 5, a reference to Exod 20.

visionary, emphasizing Moses' mediatorial function on Sinai. Moses as "a man of the pious ones" echoes Sir 44-45, in which Moses is praised as one of many "pious men" (אנשי חסד) of Israel's past (44:1; 44:23). The reference in line 11 to the cloud covering Moses and God sanctifying him may be a reshaping of Exod 24:14-18, anticipating later rabbinic understanding that the cloud covered Moses for six days in order to purify him; such sanctification was necessary preparation to receive the law.¹¹⁹ 4Q377 does not appear to exalt Moses as divine man, but as prophet and mediator of God's law; Moses' prophetic teaching function is in fact emphasized (line 8). Lines 10-12 of 4Q377 go on to describe Moses' role as agent of God's communication. In his prophetic speaking, Moses plays the role of an angel/messenger.¹²⁰

It is debated whether Moses is receiving the technical title "messiah" in this text.¹²¹ This designation is never used with reference to Moses in the traditional written Torah. About 4Q377, Bowley concludes:

But surely in the mind of the scroll's author and likely for all the sectaries, no one was more worthy of the designation messiah, so that even without biblical precedent Moses is posthumously anointed and granted the title of one sanctified to God for special service. The designation messiah is important in other Dead Sea Scroll texts for other individuals, including eschatological figures, though not necessarily in the same manner attested later in Christianity or Judaism. Here, in reference to Moses, we have not an eschatological use of the term but rather an indication of the special status and significance of Moses.¹²²

¹¹⁹ See Judah Goldin, trans., *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* (Yale Judaica Series 10; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 3.

¹²⁰ Brooke writes, "Functional similarity should not slip into ontological sameness." Brooke, "Moving Mountains: From Sinai to Jerusalem," 87, n. 66. On Moses playing the role of an angel in this text, see Hindy Najman, "Angels at Sinai: Exegesis, Theology, and Interpretive Authority," *DSD* 7 (2000): 319. Puech writes that Moses is compared with an angel, but the designations have to do with his human status. Émile Puech, "Le fragment 2 de 4Q377, *Pentateuque Apocryphe B*: L'exaltation de Moïse," *RevQ* 21 (2003-2004): 469-75.

¹²¹ See the discussion in Paul E. Hughes, "Moses' Birth Story: A Biblical Matrix for Prophetic Messianism," in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. C. A. Evans and P. W. Flint; Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 13. Hughes sums up various scholarly positions on this designation of messiah for Moses. Abegg claims that the force of the word is descriptive rather than a title. Martin G. Abegg, Jr., "The Messiah at Qumran: Are We Still Seeing Double?" *DSD* 2 (1995): 140-41.

¹²² Bowley, 175-76.

Bowley's argument is persuasive, especially in light of the fact that 4Q377 contains the only instance of Moses receiving the designation of messiah in the literature of Qumran. Elsewhere in the scrolls, prophets are called "anointed ones" (1QM XI, 7; CD-A II, 12). The reference to Moses as "anointed one" in 4Q377, while suggestive, appears to be a means to elevate Moses' prophetic significance; the lines that follow this designation provide a description of Moses' prophetic role. Because Moses, the prophet ("man of God") has entered the cloud of God's presence on Sinai and has received revelation, he is to be obeyed. The designation of messiah and angel-like speaking are a way of invoking Mosaic authority: as visionary and mediator on Sinai, Moses is without equal among humans. For this reason, "Cursed is the man who does not persevere and keep and carry [out] all the la[ws of Y]HWH by the mouth of Moses his anointed one" (lines 4-5).

2.2.3 4Q491c

Wayne Meeks, who has written much on exalted Moses traditions, states, "the *ascension* traditions play no part in published Qumran texts."¹²³ Meeks does not acknowledge ascent to heaven traditions about Moses in the scrolls. Yet ascent to heaven traditions have been identified in the Qumran literature.¹²⁴ Fragment 1 of 4Q491c (=4Q471b) speaks of one of one who has "a mighty throne (כסא עוז) in the congregation of the gods (אלים)," besides whom "no one is exalted," who resides "in the heavens" and is "counted

¹²³ Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 366, n. 2. Emphasis in original.

¹²⁴ See most recently P. Alexander, *Mystical Texts: Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts*, esp. 85-92. Also James R. Davila, "Heavenly Ascents in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (2 vols.; ed. P. W. Flint and J. C. VanderKam; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 2.461-85; Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Heavenly Ascent or Incarnational Presence? A Revisionist Reading of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*," (*SBLSP* 37.1; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 367-99.

among the gods” (lines 4-7), although there is no description of or terminology of ascent.

In the parallel text, this exalted one asks, “Who is like me among the gods?”

(מי כמוני באלים) (4Q471b 1-3 5). The first-person speaker of this text seems to be a

teacher or expert in law (“there is no teaching comparable [to my teaching...],” lines 9-

10). This suggests Moses or one who is like Moses, such as the Teacher of

Righteousness or “the teacher at the end of the days” (CD 6 11), the eschatological high

priest.¹²⁵ Morton Smith has argued that this is an exalted human who ascends and is

deified, likely the Teacher of Righteousness, not Moses.¹²⁶ The identity of this

mysterious figure remains uncertain. Esther Chazon writes, “The text leaves little doubt

about the speaker’s elevation to angelic status.” 4Q491 witnesses to a belief that some

humans can be exalted to divine status and ascend to a throne in heaven.¹²⁷ If not Moses,

it is a Moses-like figure who is so elevated.

¹²⁵ See John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 147-49. Collins writes that “Moses rather than David seems to provide the best analogue for heavenly enthronement,” 148.

¹²⁶ Morton Smith, “Ascent to the Heavens and Deification in 4QM^a,” in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin* (ed. L. H. Schiffman; JSPSup 8/ASOR Monographs 2; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990), 181-99. Cf. the revised version of his article in “Two Ascended to Heaven—Jesus and the Author of 4Q491,” in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 290-301. See also Martin G. Abegg, Jr., “Who Ascended to Heaven? 4Q491, 4Q427, and the Teacher of Righteousness,” in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. C. A. Evans and P. W. Flint; Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 61-73, and discussion in Collins, “Powers in Heaven,” 25-26.

¹²⁷ Esther G. Chazon, “Human and Angelic Prayer in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls; Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 19-23 January 2000* (ed. E. Chazon; STDJ 48; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 45. Abegg disagrees: “Such an identification of the implied speaker does not necessarily mean that the historical Teacher of Righteousness actually claimed to have ascended to heaven and taken his place among the gods. The Teacher of Righteousness might have made such a claim, but it is also possible that such a claim was made *on behalf of* the Teacher of Righteousness by the author(s) of the texts...” Abegg, “Who Ascended to Heaven?,” 72. Emphasis in original.

It has been well established that some Qumran texts display a belief in communing with the angels. Scholarship on the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* has elucidated the understanding of the community described, and certainly their priests, as functioning analogically to the priestly angels who officiate in the heavenly temple. The thirteen songs, meant to be recited on thirteen sabbaths, contain descriptions of the heavenly temple, divine throne, and angelic priesthood. Newsom has suggested that the

2.2.4 Enoch and Moses in the Scrolls

The early Enochic tradition was preserved in the literature discovered at Qumran.¹²⁸

Among the scrolls were fragments of early Enochic literature, as well as of multiple copies of *Jubilees*. It is curious that the texts preserved at Qumran include both pro-Moses/pro-Torah texts and early Enochic writings, which challenge Mosaic primacy.

But while Enochic texts are among those discovered, and although these texts are even quoted in other scrolls, the overwhelming importance of Moses in the Qumran literature points to the primacy of Moses and Mosaic tradition. Despite the appreciation of Enochic traditions, and the fact that ascent motifs are present in a few texts, there do not appear to be developed, explicit accounts of Moses' ascent to heaven in the scrolls.

Moses is, however, the recipient of esoteric revelation on Sinai, including speculative secrets that evoke Enochic claims. Although Enoch and Enochic-style revelation is affirmed by some texts, Moses is undeniably the dominant figure of the scrolls, and the

purpose of the sabbath songs was communal mysticism. Carol A. Newsom, *Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (HSS 27: Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 19. See also Devorah Dimant, "Men as Angels: The Self-Image of the Qumran Community," in *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East* (ed. A. Berlin; Studies and Texts in Jewish History and Culture; Bethesda, Md.: University Press of Maryland, 1996), 93-103. Fletcher-Louis, however, sees in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* attestation that certain humans have angelic identity. Fletcher-Louis, "Heavenly Ascent or Incarnational Presence?," 367-99. This has been refuted by James R. Davila in his *Liturgical Works* (ed. M. Abegg and P. W. Flint; ECDSS 6; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 102. Yet despite the sense of unity with the angels, and the view of the liturgy as parallel to the celestial worship of God in the heavenly temple, it cannot be established conclusively that the scrolls envisaged *Moses* as one who is angelomorphic and who has ascended to heaven and the divine throne.

¹²⁸ On Enochic writings at Qumran, see Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); the collected articles in Gabriele Boccaccini, ed., *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Michael E. Stone, "The Axis of History at Qumran," in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. E. Chazon and M. E. Stone; *STDJ* 31; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 133-49. Stone notes that the presence of Enochic writings at Qumran, "some in an astounding number of copies, and the fact that they were quoted in the sectarian writings proper, shows how important they were to the sect." *Ibid.*, 145. See also George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 65; VanderKam, *Enoch: A Man for All Generations*, 121-29.

sheer number of references to him (nearly one hundred) witnesses to his exalted position. In the scrolls, Moses is the visionary patriarch *par excellence*.

2.2.5 Summary

The literature preserved at Qumran affirms Moses' visionary and mediatorial role on Sinai. Some texts contain escalations of claims about Moses' revelatory experience in the written Torah. This is especially evident in the existence of *Jubilees* and other Moses apocrypha and pseudepigrapha at Qumran. Bowley writes, "Though citations and references to *Jubilees* in other Dead Sea Scrolls are lacking introductory formulae that indicate its Mosaic authorship (CD 10:7-10, 16:2-3; 4Q228 1 i), it seems certain that the revelatory claims of *Jubilees* and even its Mosaic origins were accepted by the sect" that preserved the scrolls.¹²⁹ In the texts we have cited and examined, the revelation to Moses on Sinai includes some increasingly esoteric elements, including disclosure of secret things and eschatological events. Moses' transformed face is a theophanic witness to God's presence on Sinai; Moses' unique prophetic status is enhanced by claims that he is like an angel and God's messiah. The texts we have considered are fragmentary and it is difficult to confirm how closely they follow the *typos* of mountain visionary ascent in the Hebrew Bible, or if they present the Sinai experience as an ascent to heaven. While Enochic texts and Enoch-like ascent traditions are present in the scrolls, the extant literature of Qumran shows little or no interest in developing the ascent to heaven motif with respect to Moses. Moses is exalted as visionary, but the overwhelming focus is on the law mediated by him. Several Qumran texts, however, exhibit an attempt to recreate the Mosaic encounter of God on Sinai in order to highlight Moses' significance. Moses

¹²⁹ Bowley, 176.

enjoyed authoritative and superlative status in the Qumran literature in that he witnessed God's glory and received revelation of the law and the end times on Sinai. Although there is no clear evidence of Moses ascending from Sinai to heaven in the scrolls, there is attestation of belief that some humans can be exalted to angelic status, reckoned among the gods, and enthroned in heaven.

2.3 Philo of Alexandria

Moses was the primary hero for Philo of Alexandria.¹³⁰ Philo was a Hellenistic Jew and his debt to Greek philosophical thinking has been well established. In Philo's writings, Moses is presented as the superlative visionary and revealer of the Torah; he is also the ideal Jew and king, as well as archetypal sage (σοφός). Philo's portrayal of Moses is rooted in the biblical text, but his interpretation of Moses is through the forms and categories of Hellenistic philosophy.

For Philo, the Hebrew Bible—above all, the Septuagint version of the Five Books of Moses—was the word of God, but his understanding of it was Greek. In his work as an exegete of scripture, Philo sought to establish both the literal and the deeper allegorical meaning of the text. Moses was significant in that he was the one through whom the Logos of God communicated the divine word, which Moses then wrote down; Moses in fact “functioned as the divine Logos” when he ascended Sinai to receive that word.¹³¹

¹³⁰ On Moses in Philo, see esp. Bernard Botte, “La vie de Moïse par Philon,” in *Moïse: l'homme de l'alliance* (ed. H. Cazelles et al.; Tournai: Desclée, 1955), 55-62.

¹³¹ Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 217. Nickelsburg defines Philo's Platonic understanding of *Logos*: “God is being itself, the unknowable, the one who exists. *Logos* is a multivalent term that denotes the complex ways in which God extends himself in order to form matter and to communicate and interact with the sensible, empirical world. *Logos* is the mind of the Creator in the act of creation, and it is the means by which God speaks through the mouth of Moses, in particular, and acts

But in Philo's thought, what Moses *saw* on Sinai was of more importance than the text he wrote down. In the words of Burton Mack, "Even Moses' words, though born of that vision and designed to lead to that vision, were no substitute for the vision itself. Knowing this, however, Moses crafted the text with care, leaving clues that pointed to the vision of the logos behind and beyond the text."¹³² Philo sought to explicate the deeper, allegorical meaning of the text, but he wanted his readers not just to understand the divine word, rather to experience or "see" it, as Moses did. And what is it that Moses "saw" on Sinai? Philo often refers to the "thick darkness" (γνόφος) into which Moses entered (cf. Exod 20:21).¹³³ Moses entered "into the darkness where God was, that is into the unseen, invisible, incorporeal and archetypal essence of existing things, perceiving things invisible to mortal nature" (*Mos.* 1.158).¹³⁴ The "thick darkness" was "the unapproachable and formless conceptions about Being (τὸ ὄν)" (*Post.* 14; cf. *Conf.* 95-97). On Sinai, Moses had an esoteric vision, and Moses' authority as prophet, priest, and king is grounded in that vision. Having perceived the Logos, which is the image of God ("Being"- τὸ ὄν), as well as divine mysteries usually invisible to humans, Moses is the model (παράδειγμα) for those who aspire to such a vision themselves.¹³⁵ Philo presents

by means of angels and archangels. Aspects of this world have their counterparts in the world of forms, which is the lowest extension of the *Logos*." *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 216. See also Erwin W. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus* (2nd ed.; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1962), 100-110.

¹³² Burton L. Mack, "Moses on the Mountaintop: A Philonic View," in *The School of Moses: Studies in Philo and Hellenistic Religion in Memory of Horst R. Moehring* (ed. J. P. Kenney; Brown Judaic Studies: Studia Philonica Monographs 1, 304; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 24. This view is contrary to that of Botte, who writes, "Ce qui intéresse Philon avant tout, c'est ce qu'il a dit et écrit, la parole sacrée elle-même." Botte, "La vie de Moïse par Philon," 56.

¹³³ *Post.* 14; *Gig.* 54; *Mut.* 7; *Somn.* 1.186-188; *Mos.* 1.158.

¹³⁴ Translations of Philo in this dissertation are by F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, *Philo of Alexandria* (10 vols. + 2 supp. vols.; Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, 1928; repr., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949-1956). Vols. 6-10 are by Colson alone.

¹³⁵ "And, like a well-executed painting, openly presenting himself and his life, he set up an altogether beautiful and God-formed work as an example (παράδειγμα) for those who are willing to

Moses as the premier example of one who is able to transcend mundane human existence and experience the divine, achieved after ascetic preparation.¹³⁶ Moses is, indeed, the ideal Hellenistic “divine man” (θεῖος ἀνὴρ) (*Virt.* 177).¹³⁷

It is apparent that Philo has a mystical understanding of Moses’ visionary ascent of Sinai.¹³⁸ In Philo’s interpretation, when Moses entered the thick darkness on Sinai and remained (“abode”) there, he became an initiate (μύστος) of divine secrets.¹³⁹ But Moses did not just have a vision of the Logos and learn about heavenly mysteries: he became “like a monad” and was “changed into the divine” on the mountain (*QE* 2.29). For Philo, Moses’ visionary ascent of Sinai is a mystical experience of enlightenment and transformation into the divine. Moses is virtually deified on Sinai.¹⁴⁰ Building upon Exod 7:1, Philo portrays Moses’ ascent of Sinai as his heavenly enthronement; Moses was named “god and king” (θεὸς καὶ βασιλεύς) of the whole nation (*Mos.* 1.155-58).¹⁴¹ The divinized Moses, the ideal king, becomes a kind of intermediary between God and humanity: he is God’s partner (κοινωνός) who shares in God’s possessions (*Mos.* 1.155).

imitate it.” *Mos.* 1.158. For Philo, no one can see God directly, but Moses came closer than anyone else in that he was able to see the “image of Being” (εἰκὼν τοῦ ὄντος), which is the Logos. See *Conf.* 95-97.

¹³⁶ *Mos.* 2.68. Josephus also calls Moses a θεῖος ἀνὴρ. *Ant.* 3.180.

¹³⁷ On Moses as θεῖος ἀνὴρ, see esp. Tiede, *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker*, 101-37. See also Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 104-105.

¹³⁸ Erwin W. Goodenough was the first scholar to examine Philo’s mystical interpretation. Goodenough, *By Light, Light: The Mystical Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935; repr., Amsterdam: Philo, 1969), esp. 134-60.

¹³⁹ *Gig.* 54.

¹⁴⁰ See esp. *Mos.* 1.155-158, *QE* 2.29, *Conf.* 95-97. On Moses’ divinization in Philo, see esp. Goodenough, *By Light, Light*, 223-34; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 60-63; Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 103-106; Tiede, *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker*, 101-27, esp. 123-26. Tiede, however, sees Moses’ divine status as resting on his rank as *sophos* sharing the attributes of God and playing the *role* of God to the fool. *Ibid.*, 123. Tiede does not see actual divinization here.

¹⁴¹ Meeks has shown that Philo combined Hellenistic philosophical thought concerning kingship with existing midrashic understandings of the Sinai ascent as a mystical ascent to the heavenly realm. Meeks, “Moses as God and King,” 355-59; *idem*, *The Prophet-King*, 111-24. On Moses as the ideal Hellenistic king, see Goodenough, *By Light, Light*, 181-87.

Philo's mystical interpretation of Moses' mountain ascents is evident in his retelling of the biblical accounts. The ascent of Exod 24, with its three stages or stations along the way, is presented as an allegory on the soul's three-stage path to heaven (*QE* 2.29). The fact that Moses alone is called up to God's presence is described in terms of divinization: "This signifies that a holy soul is divinized by ascending not to the air or to the ether or to heaven (which is) higher than all but to (a region) above the heavens. And beyond the world there is no place but God."¹⁴² Philo sees Moses' "end" on Nebo (Deut 34) as a heavenly ascent parallel to that of Enoch (*QG* 1.86), a translation into immortality (*Mos.* 2.288-292).¹⁴³ This explains why no one knows the place of Moses' grave (Deut 34:6).

Wayne Meeks contends that Moses' ascents in Philo also function as eschatological anticipation:

To Philo's conception of Moses' Sinai ascent can be applied very precisely Bousset's observation about mystical ecstasy: "the ecstasy is nothing else but an anticipation of the heavenly ascent of the soul after the death of the man."¹⁴⁴ The mystic ascent is a kind of "realized eschatology"; the final ascension is a projection and fulfillment of the goal of the mystic ascent.¹⁴⁵

In Philo's view, Moses' final ascent to heaven at Nebo has eschatological import in that it prefigures the ascent of all sages who seek to emulate the patriarch.

Philo's interpretation of Moses' visionary ascents, with his use of the language of transformation and divinization, is a significant expansion of the traditional canonical foundation. Philo ascribes to Moses ascents to heaven that in the Hebrew Bible are

¹⁴² *QE* 2.29.

¹⁴³ See Peder Borgen, "Heavenly Ascent in Philo: An Examination of Selected Passages," in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth and C. A. Evans; JSPSup 14; Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 2; Sheffield: JSOT Press, c1993), 250-51.

¹⁴⁴ Wilhelm Bousset, *Die Himmelsreise der Seele* (AR 4, 1901; repr., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960), 5. Footnote in Meeks' text.

¹⁴⁵ Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 125.

claimed for Enoch and Elijah. But Philo also appears to have been aware of other traditions of patriarchal heavenly ascent and enthronement, such as are found in the early Enochic literature, the *Testament of Levi*, and the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian. Philo's writings, in fact, evidence a polemic against claims of an exalted Enoch. Philo denigrated Enoch's status and attributed to Moses the exalted qualities of Enoch.¹⁴⁶ Alexander demonstrates Philo's depiction of Enoch as an example of repentance: Enoch is one who moved from vice to virtue in life, unlike Moses who is the ideal "divine man."¹⁴⁷ Following an existing midrashic tradition, Philo sees Moses' ascent of Sinai as an ascent to the heavenly realm, thus granting Moses an ascent *à la* Enoch. In ascribing such exalted features to Moses, Philo may be presenting interpretations about Moses that have become traditional in his Hellenistic Jewish environment.¹⁴⁸ This enhancement of Moses' profile was a means of asserting the superiority of Moses' person and text over against competing Jewish, as well as Greek, claims.¹⁴⁹

Two other Philonic assertions about Moses are noteworthy for later Mosaic developments. In *Sacr.* 8, the phrase "he sent him as a loan to the earthly sphere" implies the pre-existence of Moses, suggesting that Moses' nature is unchanging because he is divine. According to *Somn.* 1.142, Israel asked for angelic mediation at Sinai, but God spoke to the people directly. Philo rejects the notion that revelation from God had to be mediated by angels. (This may reflect a polemic against Enochic claims).

¹⁴⁶ *Abr.* 47. See esp. Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God," 108-10; also Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 51-70. Cf. *2 Bar.* 59:5-12 where esoteric revelation associated with Enoch is transferred to Moses.

¹⁴⁷ *QG* 1.82-84. See Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God," 108. Enoch is also "an example of repentance" to all generations in *Sir* 44:16.

¹⁴⁸ See Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 124. Cf. also the similar claims about Moses in the Hellenistic Jewish drama, the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian. See 2.4.2 below.

¹⁴⁹ Philo saw the Mosaic laws as superior to those of any other nation (*Mos.* 2.12); they are in fact the perfect copy of the laws of nature. See extended discussion in Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 70-107.

In summary, Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo in Philo were occasions not only of divine revelation but also transformation into the divine. What was important for Philo was not so much the revelation of the text that Moses wrote down, but Moses' vision of the Logos and entrance into the presence of God. Moses in fact functioned as the Logos when he ascended Sinai to receive the law. Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo were mystical experiences. Philo's enhancement of the figure of Moses *vis-à-vis* the traditional biblical account was partly due to dialogue with rival patriarch traditions, particularly those concerning Enoch. The purpose of this enhancement of Moses was to solidify Moses' authority and to portray him as the archetypal sage and mystic. Although rooted in the biblical text, Philo's re-presentations of Moses' visionary ascents reflect his own Hellenistic philosophical thinking.

2.4 Pseudepigrapha

Some pseudepigraphic writings expand upon the Torah narratives and interpret Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo in increasingly mystical ways. Although Moses was not everywhere the visionary seer of heavenly secrets, in some works the revelatory content of Moses' ascents includes esoteric and apocalyptic elements that elevate Moses' visionary status beyond that of the traditional written Torah. Such accounts reveal a desire to strengthen Mosaic authority and reverence for new historical settings.

Already with the *Exagoge* and *Jubilees* (pre-dating Philo and the sectarian literature at Qumran) there are esoteric and apocalyptic elements associated with Moses' ascent of Sinai and revelation. In *Jubilees*, *LAB*, *4 Ezra*, and *2 Baruch*, we begin to see Moses portrayed, to varying degrees, as the recipient of speculative secrets, including the

mysteries of heaven, the cosmos, protology, and eschatology. In this literature, God's revelation to Moses on Sinai and/or Nebo becomes a means of reinforcing Mosaic authority as well as a vehicle to legitimize new claims of transcendent truth. It is significant that all of these pro-Mosaic pseudepigraphic accounts contain evidence of dialogue with alternative exalted seer traditions. Moses' visionary ascents in these texts are often strongly reminiscent of Enochic claims: Enochic characteristic elements have been transferred to Moses. The portrayal of Moses and the content of his revelation function as a means to address resistance to Moses-centered Judaism.¹⁵⁰

2.4.1 *Jubilees*

The book of *Jubilees* presents itself as God's revelation to Moses on Sinai.¹⁵¹ The text rewrites the Torah from Gen 1 through Exod 24.¹⁵² Although Moses does not ascend to heaven in *Jubilees*, he is the chosen visionary to whom divine secrets are revealed. The apocalyptic features and motifs of *Jubilees* make it an important source for any investigation of esoteric revelatory claims about Moses. *Jubilees* sees itself as "revealed literature": it is transcendent knowledge disclosed to the venerable patriarch, Moses. The

¹⁵⁰ Cf. the observation of Tiede; "The figure of Moses was one of the most important propaganda instruments that Jews of the Hellenistic period appropriated for their competition with non-Jewish schools and cults, as well as inter-Jewish sectarian disputes." *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker*, 101. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵¹ On the dating and provenance of *Jubilees*, see Michael Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology, and Theology* (JSJSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 35-46; James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 17-22; O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," *OTP* 2.43-45.

¹⁵² On the genre of Rewritten Bible, see Philip S. Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SSF* (ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 99-121. Cohen sees *Jubilees* as challenging the written Torah's status: S. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 175-77. Najman and VanderKam, et al., claim that *Jubilees* clarifies and "accompanies" the written Torah, and is not intended to displace it. Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 45-50; VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 12. On the purpose of texts that rewrite the Bible, Najman writes, "In recent scholarship there is a general consensus among scholars who work on Second Temple literature that the essential function of Rewritten Bible is interpretive." *Seconding Sinai*, 43.

work contains features characteristic of apocalyptic literature, including angelic disclosure and mediation, periodization of history and historical review, a concern for protology, and the motif of revelation by means of a heavenly book.

The setting of *Jubilees* is Moses' forty days on Sinai. The text opens with God's command to Moses to "come up to me on the mountain" (*Jub.* 1:1; cf. Exod 24:12); the entire narrative is set within the context of the Sinai revelation. Moses ascends Sinai, where he encounters the glory of the Lord like a blazing fire, concealed by cloud (1:2-3). The prologue states that God showed Moses "what (had happened) beforehand as well as what was to come. He related to him the divisions of all the times—both of the law and of the testimony" (1.4b).¹⁵³

The book of *Jubilees* sets forth two forms of revelation to Moses on Sinai: direct speech by God, and divine revelation disclosed by an angel. There is direct dialogue between Moses and God in the beginning of the book (1:1b, 5b-18), but then God commands an angel of the presence (lit. "face") to dictate the rest of the book/revelation (*Jub.* 2-50) from inscribed heavenly tablets.¹⁵⁴ Moses is the scribe (*amanuensis*) who writes down exactly what he hears. The entire book, then, presents itself as divine revelation, most of which is not given directly by God to Moses but is disclosed through God's agent, the angel of the presence. The heavenly tablets purportedly contain the history of the world from creation through the building of the temple in Jerusalem, which is, in the author's view, a new creation "when the heavens, the earth, and all of their

¹⁵³ The translation of *Jubilees* is from VanderKam's critical edition: James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (2 vols.; CSCO 510-511; *Scriptores Aethiopic* 87-88; Leuven: Peeters, 1989).

¹⁵⁴ On the angel of the presence in *Jubilees*, see James C. VanderKam, "The Angel of the Presence in the Book of Jubilees," *DSD* 7 (2000): 378-93.

creatures will be renewed like the powers of the sky and like all the creatures of the earth” (1:29). The book of *Jubilees* claims to be the very words inscribed on the tablets.

One noteworthy feature of *Jubilees* is that it reformulates laws and places them prior to the Sinai event. Some of the laws of the written Torah are described as having originated in the time of the patriarchs; others were preserved on the heavenly tablets but not revealed until Sinai. By placing the laws before Sinai, the author emphasizes their authority by stressing their antiquity. God’s law is eternal, but it was not completely revealed until Moses received it on the mountain (*Jub.* 33:16).¹⁵⁵ The implication is that the laws were in existence from the time of creation. The revelation to Moses included the written Torah (“the first law” - *Jub.* 6:22), which the author has expanded with additional narrative, as well as the “testimony” (1:1, 26, 29; 2:24, et al.), the author’s own creation, partially based on other sources. Moses is thus the recipient not only of the written Torah, but also of additional revelation (the author’s supplement) on Sinai. Both the law and the testimony are portrayed as ancient, authoritative, and eternally valid because they are preserved on the heavenly tablets, the contents of which are dictated to Moses on the mountain.

According to *Jubilees*, Moses’ ascent of Sinai is not to heaven, but on the mountain heavenly secrets about human history, creation, the calendar, the law, and the testimony, written on the two celestial tablets, are disclosed to Moses by the angel of the presence. Moses does not “see” the celestial world on Sinai, but is connected to the celestial world through the angel of the presence, who is the mediating agent linking the

¹⁵⁵ “For the statute, the punishment, and the law had not been completely revealed to all but (only) in your time as a law of its particular time and as an eternal law for the history of eternity” (33:16).

heavenly and the earthly realms.¹⁵⁶ Through angelic dictation (1:27-29), Moses is the privileged patriarch who has access to speculative knowledge deposited in heaven; Moses then mediates this revelation to the people of Israel.¹⁵⁷ By presenting this revelation to Moses as originating from a heavenly written source, the author asserts not only the eternal significance of the Torah and covenant, but also his own work's authority and legitimacy. Both are divinely ordained.

An important feature of *Jubilees* for the purposes of this study is its appropriation of other exalted patriarch traditions. The book of *Jubilees* knows of written Enochic and Noachic traditions¹⁵⁸ and demonstrates awareness of extra-biblical traditions about Levi, Abraham, and Jacob as well.¹⁵⁹ While affirming revelation to other patriarchal figures, especially Enoch, *Jubilees* asserts Mosaic authority and ascribes total knowledge of ancient traditions to Moses' revelation on Sinai. *Jubilees* displays dialogue with Enochic traditions, particularly in his use of the heavenly tablet motif.¹⁶⁰ VanderKam notes that "the author may well have derived his teachings about the heavenly tablets from Enochic literature."¹⁶¹ Michael Segal goes further, arguing for direct literary dependence on

¹⁵⁶ See Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 62. The functions of the tablets in *Jubilees*, including innovations by the book's author, are identified by Florentino García Martínez, "The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees," in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (ed. M. Albani, J. Frey, and A. Lange; TSAJ 65; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 243-60; trans. from Spanish: "Las Tablas Celestes en el Libro de los Jubileos," *Palabry y Vida: Homenaje a José Alonso Díaz en su 70 cumpleaños* (ed. A. Vargas Machuca and G. Ruiz; Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, Series 1, Estudios 58; Madrid: Ediciones Universidad de Comillas, 1984), 333-49.

¹⁵⁷ In *Jubilees*, Moses is not the only patriarch to receive revelation in the form of heavenly tablets: Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Levi, and Amram do as well.

¹⁵⁸ 4:15-26; 5:1-11; 7:21-27; 10:1-14 (esp. v. 13). See discussion in VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 137-38.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *Aram. Levi* 57; *Apoc. Ab.* 1-8; *T. Jud.* See VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 137-39.

¹⁶⁰ On the motif and its functions, see García Martínez, "The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees," 243-60.

¹⁶¹ VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 89-90. Cf. *1 En.* 81:2; 93:2; 103:2; 106:19. VanderKam notes the general agreement among scholars that the author of *Jub.* knew of Enochic lore and refers to the *Astronomical Book* (*1 En.* 72-82), the *Book of the Watchers* (*1 En.* 1-36), the *Book of Dreams* (*1 En.* 83-90), and the *Epistle of Enoch* or the traditions behind it (*1 En.* 91-107). James C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, 180. See also idem, *The Book of Jubilees*, 137.

Enochic literature.¹⁶² The author of *Jubilees* uses the apocalyptic motif of heavenly tablets to link Moses and the covenant to pre-Sinaitic times, i.e., to the primordial period.¹⁶³ In the author's presentation, Moses' revelation (*Jubilees* itself), fully received on Sinai, was pre-existent and of celestial provenance, and portions of it had been revealed to patriarchs pre-dating Moses. This retrojection of both Sinaitic law (Torah) and the author's own supplement (testimony) to antiquity bolsters *Jubilees*' status as an authoritative work. The use of the celestial tablet motif provides a vehicle to grant an enormous amount of revelation to Moses, much of it esoteric and beyond what is preserved in the written Torah. In this bold re-writing of the Sinai event, Najman writes, "The suggestion is that the Pentateuch contains only part of what was revealed at Sinai, and that it can be properly understood only by those who have access to even more ancient traditions."¹⁶⁴ In *Jubilees*' telling, Moses is the one who has direct access to the totality of these traditions through angelic dictation. Although partial revelation had been given to select pre-Sinai patriarchs, including Enoch, Moses is the exalted recipient of *all* revelation. He is privy to secrets of human history (including pre-history) and the calendar (*à la* Enoch in Enochic literature), in addition to the written Torah. Both Moses and Enoch receive revelation in the form of heavenly tablets,¹⁶⁵ through angelic

¹⁶² Segal observes that two functions of the tablets in *Jubilees* (heavenly register of good and evil, and book of destiny recording the deeds of history) are present in prior Enochic literature, and concludes, "The inclusion of these two functions in *Jubilees*' conception of the Heavenly Tablets does not therefore inform us about the worldview of the author/editor of this book, but rather of the literary dependence of this author on previous works, primarily Enochic literature." M. Segal, *The Book of Jubilees*, 313-14 (314).

¹⁶³ For a discussion of two tablets traditions in Second Temple writings, see Andrei A. Orlov, "Overshadowed by Enoch's Greatness: 'Two Tablets' Traditions from the *Book of Giants* to *Palaea Historica*," *JSJ* 32 (2001): 137-58.

¹⁶⁴ Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 53. See also idem, "Interpretation as Primordial Writing: *Jubilees* and Its Authority Conferring Strategies," *JSJ* 30 (1999): 379-410.

¹⁶⁵ Moses in the prologue, 1:1; Enoch in *I En.* 81:1-4; 93:1-3; 103:2-3; 106:19; 107:1.

mediation;¹⁶⁶ both Enoch and Moses write;¹⁶⁷ both receive knowledge of calendrical matters and the periodization of history into jubilees;¹⁶⁸ to both are disclosed past, present, and future.¹⁶⁹ Moses, however, is the only patriarch chosen to receive the *entire* revelation that is on the tablets, and to teach it to all Israel (1:1). This disclosure to Moses on Sinai was not a new revelation, as it is in the traditional Torah: it had already been written on the heavenly tablets from primeval times. The author of *Jubilees* portrays his work as originating in pre-history, in the celestial realm, while maintaining the integrity of Moses as recipient of revelation and Sinai as the place of revelation.

Kvanvig demonstrates that *Jubilees* mediates between the Enochic and Mosaic traditions, creating a balance between them.¹⁷⁰ Although Moses plays a central role in the work, Kvanvig notes that the narrative is shaped to give room to Enochic traditions: the author uses the figure of Moses to emphasize the importance of Enoch and moves Mosaic law further back into antiquity. Kvanvig's assessment is that laws and narrative from the written Torah form "the backbone of the of the story in *Jubilees*, but the perspective is Enochian."¹⁷¹ It is true that *Jubilees* incorporates Enochic features and motifs, including a concern to place the origin of key revelation in the primordial period (evident in the author's supplement of Torah with primeval, esoteric secrets characteristic of Enochic disclosure). But it is not the case, as Kvanvig suggests, that Moses'

¹⁶⁶ *Jub.* 1:27-29; the entire book of *Jub.* is presented as revelation by the angel of the presence, dictated to Moses. Cf. Enoch as recipient of angelic revelations in *Jub.* 4:21; *1 En.* 72:1; 74:2 80:1, et al. Cf. the interpretive function of Uriel and Michael in Enochic writings.

¹⁶⁷ Enoch writes in *Jub.* 4:17-19, 22, 24; 7:39; 10:17; *1 En.* 13:4-6; 74:2; cf. 4Q203 8; *2 En.* 22:11; 23:4-6; Moses writes in *Jub.* 1:5, 7, 26; 2:1; 23:32; 33:18. Cf. Exod 24:4.

¹⁶⁸ This is disclosed to Moses in *Jub.* 1:26; to Enoch in *Jub.* 4:17-18; *1 En.* 72-82. Cf. 4Q227 2.

¹⁶⁹ Enoch sees what was and what will be in *Jub.* 4:19; *1 En.* 12-16; Enoch sees the future in *1 En.* 1:7-8, the end in *1 En.* 10; all the deeds of humanity in *1 En.* 81:1-4; *1 En.* 85-90. Moses is shown past, present, and future in *Jub.* 1:4, 7-18, 22-26. Cf. *Apoc. Ab.* 9:9-10.

¹⁷⁰ Kvanvig, "*Jubilees*: Between Enoch and Moses. A Narrative Reading," 243-61.

¹⁷¹ Kvanvig, "*Jubilees*: Between Enoch and Moses," 260.

importance is reduced in the process.¹⁷² Although Enochic traditions are present in the work,¹⁷³ and the author considers the Enochic literature authoritative, it must be acknowledged that Enoch receives incomplete revelation in *Jubilees*. Enoch's greatness is affirmed (esp. 4:23), but Moses' unique status for Israel is unchallenged: he is the one who receives the complete and final revelation. The totality of ancient, esoteric and exoteric knowledge is placed firmly in the context of the Sinai event, and Moses is the transmitter of this heavenly knowledge. The authority of Moses and Sinai is enhanced. Indeed, the narrative begins and ends on Sinai (prologue and 1:1; 50:2), and it is Moses who is addressed throughout.¹⁷⁴

This link of Moses to the primeval period is a significant development in Mosaic tradition. *Jubilees* is the earliest known work to assert that Moses wrote Genesis and parts of Exodus,¹⁷⁵ making it the first textual link of Moses to the traditions of antiquity. *Jubilees* ascribes all knowledge of ancient traditions and primeval history, including calendrical secrets, to Moses. Such revelation had previously been claimed for Enoch in Enochic lore. In *Jubilees*, Moses and Enoch share similar revelatory knowledge; Moses is even granted Enochic features. But whereas Enochic literature appealed to a higher authority than the Mosaic revelation and saw Enoch as the ultimate revealer of divine secrets, *Jubilees* ascribes definitive revelation—including that of protology and the

¹⁷² Kvanvig, "*Jubilees*: Between Enoch and Moses," 258.

¹⁷³ See James C. VanderKam, "Enoch Traditions in Jubilees and Other Second-Century Sources," *SBLSP* (1978): 229-51; repr. in *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (*JSJSup* 62; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 305-31.

¹⁷⁴ In a discussion of the knowledge of Mosaic laws by pre-Sinai patriarchs in *Jub.*, Philip Alexander suggests that the attribution to "a pre-Sinai figure [i.e. Enoch] as authoritative in such matters is potentially significant, since it could suggest a diminution of the Sinai revelation and of its mediator, Moses." Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God," 100. Such a view, however, fails to take into consideration the fact that the author has intentionally used Sinai as the setting of his work. By representing the Sinai event and supplementing it with further revelatory claims, the author has given *expanded* import to Sinai and Moses. Sinai is not denigrated but enhanced. By placing his narrative within the biblical framework of the Sinai event, the author seeks to validate it.

¹⁷⁵ VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 23-24.

calendar—to Moses on Sinai. The Enochic disregard for Moses and Sinai is not upheld. *Jubilees*' appropriation of the heavenly tablet motif, with its claim of primeval, heavenly provenance, serves to augment the authority of the Sinai revelation. Gary Anderson has posited an exegetical motive for the author's link of Torah to the pre-Sinaitic period (to explain how pre-Sinaitic patriarchs knew and observed some Mosaic laws),¹⁷⁶ but I submit that interaction with Enochic traditions was a formative factor as well. *Jubilees* affirms traditions about Enoch and other patriarchal figures, and the pre-Sinai revelation attributed to them, but presents Moses' revelation on Sinai as climactic and definitive for Israel. In attributing Enochic revelatory features and the totality of revelation to Moses, the claim is made that Moses, not Enoch, is the ultimate revealer of heavenly knowledge.¹⁷⁷ The Mosaic Torah, including the author's interpretive expansion of it (*Jubilees* itself), is that transcendent, authoritative knowledge.

As we have established, the author of *Jubilees* has incorporated apocalyptic and esoteric elements into his narrative. Several details are pertinent to subsequent Mosaic developments:

1. The author has given Moses knowledge of secrets of history on Sinai. Moses is linked both to antiquity (creation/the primeval period) and, to a lesser degree, the future. The Sinai revelation to Moses includes secrets of protology. The concern for eschatology is not evident; the book ends with Moses at Sinai. Davenport has noted that the author has little concern for eschatological matters; his interest is only in the events of his own

¹⁷⁶ G. Anderson, "The Status of the Torah Before Sinai," 1-29.

¹⁷⁷ Kvanvig writes, "in Jewish tradition Enoch is primarily portrayed as a primeval sage, the ultimate revealer of divine secrets." Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic*, 27. Cf. *1 En.* 82:1-3 where it is Enoch who passes on all knowledge to his son, to be transmitted to all generations. *Jub.*, however, grants the totality of speculative knowledge to Moses and acknowledges Moses as its transmitter.

lifetime.¹⁷⁸ But chapter 23 does have an eschatological flavor: it looks beyond Moses' lifetime to a more distant future, an ideal time when Israel will live in covenant faithfulness.¹⁷⁹

2. *Jubilees* affirms angelic presence and agency at Sinai. The angel of presence does not have an interpretive function, however: the angel dictates the exact words inscribed on the heavenly tablets. The revelation to Moses is therefore direct, unmediated disclosure, through the agency of the angel. There is no *angelus interpretis*. It is possible that this is a claim for the superiority of Mosaic revelation, over against other exalted patriarch accounts (notably Enochic) that feature interpreting angels, hence mediated revelation.

3. *Jubilees* uses the apocalyptic motif of heavenly tablets to connect Moses to the heavenly realm. This connection takes place on Sinai.

4. To Moses (and to Enoch) is revealed the periodization of history into balanced units of time (weeks of years, jubilees), a feature common to apocalypses.

5. *Jubilees* exhibits dialogue with Enochic claims. This is evident in the use of the heavenly tablet motif and the ascription to Moses of calendrical secrets and primordial knowledge, in the style of Enochic lore. In *Jubilees*, Enoch receives a partial revelation of the secrets of history, astronomy, and cosmology; Moses receives the definitive revelation of *all* secrets.

Like the Hebrew Bible, *Jubilees* presents Moses as the recipient of divine revelation, and Moses' ascent of Sinai is the setting of that revelation. *Jubilees* does not claim for Moses an ascent to heaven or a dream vision, but in its reworking and

¹⁷⁸ Gene L. Davenport, *The Eschatology of the Book of Jubilees* (StPB 20; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 47-71, 81-87.

¹⁷⁹ *Jub.* does not exhibit a belief in resurrection. See 23:31.

expansion of Genesis and Exodus, Moses' ascent and revelation take on apocalyptic features, including the motifs of angelic disclosure, the periodization of history, a concern for protology, and the use of a heavenly book or tablets to impart revelation. These apocalyptic motifs and themes are applied to Moses on Sinai. Traditions about an exalted Enoch (and other patriarchs, to a lesser extent) have been formative in the author's writing.

The book of *Jubilees* rewrites the past in order to be pertinent to the situation of the present, which is in the author's view a time when a return to strict observance of the law was of critical importance. By stressing the antiquity and celestial origin of the law and testimony, the author maintains its eternal relevance. In presenting the written Torah and his own supplementary material as heavenly disclosure to Moses on Sinai, this revelation is legitimized. Najman summarizes the author's important claims in utilizing such a literary strategy:

...the pre-Sinaitic history of Genesis through the beginning of Exodus is thereby shown to have legal implications, and the laws endorsed by *Jubilees* are shown to have the authority of Mosaic Torah, while the authority of Mosaic Torah is at the same time shown to be rooted in a heavenly tradition ascribed to God and known to select individuals since the beginnings of history.¹⁸⁰

Moses and Sinai, so rich in symbolic power, become the author's vehicle to convey transcendent, authoritative truth to his community.

2.4.2. The *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian

The *Exagoge* is Ezekiel the Tragedian's second century B.C.E. tragic drama about the Exodus.¹⁸¹ This work is significant in that it contains one of the earliest post-biblical

¹⁸⁰ Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 66.

¹⁸¹ The *Exagoge* is extant only in fragments cited by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* I:23.155-156), Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelica* 9, Book IX, 28:1-3, quoting excerpts from Alexander Polyhistor), and

into the heavenly realm and the mysteries of God's throne. The fact that Moses sits on the divine throne that God has vacated implies Moses' deification. Ezekiel has incorporated expanded revelatory claims into his portrayal of Moses' visionary encounter on Sinai.

This early enhancement of Moses' Sinai experience invites speculation. Recent scholarship has marked the affinities between the *Exagoge's* throne vision and other apocalyptic and mystical literature.¹⁸⁴ In particular, the exaltation of Moses recalls the similar elevation of Enoch in the Enochic corpus. Ezekiel's drama contains many apocalyptic features that are present in Enochic literature, including the patriarch's ascent and vision of God's throne on a mountain, his reception of esoteric revelation (including a purview of history and the extent of the universe), his counting of the stars and being beckoned by a divine being with the right hand, and the accompaniment of an angelic guide/interpreter.¹⁸⁵ The content of the *Exagoge's* throne vision reveals that Enochic

¹⁸⁴ Silviu N. Bunta, "Moses, Adam, and the Glory of the Lord: On the Roots of a *Merkabah* Text" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 2005); John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (2nd ed.; BR; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000; Livonia, Mich.: Dove Booksellers, 2000), 224-30; idem, *The Scepter and the Star*, 145-46; Goodenough, *By Light, Light*, 288-91; Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 127-29; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 57-59; Orlov, "Moses' Heavenly Counterpart in the *Book of Jubilees* and the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian," 153-73; see also the scholars cited in the following note.

The mystical aspect of the throne vision is not universally held, however. Howard Jacobson, in his introduction and commentary to the drama, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel*, sees the *anti*-mystical nature of the work, claiming that the dramatist has played down "anything supernatural or divine in Moses' role and nature." *The Exagoge of Ezekiel*, 81. In Jacobson's view, the *Exagoge* is a polemic *against* mystical traditions that elevate Moses: Moses' ascent to the heavenly throne is an imaginary, rather than actual, event, and is thus to be distinguished from other apocalyptic ascent accounts. Ezekiel has taken the Jewish genre of the symbolic dream and Hellenized it. Jacobson, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel*, 89-97; idem, "Mysticism and Apocalyptic in Ezekiel the Tragedian," *Illinois Classical Studies* 6 (1981): 272-93. C. R. Holladay sees both classical Greek and Jewish apocalyptic and mystical background behind Ezekiel's presentation. Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 301-529, esp. 313.

¹⁸⁵ On the Enochic features of the *Exagoge*, see Alexander, "Enoch and the Beginnings of Jewish Interest in Natural Science," 223-43; Holladay, *Fragments From Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 439-49; idem, "The Portrait of Moses in Ezekiel the Tragedian," *SBLSP* 10 (1976): 447-52; van der Horst, "Moses' Throne Vision in Ezekiel the Dramatist," 24-27; idem, "Some Notes on the *Exagoge*," 364; Jacobson, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel*; Wayne Meeks, "Moses as God and King," 354-71; idem, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, 147-49; Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, 262-67; idem,

traditions were formative in Ezekiel's construction of the drama. Whereas *Jubilees* (also 2nd cent. B.C.E) mediates between Enochic and Mosaic traditions,¹⁸⁶ the *Exagoge* contains evidence of a polemical rather than complementary relationship between Enoch and Moses.¹⁸⁷ While Enoch is not represented in Ezekiel's drama, it is evident that Ezekiel has transferred to Moses the transcendent characteristics earlier claimed for Enoch.¹⁸⁸ In fashioning his drama after accounts of the exalted Enoch, granting Moses a heavenly ascent and *merkavah* vision *à la* Enoch, the dramatist appears to challenge accounts of an exalted Enoch in order to present a superior Mosaic alternative. In the throne vision, Ezekiel not only attributes to Moses the claims made about Enoch: he then elevates Moses *above* Enoch's status by making the bold claim that Moses is divinized on Sinai: Moses sits on God's own throne,¹⁸⁹ receives God's insignia (scepter and crown), and is worshipped by "stars" (angels) who fall before him. Enoch has been eclipsed!

A significant and telling assertion of the *Exagoge* is that Moses received mystical revelation in an ascent, prior to the giving of the Sinaitic law. The throne vision makes a claim that Moses was accorded important esoteric knowledge before the revelation of the law. This granting of pre-covenant esoteric knowledge through a dream visionary ascent

"Exodus 33 on God's Face: A Lesson from the Enochic Tradition," *SBLSP* 39 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000): 130-47; idem, "In the Mirror of the Divine Face: The Enochic Features of the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian," in *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. G. J. Brooke, H. Najman, and L. T. Stuckenbruck; TBN 12; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 183-99. On the figure of Raguel as a possible angelic interpreter, see my article, "Raguel as Interpreter of Moses' Throne Vision: The Transcendent Identity of Raguel in the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian," *JSP* 17.2 (2008): 122-40.

¹⁸⁶ Kvanvig, "*Jubilees*: Between Enoch and Moses. A Narrative Reading," 243-61.

¹⁸⁷ Ruffatto, "Polemics with Enochic Traditions in the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian," 195-210.

¹⁸⁸ Alexander demonstrates that the exaltation of Enoch in Enochic writings pre-dates the similar exaltation of Moses, which came as a response to Enochic claims. Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God," 107-10.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Enoch as the son of man who takes the divine throne of glory in the *Book of the Parables: 1 En.* 51:2; 61:8; 62:5; 69:29. In later Enochic tradition as well, Enoch sits in the heavenly realm. In *2 En.* 23:4-6 Enoch is commanded by Vereveil (Uriel) to sit to perform his scribal activity; in *3 En.* 48C:4, Enoch (now Metatron) rules not from God's throne but from his own.

is a means of attributing to Moses the status of Enoch. The *merkavah* vision serves to validate Moses' authority beyond that of lawgiver: he is also the recipient of higher knowledge of the heavenly realm and the divine throne, as was his rival, Enoch. In placing the vision in the context of a dream vision *on Sinai*, the author establishes the primacy of Moses as seer of *both* esoteric knowledge and covenant revelation.¹⁹⁰ Ezekiel makes it clear that Sinai (the mountain of the covenant) and God's throne are inextricably linked.¹⁹¹

The disregard of Moses and the revelation at Sinai in Enochic lore may well have spurred the Tragedian to include his non-biblical account of Moses' vision of his heavenly enthronement on Sinai and its interpretation as a polemical response to supporters of Enoch's exalted status. The non-Jewish members of the audience would not have caught this; they would have seen Moses as just another elevated heroic figure.¹⁹² But for the Jews present, the claim about Moses in the *merkavah* vision was unmistakable: it was "nothing less than a vision of Moses' future exaltation to cosmic rulership to be exercised from God's throne."¹⁹³ Moses is clearly the dramatist's hero. He is the patriarchal seer *par excellence* in Jewish tradition, and Sinai is the place of God's special revelation, both esoteric (the throne vision) and exoteric (the covenantal law).

¹⁹⁰ Collins writes that "the authority of Moses, at least in the fragments we have, is related not to the law but to his ascent to the divine throne." Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 229. This view, however, does not take into consideration the fact that the setting of the esoteric revelation is in fact Sinai, the mountain of the covenant. Early Enochic literature locates God's throne on a mountain (*1 En.* 18:8; 24:3; 25:3).

¹⁹¹ In the throne vision, God's mountaintop throne on Sinai extends to the heavenly realm: it "reached till the folds of heaven" (line 69).

¹⁹² Internal evidence shows that Ezekiel's drama was intended for an audience of both Jews and non-Jews. See discussion in Jacobson, *The Exagoge*, 17-20; idem, "Two Studies on Ezekiel the Tragedian," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 22 (1981): 171-72.

¹⁹³ van der Horst, "Some Notes on the *Exagoge*," 366.

2.4.3. Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum

Pseudo-Philo's *LAB* is a first century C.E. Jewish text that covers the history of Israel from Adam to Saul's death. As this text will be the focus of the second part of this dissertation, my comments here will be brief. (The authorship, date, and purpose of *LAB* will be discussed in the following chapter).

LAB, like *Jubilees*, is a work that reshapes the biblical narrative. The author, now called Pseudo-Philo, supplements the biblical account with legendary material from other sources. Moses is the central figure of *LAB*, and his portrayal in the text suggests an awareness of other exalted patriarch traditions. Pseudo-Philo ascribes to Moses visionary ascents that go beyond the traditional Torah account. In *LAB*, Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo take on features and motifs of heavenly journeys such as are found in apocalypses that feature otherworldly tours. These apocalyptic features include mountain ascent to the heavenly realm, the granting of esoteric revelation (including the secrets of primeval and eschatological times), recurrent luminous transformation, and specific motifs and technical terminology that recur in apocalyptic ascent accounts (e.g. vision of the heavenly temple, glory, cosmic phenomena, journey to paradise and the tree of life, "protoplast," and other motifs). The author has incorporated enhanced esoteric revelation into his narratives of Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo, resulting in an elevation of Moses' visionary status. The inclusion of speculative knowledge into the portrayal of Moses in the presence of God on both mountains augments the authoritative status of the covenant patriarch.

Of particular interest for the purposes of this dissertation is the deliberate ascription to Moses of visionary elements that had been previously associated with Enoch in the early Enochic literature. Specifically Enochic speculative elements, notably mystical knowledge of creation and paradise,¹⁹⁴ are placed in *LAB* within the context of *Moses*' visionary ascents of Sinai and Nebo. Both ascents of Moses are to the heavenly realm.¹⁹⁵ On Sinai, Moses is shown the tree of life (*LAB* 11:15; cf. *I En.* 24:4-5; 25:4-6; 30-32). God reveals to Moses the paths and ways of paradise (*LAB* 13:9; 19:10; cf. *I En.* 24-25; 32) and gives him special knowledge about the first man (*protoplastus*) and Noah; revelation about primordial secrets was previously claimed for Enoch (*I En.* 1-36; 65-68; 83-84; 106-107).¹⁹⁶ On Nebo, God discloses to Moses meteorological and heavenly geographical knowledge typical of revelation to Enoch, including the place of origin of rainwater (19:10; cf. *I En.* 36:1; 76-77), the source of rivers (19:10; cf. *I En.* 17:8), and the place in the lower heavens "from which only the holy land drinks."¹⁹⁷ The content of *Moses*' revelation evokes that of Enoch in his celestial tours. On Sinai, Moses refers to God's "lofty and eternal seat"¹⁹⁸ (the divine throne – 12:8; cf. *I En.* 18:8; 24:3; 25:3; 39-41). Moses is granted knowledge of the measurements of the sanctuary and number of sacrifices in the midst of a revelation of celestial and cosmological secrets (19:10),

¹⁹⁴ The Torah itself does not suggest that it was written by Moses, nor does it claim that the creation accounts were revealed to Moses on Sinai. In the late Second Temple period, Moses came to be seen as the author of the written Torah, including the primeval history. The "Torah of Moses" in late biblical writings (Ezra, Neh, and Chron) refers to the Five Books (Ezra 7:6; Neh 8:1; cf. Josephus' *C. Ap.* 1.37-40). But the creation accounts in the written Torah are cursory and contain little speculative content. *Jub.* is the earliest extant source that explicitly claims Mosaic authorship of Genesis and grants to Moses revelation of creational secrets. See VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 23-24. The early Enochic literature, however, presents *Enoch* as the recipient of primordial secrets.

¹⁹⁵ Coming down from Sinai, Moses "descends to the place where the light of the sun and the moon are" (12:1); on Nebo, Moses sees locations in the lower heavens (19:8, 10).

¹⁹⁶ *Jub.* also ascribes to Moses Enochic-style knowledge of protology. See above, Section 2.4.1.

¹⁹⁷ All translations of Pseudo-Philo in this work, unless otherwise noted, are from Daniel J. Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," *OTP* 2.297-377.

¹⁹⁸ Translation by Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum with Latin Text and English Translation* (2 vols.; AGJU 31; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1.112.

recalling Enoch's measuring and numbering of heavenly and earthly phenomena (*1 En.* 33:2-4; 40:2; 60:12; cf. *2 En.* 40:2-4). Eschatological secrets are unveiled to Moses (the amount of time that has already passed and how much time remains), just before his death (19:14-15; cf. *1 En.* 20-32; 93).¹⁹⁹ Pseudo-Philo has transferred Enochic revelatory elements (celestial knowledge of primeval, eschatological, cosmological, and meteorological secrets) to Moses, resulting in a portrayal of the covenant patriarch as the recipient of esoteric as well as exoteric knowledge.

These considerable Enochic parallels call for a closer look at the apocalyptic claims made for Moses in *LAB*. This topic will be the focus of the subsequent chapters of this dissertation. Pseudo-Philo's concern to link Moses not just to the particular history of Israel, but to the primeval and eschatological history of the whole world, appears to be in dynamic dialogue with Enochic claims. *LAB* is faithful to Moses-centered tradition and lifts up Moses as the ultimate recipient of all revelation on Sinai and Nebo. As later chapters will demonstrate, the incorporation of apocalyptic motifs, including technical vocabulary, into the accounts of Moses' visionary ascents reveals Pseudo-Philo's desire to exalt Moses *vis-à-vis* other exalted patriarch traditions.

2.4.4. 4 Ezra

The apocalypse of *4 Ezra* portrays Ezra as a second Moses.²⁰⁰ In this pseudonymous work, Ezra is an apocalyptic seer. He, like his predecessor, is devoted to the law. To

¹⁹⁹ Enoch reads about past, present, and future in *1 En.* 12-16.

²⁰⁰ On the date and provenance of *4 Ezra*, see B. M. Metzger, "The Fourth Book of Ezra," *OTP* 1:520; Michael Edward Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra* (ed. F. M. Cross; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 9-10. *4 Ezra* was likely originally composed in Hebrew, but is extant only in translation. The oldest versions are Latin, and most translations are drawn primarily from the Latin witnesses. The translation of *4 Ezra* used in this dissertation is that of Metzger, *OTP* 1:525-59.

able scribes Ezra dictates the entire Hebrew canon of twenty-four books, which are to be available to all, as well as seventy esoteric (apocalyptic) books, intended only for the “wise.” In *4 Ezra* 14, a divine voice speaks to Ezra from a bush, emphasizing his similarity to Moses. About Moses, the divine voice says:

Then he said to me, “I revealed myself in a bush and spoke to Moses, when my people were in bondage in Egypt; and I sent him and led my people out of Egypt; and I led him up to Mount Sinai. And I kept him with me many days; and I told him many wondrous things, and showed him the secrets of the times and declared to him the end of the times. Then I commanded him, saying, “These words you shall publish openly, and these you shall keep secret.” (*4 Ezra* 14:3-6)

Although Sinai had been referred to previously in the work (3:17-22 and 9:30-31), only here is esoteric knowledge attributed to Moses’ mountaintop experience. Secret revelation had earlier been granted to Abraham (3:15 – a reference to Gen 15), and to Ezra himself (14:7 mentions the signs, dreams, and interpretations revealed to Ezra previously in the text). The author of *4 Ezra* has developed the theme of open (exoteric) and concealed (esoteric) knowledge, asserting that Moses received both on Sinai. Ezra’s visions in the text recall the tradition of disclosures to Moses on the mountain.²⁰¹ The brief reference to Moses’ two-fold revelation in 14:5-6 anticipates Ezra’s parallel experience: having already received esoteric revelation himself, he will soon dictate the contents of the twenty-four exoteric and seventy esoteric books (14:23-26, 37-48).

The content of the secrets disclosed to Moses in 14:3-6 is instructive, for it reveals the kind of transcendent revelation the author deems proper and available to humans. To Moses was transmitted knowledge of “many wondrous things,” “the secrets of the times,” and “the end of the times.” Esoteric revelation to Moses is identified exclusively as

²⁰¹ Michael P. Knowles has identified two forty-day periods that frame the book of *4 Ezra*. The literary structure of the work brings to mind Moses’ encounter with God on Sinai. Knowles, “Moses, the Law, and the Unity of *4 Ezra*,” *NovT* 31.3 (1989): 257-74. Moses’ Sinai experience is formative for the theology of *4 Ezra*.

eschatological knowledge.²⁰² Stone has demonstrated *4 Ezra*'s rejection of all types of speculative revelation except the eschatological.²⁰³ This limitation of esoteric revelation to eschatological matters distinguishes *4 Ezra* from other apocalypses. The kinds of secret knowledge *not* available to Moses (or Ezra) indicates the sort of revelation the author rejects. Conspicuously absent in *4 Ezra* is revelation of cosmological and heavenly geographic secrets such as are common to apocalyptic accounts of patriarchal heavenly ascent. Michael Stone maintains that this strong denial of the availability to humans of these forms of esoteric revelation must be polemical.²⁰⁴ Although the author grants secret knowledge of eschatology to human visionaries (Abraham, Moses, and Ezra), it is clear that specifically *Enochic*-style revelation (including cosmological and heavenly secrets) is not acceptable.

There are some parallels between *4 Ezra* and *1 Enoch*,²⁰⁵ yet *4 Ezra* significantly contains no reference to heavenly ascent. *4 Ezra* recognizes accepted formulaic lists of apocalyptic esoteric knowledge, including secrets of cosmology and heavenly geography,²⁰⁶ but insists that such revelation is beyond human understanding (4:1-12, 21; 5:36-40). Ezra in fact states that he has not entered paradise (4:8) and does not want to comprehend heavenly matters ("the ways above" - 4:23). The angel Uriel declares that "those who dwell upon the earth can understand only what is on the earth, and he who is

²⁰² Stone writes that "wondrous things" here refers to eschatological matters, for "'wonders' has a very specific eschatological denotation in *4 Ezra*." Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 419. *4 Ezra* 4:5-9 and 5:36-37 also limit speculative knowledge to eschatological subjects.

²⁰³ Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, esp. 80-81, 373, 419.

²⁰⁴ Stone observes the "pointed rejection of the very sort of apocalyptic speculation that greatly interests other apocalypses. This is done deliberately; *4 Ezra* rejects an apocalyptic view of revealed knowledge. Indeed, the book seems deliberately to avoid all intimations of revealed, speculative knowledge and to limit itself to discussion of eschatological matters." *Fourth Ezra*, 81. See also idem, "Paradise in IV Ezra iv.8, and vii. 36, viii.52," *JJS* 17 (1966): 85-88. Stone maintains that "a rejection of an esoteric, speculative tradition can here be detected." *Ibid.*, 88.

²⁰⁵ See Metzger, *OTP* 1.522.

²⁰⁶ On the content of pre-existing lists of speculative knowledge in apocalyptic literature, see Michael E. Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature," 414-54.

above the heavens can understand what is above the height of the heavens” (4:21). This deliberate emphasis on the limitations of human knowledge is telling: it is a polemic against some sorts of apocalyptic revelation, specifically the secrets of cosmology and the heavenly realm granted to Enoch in the Enochic tradition. In its pointed rejection of Enochic-style ascent and esoteric revelation, *4 Ezra* positions Moses and Ezra against Enoch. The author claims that cosmological and heavenly geographic speculation are off-limits to human visionaries; they were not a part of the revelation to Moses, or his successor Ezra, on Sinai.

4 Ezra reshapes Moses’ Sinai revelation to include eschatological secrets (“many wondrous things,” “the secrets of the times,” and “the end of the times”). Dialogue with Enochic claims is overt and undeniable. It is significant that the author is not content merely to transfer Enochic speculative elements to Moses’ visionary experience on Sinai, in order to elevate him (or Ezra) *vis-à-vis* the ante-diluvian patriarch; rather, all such esoteric revelation is dismissed as beyond human possibility, as is heavenly ascent. *4 Ezra* maintains that Enochic speculative concerns were off-limits and incompatible with Moses-centered covenant life. By lifting up Moses and his scribal and visionary successor, the author of *4 Ezra* assures his contemporaries that their present difficult circumstances are to be understood in the context of Moses’ and Ezra’s era: in both, obedience to the law was central; in both, God was faithful. But in *4 Ezra*, Ezra’s direct revelation about eschatological matters eclipses that of Moses. Although Ezra’s revelation is consistent with Mosaic law (which has been burned – 14:21), only Ezra knows the way to escape the present troubles and hasten the last days (14:14, 35). It is he, not Moses, who will “write everything that has happened in the world from the

beginning, the things which were written in thy law, that men might be able to find the path, and that those who wish to live in the last days, may live” (14:22).

2.4.5. 2 *Baruch*

2 *Baruch* is a Torah-centered text that purports to be written by Jeremiah’s scribe.²⁰⁷ The author uses Deuteronomic Mosaic typology throughout; Baruch, the hero of the work, is modeled after Moses.²⁰⁸ Just as Moses led the Israelites into the promised land, so Baruch will guide those who are faithful to Torah into the eschatological world to come.

In this pseudepigraphon, Baruch does not go on an otherworldly journey, but it is reported that Moses does: he is taken by God on a tour of the cosmos (59:3-12). The text affirms Moses’ journey to the heavenly realm from Sinai: “the heavens which are under the throne of the Mighty One were severely shaken when he took Moses with him” (59:3). Sinai is connected to God’s throne in heaven and is the place where esoteric knowledge is disclosed to the great covenant patriarch. In chapter 59, Moses is portrayed as an apocalyptic seer. Discussion of Moses’ experience on the mountain is situated within the angel Ramael’s interpretation of Baruch’s vision of the bright and dark waters, which correspond to high and low points in the history of Israel.²⁰⁹ In this visionary account, God shows Moses “the ways of the law” and the measurements of the sanctuary,

²⁰⁷ On the date and provenance of 2 *Baruch*, see Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch. Introduction, traduction du Syriaque et commentaire* (2 vols.; SC 144-145; Paris: Cerf, 1969), 1.270-95; A. F. J. Klijn, “2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch,” *OTP* 1.618-19; Liv Ingeborg Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch* (*JSJSup* 129; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 26-29; Nicolae Roddy, “‘Two Parts: Weeks of Seven Weeks’: The End of the Age as *Terminus ad Quem* for 2 Baruch,” *JSP* 14 (1996): 3-14; Gwendolyn B. Sayler, *Have the Promises Failed? A Literary Analysis of 2 Baruch* (SBLDS; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1984), 103-118. The translation of 2 *Bar.* used in this dissertation is that of Klijn, *OTP* 1.621-52.

²⁰⁸ On Mosaic typology in 2 *Bar.*, see esp. Frederick J. Murphy, *The Structure and Meaning of Second Baruch* (SBLDS 78; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1984), 129-30; Sayler, *Have the Promises Failed?*, 95-98.

²⁰⁹ On Ramael’s identity and significance, see Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, 1.428-38.

revelatory elements that are consistent with the traditional Torah account. But Moses' visionary tour is expanded to include apocalyptic revelation: Moses is shown the entire cosmos, including the heavenly temple and paradise, and meteorological and eschatological secrets.²¹⁰ Moses is able to see directly into the world to come.

2 Baruch's many similarities to *4 Ezra* suggest a literary relationship or a common source.²¹¹ In fact, *2 Baruch* seems to have been written to address some of the issues posed by *4 Ezra*. The speculative material that is denied humans in *4 Ezra*, notably secrets of cosmology and heavenly geography, is now granted to Moses in *2 Baruch*. Moses is privy to the Enochic-style esoteric knowledge that Uriel in *4 Ezra* has declared inaccessible to humans ("those who dwell upon the earth can understand only what is on the earth, and he who is above the heavens can understand what is above the height of the heavens" - *4 Ezra* 4:21). Although Baruch himself does not ascend to heaven, Moses, like Enoch in Enochic literature, is granted a cosmic tour and esoteric revelation. He is given knowledge of meteorological and eschatological matters; he sees paradise and heavenly secrets (cf. *2 Bar.* 4:5-6; *4 Ezra* 4:8, 23). In terms of transcendent visionary experience, Moses has become the equal of the exalted Enoch.

The similarities between *2 Bar.* 59 and *1 Enoch* (especially *1 En.* 14-36; 40-43; and 58-69) are evident and striking.²¹² The author has transferred Enochic revelatory

²¹⁰ *2 Bar.* 4:5-6 states that the heavenly Jerusalem and the heavenly prototype of the temple were shown to Moses on Mount Sinai. Adam and Abraham also saw the heavenly Jerusalem (4:3-4).

²¹¹ For a concise summary of the relationship between *4 Ezra* and *2 Bar.*, and scholarly hypotheses about this relationship, see Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 283-85. See also Klaus Berger, *Synopse des Vierten Buches Ezra und der syrischen Baruch-Apokalypse* (TANZ 8; Tübingen: Franke, 1992); Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch," *OTP* 1.620; Saylor, *Have the Promises Failed?*, 130; Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 39.

²¹² On parallels between *2 Bar.* and Enochic literature, see Richard Bauckham, "Early Jewish Visions of Hell," *JTS* 41 (1990): 355-85; idem, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (NovTSup 93; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 60-66; Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in Apocalyptic

claims to Moses on Sinai. The clear and undeniable Enochic parallels invite conjecture. The contents of *2 Baruch*'s revelation to Moses can best be explained by dialogue with alternative seer traditions, particularly those that elevate Enoch as the recipient of all speculative knowledge. As Bauckham has observed, the author of *2 Baruch* has appropriated Enochic revelatory elements but has added several items (specifically, the "measurements of the [heavenly] sanctuary," "the number of offerings," and "the inquiries into the Law") to give a decidedly *Mosaic* stamp to the list. Bauckham writes:

Significantly, these specifically Mosaic items of revelation are placed respectively at the beginning and about half way through the list of revealed things, while the last item is also a specially Mosaic one: 'the investigations of the law.' These strategically placed items give a Mosaic character to what is otherwise mainly a list of the kind of things revealed in other tours of the cosmos. Another significant feature, however, is that some items are not cosmic but eschatological secrets, i.e. they could not have been seen by Moses in a tour of what there is now to be seen in the cosmos, but only in prophetic visions of the future such as can be found in other parts of the Enoch literature, such as the Apocalypse of Weeks and the Animal Apocalypse. A parallel to the combination of the tour of the cosmos and visions of the eschatological future can be found in the Parables of Enoch, especially the third (1 En 58-69).²¹³

The transfer to Moses of esoteric revelation previously attributed to Enoch has polemical implications. Michael Stone's important essay, "Lists of Revealed Things in Apocalyptic Literature," has demonstrated that authors of apocalyptic literature used formulaic lists of revelatory items. The author of *2 Baruch* has utilized a pre-existing revelatory list, but has attributed it to Moses. In carefully placing Enochic-style revelatory disclosure in the context of Moses' visionary ascent of Sinai, and in reworking the received formulaic list to give primary place to unmistakably Mosaic covenantal additions (the "measurements of the sanctuary," "the number of offerings," and "the inquiries into the Law"), the author appears to be responding to claims about Enoch's

Literature," 414-52. Bauckham and Stone give comprehensive tables of the parallels, which I do not duplicate here.

²¹³ Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 61-62; previously published in idem, "Early Jewish Visions of Hell," 366-67.

exalted visionary status and Enochic devaluation of the covenant at Sinai.²¹⁴ The author's modification of the common formulaic revelatory list is not merely stylistic: it has theological ramifications.

Recently Matthias Henze has denied any polemical overtones in *2 Baruch*. Henze writes, "Turning to *2 Baruch*, then, we find that there is nothing in it to suggest that our author felt disenfranchised, marginalized, or that he was writing out of a sense of opposition, let alone an opposition to 'mainstream' Judaism... There is nothing sectarian or esoteric in *2 Baruch*."²¹⁵ It is true that *2 Baruch* is more inclusive and hopeful than, say, *4 Ezra*. But Henze fails to take into account the author's use of recognizably *Enochic* esoteric elements as building blocks in his portrayal of Moses' revelation on Sinai, and the author's addition of Mosaic elements to bookend that revelation so as to give the Enochic list a Mosaic framework. Chapter 59 ascribes to Moses a cosmic tour and speculative revelation, including heavenly, meteorological, protological and eschatological secrets - all items that are inscrutable to humans in wisdom literature, but available and accessible previously to Enoch in Enochic lore. The author has exalted Moses as visionary figure, making him the recipient of revelation of "all things," esoteric and exoteric. The account of Moses' visionary experience on Sinai serves to elevate Moses over Enoch, and furthers the authority of Moses and the covenant on Sinai. A

²¹⁴ Cf. the conclusion of Bauckham; "It is not possible to be sure whether in 59:4-11 he (the author) was summarizing the contents of an actual apocalypse of Moses, modelled on the tour apocalypses of Enoch, or whether he simply himself attributed to Moses a cosmic tour like that of Enoch, perhaps out of hostility to the Enochic literature and a desire to exalt the figure of Moses instead of Enoch. The arrangement of the list probably favors the latter alternative." Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 65. Bogaert claims that these revelatory items coincide with what the rabbinic tradition considered to be created before the creation of the world: the law, conversion, the garden of Eden, Gehenna, the throne of glory, the temple, and the name of the messiah. Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, 2.113. This explanation is inadequate, for it fails to acknowledge the Enochic character of the revelatory items and the considerable Enochic parallels.

²¹⁵ Matthias Henze, "Torah and Eschatology in the *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch*," in *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. G. J. Brooke, H. Najman, and L. T. Stuckenbruck; TBN 12; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 209.

return to Moses and Torah fidelity is precisely what the author sees as needful in the present difficult circumstances, post-70 C.E.

2.5 Septuagint

There is scholarly agreement that the Five Books of Moses were translated into Greek in the third century B.C.E.; this section of the Hebrew Bible was the earliest to be translated in the Greek version called the Septuagint (LXX). It is uncertain what Hebrew text was available to the translators of the LXX,²¹⁶ thus it is difficult to determine whether the translator/s used interpretive liberties or not. Leonard Greenspoon summarizes, “Because of this lack of certitude, every statement that we make about the translators’ approach, including statements about the nature and extent of their interpretive activity, must remain in the realm of speculation.”²¹⁷ The LXX’s rendering of Moses’ visionary ascents will be analyzed in light of this caveat.

In the LXX version of Exodus, John William Wevers notes the tendency of the translator to expand rather than contract.²¹⁸ According to Wevers, the translator freely explicates the text, adding details that are deemed appropriate for clarification. The LXX version of Exod 19 contains no significant variations from the MT, but for the other accounts of Moses’ theophanic encounters in Exodus, there are important differences from the MT that suggest to some scholars an anti-anthropomorphic tendency in the

²¹⁶ Sometimes the translators used a Hebrew text that was similar to the traditional MT, but at times the translators appear to have been translating from a text that differed from the MT in length, content, and order. See discussion in Leonard Greenspoon, “Hebrew into Greek: Interpretation In, By, and Of the Septuagint,” in *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Ancient Period* (ed. A. J. Hauser and D. F. Watson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 82.

²¹⁷ Greenspoon, “Hebrew into Greek: Interpretation In, By, and Of the Septuagint,” 82.

²¹⁸ John William Wevers, *Text History of the Greek Exodus* (Abhandlung der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen; Philologisch-Historische Klasse, 003, Nr 192; Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens 21; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 148.

LXX; this remains a matter of scholarly debate.²¹⁹ It cannot be determined with certainty whether these differences originate with the translator or are due to a different Hebrew *Vorlage*, or whether they truly signify an anti-anthropomorphic theological viewpoint.

One of the striking characteristics of the LXX's rendering of Moses' theophanic encounters in Exodus is that the language of direct vision of God, present in the MT, is tempered. The MT of Exod 3:6b states that at the burning bush, "Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God" (ויסתר משה פניו כי ירא מהביט אל־אלהים). The LXX version, however, contains the notion that Moses bowed before God in worshipful reverence: ἀπέστρεψεν δὲ Μωυσήσ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ· εὐλαβεῖτο γὰρ κατεμβλέψαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. It is possible that the translator sought to remain consistent with the claim of 33:20 ("You cannot see my face, for no one shall see me and live"), but this remains uncertain. The LXX does not acknowledge direct vision of God's form in the theophany of Exod 24:9-11; the pertinent passages are rendered, "And they saw *the place* where the God of Israel stood" (καὶ εἶδον τὸν τόπον οὗ εἰστήκει ἐκεῖ ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραηλ); "and they appeared in *the place* of God" (καὶ ὤφθησαν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ). Moses and the elders do not see God's form; they only see "the place" where God had been present. In the LXX version of Exod 33:23, it is implied that Moses only sees an insignificant part of God, his backside (τὰ ὀπίσω μου). This concurs with what is preserved in the MT. In the description of Moses' luminous countenance upon his descent of Sinai (Exod 34:29-35), the translator uses a verb that heightens the connection to God's glory (δόξα): Moses'

²¹⁹ Orlinsky claims that these renderings are merely stylistic differences, and that the translator also incorporated unchanged anthropomorphisms in the text. H. M. Orlinsky, "Review of the Anti-Anthropomorphisms of the Greek Pentateuch," *Crozier Quarterly* 21 (1944): 156-60. Greenspoon writes, "Subsequent specialists have by and large confirmed Orlinsky's point of view." "Hebrew into Greek: Interpretation In, By, and Of the Septuagint," 96.

face is “glorified”/“glorious” (δεδοξασμένη ἡ ὄψις τοῦ χρώματος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ - 34:30; τὸ πρόσωπον Μωυσῆ ὅτι δεδόξασται - 34:35).

The LXX of Deut 34:6 contains a version of Moses’ burial that is at odds with the claim of the MT that Moses was buried by God’s own hand. The MT declares, “And he buried him” (וַיִּקְבֹּר אֱתוֹ), indicating that God buried Moses. The LXX of this verse, however, uses a plural form of the verb, rendering the verse, “And they buried him” (καὶ ἔθαψαν αὐτόν).

In sum, the LXX versions of Moses’ ascents and revelation appear to describe these experiences in less transcendent terms than what is preserved in the MT. It is not possible to know if this was due to the translators’ interpretive agenda, or if such renderings were already present in the Hebrew text that the translators had at their disposal.

2.6 Targumim

The targumim, early translations of Jewish scripture from Hebrew into Aramaic, also include interpretations of and expansions of the translated Hebrew text.²²⁰ The central purpose of the translators was not to provide an accurate text, but one that was updated for the needs of Jewish communities in new historical circumstances. Current interpretations of laws, customs, and narratives were often woven into targum texts. Although the targumim contain layers of tradition and are difficult to date, they provide a window into the way a biblical text was understood and re-interpreted for a new day.

Translation provided a way to apply past revelation to present reality. Targumim of

²²⁰ On the dating of the targumim, see Martin McNamara, “The Interpretation of Scripture in the Targumim,” in *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Ancient Period* (ed. A. J. Hauser and D. F. Watson; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 167-71.

Moses' ascents of Sinai and revelation give insight into how early Aramaic-speaking Jews viewed Moses as visionary and recipient of transcendent truth. Some targumim display developing esoteric traditions about Moses' divine encounter on Sinai, as well as evidence of dialogue with Enochic developments.

Robert Hayward has recently summarized some of the mystical traditions found in the targumim of the Sinai theophany.²²¹ Hayward notes how some targumim enhance the traditional Hebrew texts with their own unique emphases and perspectives. Several targumim (*Tg. Onq.* Exod 19:4 and 24:5, 11; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 19:4) expand upon the notion that Sinai is a sanctuary, as is suggested in Exod 19 and 24.²²² The Hebrew text is augmented in the targumim to highlight the cultic nature of the Sinai event, linking the mountain to the Temple and priestly service.²²³ Sinai is presented as “the place of the House of the Sanctuary” in *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 19:4.²²⁴ The references to God's “footstool” in *Tg. Onq.*, *Tg. Neof.*, and *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 24:10 directly connect Sinai to the divine throne in heaven which accompanies the footstool; neither the footstool nor the throne are explicitly mentioned in the Hebrew text. The targumim thus closely link Exod 24:10 to Ezek 1:26. Hayward remarks that this motif of the visionary beholding the divine throne is found in many Second Temple texts, citing *I En.* 14 as an early example.²²⁵ He concludes, “All the extant targumim, therefore, in their differing ways acknowledge the

²²¹ Charles Thomas Robert Hayward, “The Giving of the Torah: Targumic Perspectives,” in *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. G. J. Brooke, H. Najman, and L. T. Stuckenbruck; TBN 12; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 269-85.

²²² See Sarna, *Exodus*, 105-7.

²²³ Hayward gives numerous examples, including *Tg. Onq.* Exod 19:4, which renders the Hebrew “And I have brought you to Myself” (וּאֵבֵא אֶתְכֶם אֵלַי) as “And I have drawn you near to my service” (וּקְרִיבִית יִתְכּוֹן לְפָנַי); *Tg. Onq.* Exod 24:8 adds the notion of sacrificial cleansing to the Hebrew text of Moses' sprinkling of blood. Hayward, “The Giving of the Torah,” 270-75.

²²⁴ Translation by Ernest G. Clarke in collaboration with W. E. Aufrecht, J. C. Hurd, and F. Spitzer, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance* (Hoboken, N. J.: Ktav, 1984). Cf. *Mek. R. Ish.* Exod. 19:4 (2.202). All translations of *Tg. Ps.-J.* in this study are by Clarke.

²²⁵ See also Rev 4, *L.A.E.* (Apocalypse) 25-29, *Ap. Ab.* 15-18, et al. *L.A.E.* (Apocalypse) is the Greek text; *L.A.E.* (Vita) is Latin.

events surrounding the giving of the Torah as the revelation of a world normally concealed from human sight.”²²⁶ As in apocalyptic texts, the targumim associate visionary ascent with the disclosure of heavenly secrets. The ascent of Sinai is the occasion of esoteric and exoteric revelation.

The targumim of Exod 19-24 emphasize Moses’ connection with the divine glory,²²⁷ as well as Sinai as “the place”/Temple that links heaven and earth. The deliberate presentation of Sinai as Temple, an elaboration of and expansion of Exod 19 and 24, recalls Jewish heavenly journey texts in which the visionary ascends to a mountaintop temple setting in the heavens.²²⁸ This is especially evident in *Tg. Ps.-J.*, which displays a particular interest in heavenly matters. In the context of Moses’ and the elders’ ascent of Sinai in *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 24:10, there is an account of the archangel Gabriel ascending to “the heavens on high” (lit. “the heavens of the height”) and to the footstool of God’s throne. Nadab and Abihu behold this footstool connected to the heavenly throne and witness God’s glory. It is not stated that Moses ascends to heaven and the divine throne here, but Moses’ heavenly ascent and enthronement are specifically mentioned in *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 34:5: “The crown of the law is his, that he carried off from the high heaven and the Glory of the Lord’s *Shekinah* was revealed to him with two thousand myriads of angels and with forty-two thousand chariots of fire.” The targum states that Moses received the crown of the law and the crown of the kingdom directly from heaven. Moses’ heavenly enthronement here recalls earlier traditions such as that

²²⁶ Hayward, “The Giving of the Torah,” 283.

²²⁷ The targumim are hesitant to describe God anthropologically, preferring to speak of God’s “glory” or God’s *memra* (word) rather than God’s form. See McNamara, “Interpretation of Scripture in the Targumim,” 178-80.

²²⁸ See Mary Dean-Otting, *Heavenly Journeys: A Study of the Motif in Hellenistic Jewish Literature* (Judentum und Umwelt 8; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1984), 4-5.

found in the throne vision of the Ezekiel the Tragedian's *Exagoge*, in which Moses is bid to sit on the divine throne atop Sinai and is given God's own scepter and crown (lines 68-75). There is a description of Enoch's heavenly enthronement in *1 En.* 35-71; Enoch is the Son of Man on the throne of glory. Heavenly enthronement motifs are found in other apocalyptic texts, including *Dan 7*, *T. Levi 8*, and *2 En.* 24-36. The author/translator of *Tg. Ps.-J.* was undoubtedly familiar with these traditions and sought to present Moses as the heavenly enthroned one.

Sinai's connection to heaven is emphasized in a dramatic and fantastic way in *Tg. Ps.-J.* *Exod 19:17-18*. In this telling, God lifts Sinai up into the heavens and suspends it over the Israelites. God bends (אַרְכִּיק) the heavens to reach the mountain (cf. *LAB 15:6*, *Mek. R. Ish. Exod 19:20*).

Some targumic traditions reveal a particular concern to link Moses and Sinai to secrets of heaven and creation. This is especially the case with *Tg. Ps.-J.*, which expands upon the Hebrew text, giving the Sinai account considerable esoteric enhancements. *Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 31:18* claims that the two tablets of the law, written with God's finger, were made from the sapphire stone of God's heavenly throne.²²⁹ This is an overt link to *Ezek 1*, and gives an esoteric detail to the exoteric revelation of the law. The claim shores up the celestial origin of the tablets. *Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 35:27-28* also connects the oil and spices for worship, as well as the precious stones of the high priest's ephod and breastplate, to heaven and the garden of Eden: the clouds of heaven had scattered precious stones from heaven in the wilderness, so that the princes could gather them for the high priest's breastplate. These same clouds went to the garden of Eden to fetch oil

²²⁹ Cf. *Sipre Num.* 101; *Lev. Rab.* 32:2; *Pirqe R. El.* 46 (361); *y. Shek.* 5:491 mentions precious stones rather than sapphire. Moses' rod is also made of sapphire from God's throne (*Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 4:20*).

and spices for Israel's worship. The necessary items for priestly ritual, revealed to Moses by God, have their origins in paradise. Moses and Sinai are connected in this way to creation. This link between temple/tabernacle and creation builds up the authority of law and covenant, as well as that of the covenant mediator, by establishing their link both to heaven and to antiquity. The connection of Moses and covenant to the primordial period may even have polemical import, positioning the Mosaic tradition against alternate revelatory traditions, Enochic in particular, that claim origins further back in antiquity.

Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 24:1 contains a tradition about angelic participation in the events on Sinai that curiously echoes Enochic developments. In *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 24:1, it is a significant angel, here the archangel Michael, who summons Moses to the top of Sinai to receive revelation. Michael is called in this verse "the prince of wisdom," a title also found in *3 En.* 10:5; 48D:1 [93], where it is equivalent to "prince of the Torah."²³⁰ In *3 Enoch*, Metatron, the highest angel and God's vice-regent enthroned in heaven (*3 En.* 10:3-6; 16:1), is associated with the translated Enoch. In *3 En.* 48D:4 it is Enoch/Metatron, the Prince of Torah, who gives the law to Moses on Sinai; he reveals "all the depths of the perfect Torah" and "all the mysteries of the world and all the orders of nature" (*3 En.* 11:1).²³¹ In *3 En.* 48D:7 and *b. Sanh.* 38b, it is Metatron who meets Moses when he ascends Sinai to heaven to receive the law. Although *Tg. Ps.-J.* has a high regard for Enoch²³² and mentions Metatron in Gen 5:4 and Deut 34:6 (where he is merely called "the great scribe"), it claims that *Michael* calls Moses up to Sinai; Michael

²³⁰ See Philip S. Alexander, "Appendix to 3 Enoch," *OTP* 1.314, n. i.

²³¹ All translations of *3 Enoch* in this dissertation are by Philip S. Alexander, "3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch," in *OTP* 1.223-315. These passages from *3 En.* display a polemical response to Moses traditions that exalt Moses as the recipient of both esoteric revelation and the revelation of the covenantal law.

²³² See *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 5:24.

does not, however, mediate or interpret the revelation to Moses. It is certainly significant that Michael summons Moses but does not function as an *angelus interpres* for him. In likely polemical dialogue with Enochic mediatorial traditions, *Tg. Ps.-J.* does not want to suggest that the Sinai revelation involved angelic mediation, nor that Metatron/Enoch revealed heavenly secrets to Moses. Moses ascends Sinai “on which the Glory of the *Shekinah* of the Lord was revealed” (24:14) directly to him.

Targumic faithfulness to Mosaic primacy is implied by the negative assessments of Enoch in some targumim. Alexander notes the pointed challenge to exalted Enoch traditions exhibited in *Tg. Onq. Gen 5:24*: “And Enoch walked in the fear of the Lord; and he was not for the Lord caused him to die.”²³³ This targum refuses to grant that Enoch’s earthly life ended without death. This is clearly a Mosaic counterattack to Enochic developments. Both *Tg. Onq.* and *Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 5:22* insist that Enoch was not always perfect: he walked in the fear of the Lord (*Tg. Onq.*)/in uprightness (*Tg. Ps.-J.*) only after begetting Methuselah.²³⁴ Discomfort with Enochic traditions is also evident in the fragmentary targums, which explain that Enoch’s end is not known because he was taken away from before the Lord.²³⁵

In sum, the targumim grant expanded transcendent characteristics both to the Sinai revelation and to Moses. The targumic emphasis on the cultic nature of Sinai, as well as its links to heaven and creation, provide a means to strengthen Mosaic tradition for the present, especially with respect to worship. Targumic dialogue with Enochic

²³³ Alexander, “From Son of Adam to Second God,” 109. The uncertainty about Enoch is evidenced by the fact that some manuscripts add “not” to the text: “because the Lord did *not* cause him to die.” Alexander writes that this variant is “almost certainly secondary.” *Ibid.*, n. 35.

²³⁴ See also LXX Gen 5:21. Cf. Enoch as “an example of repentance” in Sir 44:16.

²³⁵ See John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretation of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 143, 147.

assertions is occasionally in evidence. Esoteric enhancements to the Hebrew text are especially present in the later *Tg. Ps.-J.*, revealing that its interpretations are in active dialogue with, and influenced by, prior mystical traditions.

2.6 Other Rabbinic Writings

Rabbinic Judaism traced its origin and authority back to Moses and the revelation at Sinai. The rabbinic tradition maintained that the entire written Torah was revealed to Moses in the Sinai theophany; it also claimed that Moses simultaneously received the oral law, its own definitive interpretation of the written Torah.²³⁶ In the view of the sages of the rabbinic period, the dual Torah, written and oral, was the all-important, authoritative revelation; non-Mosaic revelation, such as was asserted in many pseudepigraphic writings, was suppressed. Alternative revelatory traditions were not acceptable.²³⁷

²³⁶ *m. 'Abot* 1:1; *y. Peah* 2:4; *b. Meg.* 19b; *Qoh. Rab.* 1:9. On Moses in rabbinic literature, see esp. Renée Bloch, “Quelques aspects de la figure de Moïse dans la tradition rabbinique,” in *Moïse: l'homme de l'alliance* (ed. H. Cazelles et al.; Tournai: Desclée, 1955), 93-167.

²³⁷ The Mishnaic tractate *'Abot* establishes an unbroken chain of tradition that begins with Moses on Sinai and continues through Joshua and the elders to the prophets and eventually to Johanan ben Zakkai and the men of the Great Assembly. Each successor in the chain is characterized by the rubric “he received” or “he took over” the Torah (written and oral) from his predecessors; Moses was the original recipient of the Torah and only those who are in the Mosaic succession are deserving and authoritative. Gabriele Boccaccini has shown that “the unbroken normative tradition from Moses to the Mishnah has been unveiled for what it is—nothing more than an ideological construct without any historical foundation.” Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 9-10. Boccaccini has demonstrated that rabbinic Judaism was actually a reform movement whose line of thought is traced back to Zadokite Judaism through Pharisaism. Zadokite Judaism was opposed by Enochic and Sapiential Judaism. *Ibid.*, esp. 205. It is reasonable to conclude that the emphasis on a chain of transmission, such as is expressed in *m. 'Abot* 1:1, was partly a response to non-Zadokite claims of revelatory authority. The notion that oral law originated in the Sinai revelation has been seen by some scholars as an attempt by the “Yavnean rabbinic authorities to solidify their authority by claiming divine origin for their teachings.” See Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition*, 179-81 (181).

Although aware of esoteric visionary traditions,²³⁸ rabbinic Judaism was wary of esoteric speculation, restricting it to the few who were qualified to contemplate such secrets (*m. Hag.* 2:1; cf. *m. Meg.* 4:10 and parallels). Undue speculation into mystical matters was discouraged and even considered dangerous.²³⁹ Delving into such secrets may have been popular,²⁴⁰ but the rabbinic reaction against such endeavors was mostly negative.

Despite its guarded attitude toward speculative revelation, rabbinic literature acknowledges the esoteric nature of the Sinai revelation. According to *m. 'Abot* 6:1, the Torah itself contains secrets of God. In the later texts *Lev. Rab.* 26.7 and *Num. Rab.* on Num 34.2, Moses received the (dual) Torah and secret knowledge in his ascent of Sinai. Only Moses had such privileged access to divine mysteries; his visionary status was unique and his experience could not be duplicated. Rabbinic tradition generally separated the Sinai revelation from all other divine-human encounters.

Fraade has shown that the earliest rabbinic commentaries on the revelation at Sinai, including those attributed to Rabbi Akiba, understand the revelation to be a visual

²³⁸ Rowland writes, "It seems probable that esoteric traditions associated with Ezek 1 and similar passages were inherited by some of the early Tannaim from this apocalyptic milieu. These traditions (as in apocalyptic) had both an exegetical as well as a visionary or mystical dimension." Christopher Rowland, with Patricia Gibbons and Vicente Dobroruka, "Visionary Experience in Ancient Judaism and Christianity," in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism* (ed. A. D. DeConick; SBLSymS 11; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 46. Morray-Jones writes that visionary-mystical traditions "were inherited from apocalyptic circles and enthusiastically developed by some Tannaim, but were opposed by others, mainly because the same traditions were being developed by groups whom they regarded as heretical, including the various forms of Christianity and Gnosticism." Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition," *JJS* 43 (1992): 1.

²³⁹ See *y. Hag.* 2:1; 77a; *b. Hag.* 13a; *b. Šabbat* 80b. Cf. the warnings against visionary activity in *m. Meg.* 4:10; *t. Meg.* 4(3):31-34; *b. Meg.* 24a-b. See Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 73-97; Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 271-305. Rowland writes, "Knowledge of such things was something for those who were in a position to appreciate the mystery of God and safeguard these mysteries from abuse." *Ibid.*, 277.

²⁴⁰ The warning against excessive esoteric speculation in *m. Hag.* 2:1 suggests that many were engaged in such activity. Cf. *t. Meg.* 3(4).28, which notes that many expounded upon the *merkavah* but never saw it.

and audible experience of the divine *words*, rather than of God's face or form.²⁴¹ The words coming from God were seen as "hypostatized divine utterances in the form of flying flames, that burned themselves into the tablets of the decalogue."²⁴² What Moses and the Israelites "saw" on Sinai was the Torah. The critical, practical truths revealed in the written and oral Torah were the all-important revelation. Later rabbinic *haggadah*, however, contains conjecture on what Moses saw and learned about God and heaven on Sinai.

There was widespread rabbinic understanding that Moses' ascent of Sinai was to the heavenly realm.²⁴³ Moses received the dual Torah directly from heaven. Rabbinic midrashim connect Exod 7:1 ("See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh...") with Moses' ascent of Sinai, seeing the ascent as Moses' divine enthronement.²⁴⁴ There were also *merkavah* (divine throne) traditions in rabbinic interpretations of the Sinai theophany and the revelation of the law.²⁴⁵ Halperin demonstrates that later Jewish tradition connected Moses' ascent of Sinai with God's heavenly throne.²⁴⁶ *Exod. Rab.* 43:8 and later midrashim accuse the Israelites of wrongly contemplating the divine throne when God descended to Sinai to give the law to Moses; Halperin has shown that, in the rabbinic view, it was this contemplation of the living creatures carrying God's throne that

²⁴¹ Fraade, "Hearing and Seeing at Sinai," 251-54. See, e.g., *Sipre Deut.* 343 on Deut 33:2. Fraade cites *Sipre Num.* 103 on Num 12:8, where God is said to have communicated with Moses "visually" (במראה) rather than "plainly," as in the MT (וּמְרָאָה). This is also the interpretation of the LXX, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Peshitta, and the targumim, based on Exod 33:20. *Ibid.*, 254.

²⁴² Fraade, "Hearing and Seeing at Sinai," 253.

²⁴³ E.g. *Num. Rab.* on Exod 31:2, *Midr. Tehillim* on Ps 24:1 and on Ps 106:2. See Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 7 vols. (trans. H. Szold; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909-1938), 3.109-19; Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 188-215; Joseph P. Schultz, "Angelic Opposition to the Ascension of Moses and the Revelation of the Law," *JQR* 61 (1970-1971): 282-307.

²⁴⁴ Cf. midrashim on Deut 33:1, especially *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 32; also *Num. Rab.* on Exod 31:2; cf. *Deut. Rab.* 11.4, *Tg. Onq.* and *Tg. Ps-J.* Exod 24:10. See also Meeks, "Moses as God and King," 355-57.

²⁴⁵ See Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 2:304-309; 5:416-18.

²⁴⁶ David J. Halperin, *The Merkavah in Rabbinic Literature* (AOS 62; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1980), 128-133.

resulted in the idolatrous worship of the golden calf.²⁴⁷ This is evidence of the custom in some rabbinic circles of linking Exod 19 to the divine throne of Ezek 1 (*t. Meg.* 3 [4]:5; *b. Meg.* 31a), a connection that was possible because of rabbinic interpretation of Ps 68:17-18 (= MT Ps 68:18-19) as a reference to Moses' *merkavah* encounter on Sinai.²⁴⁸ Exod 19 was combined with Ezek 1 in synagogue lectionary readings for Shavuot; in rabbinic Judaism this festival came to be associated with the giving of the Torah on Sinai. Moses' ascent of Sinai was envisaged as the occasion of a *merkavah* vision.

The rabbinic assertion that all authoritative revelation (i.e., the written and oral Torah) stems from Moses on Sinai displays interaction with alternative revelatory traditions.²⁴⁹ The rabbis claimed Sinai as the origin of their interpretations of the written Torah in order to solidify the heavenly origin of the oral law: the Torah, which included the rabbinic interpretation of the written Torah, came directly from God to Moses in heaven, and was therefore the definitive and eternally valid revelation. Revelation from all other sources was rejected. The Tannaim stressed that all authentic revelation had to be transmitted exactly as it had been at Sinai.²⁵⁰ Moses had received the definitive disclosure of transcendent truths; no further mysteries remained in heaven to be revealed

²⁴⁷ Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 157-93.

²⁴⁸ Halperin shows that Origen knew of the connection between Moses' ascent of Sinai and the divine throne already in third century Palestine: *Hom. Ezech.* 1.6-8. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 331-33. Elior writes that this link occurred as early as the second century B.C.E. Rachel Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (trans. D. Louvish; Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004), 164. The LXX version of Ezek 43:2 links Sinai with the divine throne, via Ps 68:17 (MT Ps 68:18). See Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 58. Cf. the much later *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 12.22.

²⁴⁹ Hauser and Watson state, "...while rabbinic Judaism's understanding of the Torah and its interpretation would eventually come to dominate Judaism, early in the first millennium CE, when midrash was first being developed, rabbinic Judaism was still in competition with other forms of Judaism." Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, "Introduction and Overview," in *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Ancient Period*, 26. As Nickelsburg has noted, the notion of revelation, by its very nature, has polemical import: revelation "often serves polemically to distinguish this community from others that are perceived to be unenlightened or the purveyors of bogus and deceptive revelation." Nickelsburg, "The Nature and Function of Revelation," 91.

²⁵⁰ See Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition*, 179.

to any other visionary.²⁵¹ Although aware of apocalyptic accounts of esoteric revelation,²⁵² the rabbis emphasized that authoritative revelation (esoteric or exoteric) came only through Moses, or Moses' legitimate successors. Some traditions portrayed important rabbinic figures, such as R. Johanan ben Zakkai, as learned in esoteric secrets.²⁵³ Halperin has maintained that the elevation of these figures as experts in mysteries is to show that they have, indeed, "inherited the mantle of Moses"; he further claims, "we might conjecture that this was the rabbis' retort to the parallel claims of the apocalyptists."²⁵⁴ Mosaic authority was invoked to counter alternative revelatory traditions.

The rabbis affirmed that the Sinai revelation was direct and unmediated.²⁵⁵ The emphasis on Moses as recipient of unmediated revelation has polemical overtones. The insistence that God's revelation to Moses was complete and direct, rather than through an agent, is a rejection of traditions, especially Enochic, that posit divine revelation to alternative visionaries through angelic mediation.²⁵⁶

The rabbinic reaction against esoteric speculation was in part influenced by rival Enochic claims. Rabbinic tradition was tellingly silent about or negative toward

²⁵¹ *Deut. Rab.* 8:6 states: "You must not say that another Moses will arise and bring us another Torah from Heaven. I, therefore, tell you, "It is not in the Heaven, that is to say, no part of it has remained in Heaven."

²⁵² See, e.g., Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition," 1; Rowland, "Visionary Experience in Ancient Judaism and Christianity," 46.

²⁵³ E.g. *b. Sukk.* 28a (= *B. Bat.* 134a), the roots of which may go back to the Tannaitic period.

²⁵⁴ Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature*, 138. Cf. the story of R. Johanan's successors who enter paradise in *t. Hag.* 2:2.

²⁵⁵ Goldin writes that rabbinic tradition emphasized "not by means of an angel and not by means of a messenger" with respect to God's revelation to Moses on Sinai (*'Abot R. Nat.* B and elsewhere). Judah H. Goldin, "Not by Means of an Angel and Not by Means of a Messenger," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (ed. J. Neusner; SHR 14; Leiden: Brill, 1968), 418-20, 424.

²⁵⁶ In Enochic lore, Enoch the visionary is accompanied by an *angelus interpretes* (usually Uriel but also Michael and Reuel/Raguel) who guides and interprets visions. Cf. the angel in *T. Levi* 5 and Yahoel's role in the *Apoc. Ab.* Uriel is an interpreting angel for Ezra in *4 Ezra* (5:32; 7:49, et al.) and *2 Bar.*, but in neither text does an angel interpret for Moses.

Enoch.²⁵⁷ A pointed example is *Gen. Rab.* 25:1, which claims that God “took” Enoch *in death*. This denial of Enoch’s ascent to heaven reveals antagonism toward apocalyptic traditions of Enoch’s heavenly ascent. It is likely that the elevation of Moses’ visionary status in some rabbinic texts was in polemical interaction with Enochic claims. Some rabbinic writings grant to Moses the visionary qualities of Enoch. Borgen writes, “In some texts, such as in *Sifre Deut.* 357 on Deut 34:5 and *b. Sotah* 13b it is probable that traditions about Enoch have influenced traditions about Moses.”²⁵⁸

Meeks has demonstrated the polemical nature of some rabbinic portrayals of Moses. Discomfort with heavenly ascent traditions, both for Moses and for other patriarchs, resulted in a downplaying of Moses’ visionary ascent. Meeks writes:

It is almost a commonplace in rabbinic traditions that when Moses “went up to God” on Mt. Sinai, he ascended “on high,” that is, to heaven... Even in passages where a mild polemic can be detected against too great an exaltation of Moses—and perhaps against dangerous mystical preoccupation with heavenly mysteries—Moses’ ascent is taken for granted, as in the midrash on Psalm 106.2: “Not even Moses who went up into heaven to receive the torah from God’s hand into his own could fathom heaven’s depth.” The reaction was sometimes so strong that Moses’ ascent was denied—and Elijah’s along with it!—as in *Mekilta* on Exodus 19.20.²⁵⁹

The rabbinic traditions that were reluctant to expand upon the heavenly ascent motif clearly thought such speculation was dangerous, even when it involved the venerable Moses. Exalted visionary claims, even for Moses, are roundly rejected in some writings.

Polemical overtones are also evident in rabbinic accounts that accent the mystical transformation Moses undergoes on Sinai. One example is the reference to Moses’ physical transformation on Sinai in *’Abot R. Nat.* 1:1: “R. Nathan said: “Why was Moses made to wait all these six days before the word came to rest upon him? So that he might be purged of all food and drink in his bowels, before he was sanctified and became like

²⁵⁷ See Alexander, “From Son of Adam to Second God,” 109.

²⁵⁸ Peder Borgen, “Heavenly Ascent in Philo,” 250.

²⁵⁹ Meeks, *The Prophet-King*, 205.

the ministering angels.”²⁶⁰ Yet the following statement by R. Mattia ben Heresh strongly denies that Moses’ six days in the cloud had anything to do with mystical bodily transformation; it was, in his view, to bring Moses to a state of fear and awe, the appropriate readiness to receive the Torah. Polemics with ascended visionary traditions are detectable here: there is a reluctance to apply to Moses the exalted, angelic qualities of other visionaries.²⁶¹

The esoteric traditions of Jewish sectarians, such as those at Qumran, as well as those of Jewish groups with apocalyptic tendencies, such as those that produced pseudepigraphic texts, entered rabbinic Judaism sometime after 70 C.E. Schiffman summarizes, “Sometime in the amoraic period and continuing into the early Middle Ages, these speculative approaches gave rise to an experiential, practical mysticism in which the aim of the adept was to experience visions of the divine throne.”²⁶² These traditions are preserved in *Hekhalot* literature and have roots in (non-rabbinic) apocalyptic traditions of the Second Temple period. As we have seen, these apocalyptic texts and traditions influenced rabbinic portrayals of Moses’ ascent and revelation. In an effort to preserve Moses’ singular visionary authority and their own interpretations of what constituted basic Judaism, the rabbis presented Moses as the superlative visionary and sole recipient of transcendent truth. Only visionaries in the chain of Mosaic tradition

²⁶⁰ Judah Goldin, trans., *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* (Yale Judaica Series 10; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 3.

²⁶¹ Cf. Jacob as the earthly incarnation of the archangel Israel in the first cent. C.E. *Pr. Jos.* Meeks cites Moses *haggadah* (including *t. Sotah* 4.8, *b. Sotah* 13b) that link Moses’ ascent of Sinai “on the wings of the *Shekina*” to his death and burial, concluding that “the rabbis sought to render harmless a dangerous form of speculation.” *The Prophet-King*, 211. Presenting Moses as one who, like Enoch, never died, was clearly unacceptable. It is a rejection of Enochic claims.

²⁶² Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition*, 264. Cf. *ibid.*, 112-113. See also Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 271-305; Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 73-97.

were considered acceptable. Alternative visionary claims, such as those attributed to Enoch, were rejected.

2.7 Summary

In this section we have traced the growth of visionary Moses tradition. Beginning in the second century B.C.E., with *Jubilees* and the *Exagoge*, we begin to see esoteric and apocalyptic assertions about Moses' visionary ascents that go beyond the traditional canonical portrayal. Authors of pro-Mosaic literature recast the Torah accounts of Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo, investing them with heightened revelatory claims. Moses is no longer the one who ascends to the mountaintop place where God descends; he is increasingly portrayed as an apocalyptic seer who ascends all the way to heaven and the divine throne. Moses' authority lies not just in the fact that to him was revealed the all-important exoteric law; he becomes the ultimate revealer of *all* knowledge, esoteric and exoteric. Moses becomes an expert in the secrets of heaven, the cosmos, and the entire drama of human history from creation to end times. This re-interpretation of Moses as expert in speculative knowledge was a way of solidifying his status as superlative visionary in Jewish tradition. We have demonstrated that these elevated assertions about Moses and his revelation were not arbitrary, but often emerged from the authors' dynamic dialogue with developing Enochic traditions. As Enoch's popularity grew, and legends about him grew increasingly dramatic, Jewish authors met this challenge to Mosaic primacy by either transferring to Moses the transcendent qualities previously attributed to Enoch, or by denigrating elevated claims of Enoch's greatness and the content of his revelation, even disputing his translation to heaven before death.

Revelation provided the vehicle for authors to define authoritative truth. Beginning in the fourth century B.C.E., as rival exalted patriarch revelatory traditions began to emerge, Enochic lore in particular, challenging Moses-centered Judaism, it became natural for pro-Moses/pro-Torah authors to respond by ascribing to the Sinai revelation whatever they believed to be normative Judaism. The presentation of the disclosure to Moses changed as new cultural assumptions about revelation changed. Past revelation to Moses was reworked to address the needs of the present, and to define a community's theology over against other revelatory traditions with their alternate versions of authoritative, transcendent truth. By casting Moses as the ultimate visionary in Jewish tradition, and placing their own ideas in the context of the revelation at Sinai (or Nebo), authors in the Mosaic strand of tradition could legitimize their own values and beliefs, as well as counter non-Mosaic alternatives that were seen as a threat to Torah faithfulness.

There is a continuous literary tradition from the second century B.C.E. to the second century C.E. and beyond of texts that portray Moses as a visionary seer of esoteric secrets. These writings give a Mosaic character to esoteric knowledge by placing it in the context of Sinai and Nebo. The texts examined above exhibit interaction with Enochic claims. Pseudo-Philo's *LAB* is a text that is situated chronologically between the earliest portrayals of Moses as exalted visionary (*Jubilees*, the *Exagoge*, and Philo) and the full-blown apocalypses of *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, which ascribe considerable speculative revelation to Moses. *LAB*'s narratives about Moses contain apocalyptic motifs that indicate an awareness of other apocalyptic ascent traditions, placing it in a long line of

tradition elevating Moses. The next section of this study will focus on *LAB*, a text that sheds light on the growth of visionary Moses tradition.

CHAPTER THREE

PSEUDO-PHILO AND MOSES: THE TEXT OF *LAB* AND ITS SHAPING OF VISIONARY MOSES TRADITION

3.1 The Text of *LAB* and its Apocalyptic Expansions

LAB is an anonymous text that is extant in multiple Latin manuscripts from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries; there are eighteen complete and three fragmentary manuscripts.²⁶³ The Latin text is a translation from the Greek, and behind the Greek was a Hebrew original.²⁶⁴ There is also a partial retroversion into Hebrew of some portions of *LAB* in the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*.²⁶⁵ Because *LAB* was transmitted along with Latin translations of Philo's writings, it was long thought to be the work of Philo of Alexandria, but differences in interpretive style, themes, and theology, as well as in the original language of composition, indicate that Philo was not the author. Cohn and Harrington have established the Palestinian provenance of *LAB*: the importance of Temple, sacrifice, and law, as well as the interest in angelology and eschatology, are consistent with texts of

²⁶³ See Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," *OTP* 2.298, and his fuller discussion of the extant manuscripts in Daniel J. Harrington, "Introduction Critique," in Daniel J. Harrington, Jacques Cazeaux, Charles Perrot, and Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques* (vol. 1 of Sources Chrétiennes 229-230; Paris: Cerf, 1976), 15-59. The *editio princeps* of *LAB* was published by Johannes Sichardus, *Philonis Iudaei Alexandrini Libri Antiquitatum, Quaestionum et Solutionum in Genesin, de Essaeis, de Nominibus Hebraicis, de Mundo* (Basel: Adamus Petrus, 1527). *LAB* was re-introduced to the modern scholarly world by Leopold Cohn, "An Apocryphal Work Ascribed to Philo of Alexandria," *JQR* 10 (1898): 277-332. The Latin text of *LAB* was not readily available to scholars until the edition of Kisch in 1949; Guido Kisch, *Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (Publications in Medieval Studies, University of Notre Dame; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1949).

²⁶⁴ L. Cohn, "An Apocryphal Work Ascribed to Philo of Alexandria," 277-332; Daniel J. Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo," *OTP* 2.298-99; idem, "The Original Language of Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*," *HTR* 63 (1970): 503-14.

²⁶⁵ See Daniel J. Harrington, ed. and trans., *The Hebrew Fragments of Pseudo-Philo* (SBLTT 3, Pseudepigrapha Series 3; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1974).

Palestinian origin.²⁶⁶ Additional evidence for Palestinian provenance includes the text's composition in Hebrew, its reliance upon a Palestinian biblical text rather than the LXX, and the text's substantial parallels with the Palestinian apocalypses of *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*.

There is a scholarly consensus that *LAB* was written shortly before or after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.²⁶⁷ *LAB* retells the history of Israel from Adam to the death of Saul; it most closely resembles texts of the genre Rewritten Bible, including *Jubilees*, *1 En.* 85-90, and the *Genesis Apocryphon*.²⁶⁸ The text of *LAB* follows an episodic narrative pattern, focusing on key biblical figures from Israel's past²⁶⁹ and emphasizing the critical importance of faithfulness to the covenant. Although *LAB* is based on the biblical account, it leaves out significant portions of the biblical text; *LAB* also freely reshapes and embellishes the biblical narrative with popular legends and traditions that predate the author. *LAB* is the first witness to some of these legends; the text also includes material that is not known elsewhere and may well be Pseudo-Philo's

²⁶⁶ L. Cohn, "An Apocryphal Work Ascribed to Philo of Alexandria," 277-332; Daniel J. Harrington, "The Biblical Text of Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*," *CBQ* 33 (1971): 1-17; idem, "Pseudo-Philo," *OTP* 2.300; idem, "The Text-Critical Situation of Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*," *RBén* 83 (1973): 383-88. See also Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.210-11

²⁶⁷ Jacobson has summarized the scholarly opinions in his commentary, 1.199-210. Jacobson's argument for a post-70 C.E. date is persuasive. Ibid. Nickelsburg's observation is salient: "In any case, whether one dates the work before, during, or after the Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem, its message is clear: in a time of deep distress and doubt as to whether the covenantal promises are still viable, God's actions in the past provide hope for the nation." Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 269.

²⁶⁸ On this genre, see esp. P. Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," 99-121. The canon of the Hebrew Bible was not yet fixed at the time of Pseudo-Philo's writing, although there is widespread scholarly consensus that the Torah was closed and considered authoritative before the second century B.C.E. See Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 175-77.

²⁶⁹ On *LAB*'s focus on prominent figures from Israel's early history, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Good and Bad Leaders in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms* (ed. J. Collins and G. W. E. Nickelsburg; SBLSCS 12; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1980), 49-65.

own creation. Although *LAB* is dated to the first century, the traditions and legends it contains may be much earlier.

Many scholars have seen *LAB* merely as a repository of legends and interpretations of the Hebrew Bible. Najman has written that “there is a general consensus among scholars who work on Second Temple literature that the essential function of Rewritten Bible is interpretive.”²⁷⁰ There is evidence in the text of *LAB* that Pseudo-Philo’s purpose was not just to “fill in the gaps” of the Hebrew Bible, or to explicate the biblical text. The author’s narrative expansions of Israel’s history reveal his desire not only to supplement or explain the Hebrew Bible, but also to rework it—to reshape it according to his own theological viewpoint.²⁷¹ Pseudo-Philo addresses the dire situation of his Palestinian Jewish community often by *revising* the biblical accounts, inserting into these narratives speeches and events that reflect his own beliefs and concerns. Pseudo-Philo’s reshaping of Israel’s past history is a vehicle to proclaim his view of the present as authoritative truth: his Jewish community’s current punishment by its Gentile enemies is the result of unfaithfulness to the covenant. A return to Moses and covenant is urgent and necessary for the restoration of God’s favor and protection.

There have been numerous attempts to ascertain Pseudo-Philo’s interpretive agenda. Earlier scholars have variously suggested that Pseudo-Philo wrote his text to defend or to counter Samaritanism, to attack the cult of Mithra, the Pharisees, Hellenists, Essenes, or Gnostics, or to oppose universalistic tendencies or exogamy, but none of

²⁷⁰ Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 43.

²⁷¹ Cf. the conclusion of Hayward: “*LAB* appears not simply as a transmitter, but also as a moulder of traditional material.” C. T. R. Hayward, “The Figure of Adam in Pseudo-Philo’s Biblical Antiquities.” *JSJ* 23 (1992): 20. With reference to Pseudo-Philo’s practice of transferring biblical events to another geographical location, Harrington writes, “it seems to reveal a conscious effort on Ps.-Philo’s part to rewrite the biblical text in the light of his theological preoccupations.” Daniel J. Harrington, “Biblical Geography in Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*,” *BASOR* 220 (1975): 220.

these approaches has enjoyed scholarly consensus.²⁷² Recently, few scholars detect a prominent polemical interest on the author's part.²⁷³ Nevertheless, Pseudo-Philo's revisions of the biblical text invite speculation and further analysis. In some sections, the author has carefully constructed his narrative with an apocalyptic bent that is not present in the canonical account. Apocalyptic amplifications are most evident in episodes involving the covenant patriarchs Abraham, Kenaz,²⁷⁴ and Moses: Pseudo-Philo has deliberately reshaped the stories of these biblical figures in order to insert apocalyptic themes and motifs into the context of their covenant revelation. The invention of esoteric revelation to Kenaz and the considerable expansion of the revelation to Moses to include apocalyptic characteristics must be significant. Pseudo-Philo's modifications of the biblical account suggest interaction with other apocalyptic writings.

Pseudo-Philo's use of apocalyptic features and motifs is an underexplored area of research on *LAB*. *LAB*'s parallels to the apocalypses of *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch* have been well documented, but the nature and purpose of *LAB*'s apocalyptic insertions remains to be further elucidated. It is my view that Pseudo-Philo's incorporation of apocalyptic elements has polemical implications. There is evidence in *LAB* that the author was aware of developing Jewish apocalyptic traditions (see below). Pseudo-Philo has intentionally shaped his narrative of Israel's history to insert apocalyptic claims into the accounts of covenant revelation. This is most clearly evident in his treatment of Moses, particularly

²⁷² Louis H. Feldman, "Prolegomenon," in *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo* (ed. M. R. James; New York: Ktav, 1971), xxxiii-xlvii. See also Perrot, SC 230, 28-39.

²⁷³ E.g., Perrot writes, "*LAB* n'est pas l'oeuvre d'un polémiste; ce n'est ni un pamphlet, ni le traité d'un théologien démontrant quelque thèse. Le but du Pseudo-Philon est d'écrire une histoire de l'Alliance visant l'intérêt et l'édification d'un large public." Perrot, SC 230, 29.

²⁷⁴ Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, is but a name in Judg 3:9, 11. In his lengthy section about Kenaz (chs. 25-28), Pseudo-Philo has created a history for this figure, presenting him as the recipient of a covenant and apocalyptic revelation. Pseudo-Philo has also altered Kenaz's biblical ancestry to suit his interpretive purposes.

in the transformation of the canonical accounts of Moses' visionary mountain ascents. In this dissertation I propose that the apocalyptic nature of Pseudo-Philo's narratives about Moses on Sinai and Nebo displays interactive dialogue with alternative Jewish exalted visionary traditions. In *LAB*, sections about Moses have been purposefully assembled and composed in order to portray Moses as an apocalyptic seer. In my view, this presentation of Moses as ascended visionary and recipient of esoteric revelation is evidence that *LAB*'s dialogue with other Jewish apocalyptic traditions is far greater than has previously been demonstrated. *LAB* does not claim to be a revelation, yet the revelatory elements ascribed to Moses in the work suggest a desire to position Moses over against traditions about other elevated patriarchal visionary figures, notably Enoch. Pseudo-Philo's reshaping of the biblical Mosaic accounts provides insight into to the author's purpose, and informs the study of the development of Jewish apocalypticism. As the remainder of this dissertation will seek to substantiate, Pseudo-Philo's revision of the traditional canonical text is a deliberate attribution to Moses of the transcendent qualities of Enoch. While evidence of literary dependence on early Enochic texts is difficult to assess or prove, it is clear that Pseudo-Philo was aware of exalted Enochic traditions²⁷⁵ and drew upon them to make his specific claims about Moses. In its apocalyptic portrayal of Moses, a sub-theme of *LAB* is detectible: Moses, who ascended to heaven from Sinai and Nebo, is the superlative patriarch and visionary of all secrets, including esoteric knowledge of protology and eschatology.

²⁷⁵ See esp. 34:2-3, and further evidence below.

3.2 A History of Research into *LAB*'s Apocalyptic Features and Motifs

The importance of *LAB* for the study of first century Judaism and the history of biblical exegesis has been recognized. Critical scholarship has established the numerous and substantial parallels between *LAB* and Jewish midrashic and rabbinic texts; these parallels have been summarized by Feldman, Perrot, Bogaert, Jacobson, and others. The biblical elements of *LAB* have been analyzed.²⁷⁶ But although *LAB* is widely recognized to contain apocalyptic features, relatively little work has been done on the apocalyptic motifs and their significance for the study of the development of Jewish apocalypticism. Because *LAB* primarily reflects normative first century Palestinian synagogue beliefs, the esoteric elements of the work were understood to originate in extant or yet-to-be-discovered midrashic texts.²⁷⁷ Yet as early as 1917, James noted certain affinities in *LAB* to Enochic literature, *Jubilees*, *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*.²⁷⁸ Erwin Goodenough (1935) pointed out recurring phrases consistent with what he termed “the mystic type of Judaism,”²⁷⁹ and Marc Philonenko (1967) sought the source of *LAB*'s imagery within the

²⁷⁶ Harrington has established that *LAB* follows a Palestinian biblical text type. Daniel J. Harrington, “The Biblical Text of Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*,” 1-17. Vermès has determined important exegetical traditions behind the work. Geza Vermès, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism. Haggadic Studies* (StPB 4; Leiden: Brill, 1973). See also idem, *Postbiblical Jewish Studies* (ed. J. Neusner; SJLA 8; Leiden: Brill, 1975). Bauckham has examined *LAB* as midrash, in Richard Bauckham, “The Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum of Pseudo-Philo and the Gospels as ‘Midrash,’” in *Gospel Perspectives III: Studies in Midrash and Historiography* (ed. R. T. France and D. Wenham; Sheffield: JSOT, 1983), 33-76. Murphy has done narrative analysis on the work as a whole. Frederick Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

²⁷⁷ Cf. the statement of Feldman: “While, to be sure, some of the traditions found in *LAB* are not found in extant midrashim, so many are found that it is safe to conclude that if the many lost midrashim should reappear we would be able to find parallels with practically all the traditions embodied in *LAB*.” Feldman, “Prolegomenon,” lxviii.

²⁷⁸ M. R. James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo* (London: SPCK, 1917; repr., New York: Ktav, 1971), 43-58.

²⁷⁹ Goodenough, *By Light, Light. The Mystical Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism*, 265-66.

compass of Essenism and Gnosticism.²⁸⁰ Despite this early recognition of apocalyptic motifs and esoteric tendencies, many commentators on Pseudo-Philo have downplayed these elements, skimming over them with hardly a comment. The usual course has been to cite parallels in other apocalyptic texts (especially *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*), and leave it at that, without explication. Perrot, though acknowledging the author's use of apocalyptic elements, even writes that that *LAB* "n'a rien d'ésotérique, sans dualisme outrancier ni pessimisme."²⁸¹

There are some notable exceptions to the lack of attention to Pseudo-Philo's apocalyptic features. Michael Stone's pivotal essay (1976) on the "lists of revealed things" in apocalyptic literature makes the point that Pseudo-Philo, *4 Ezra*, and *2 Baruch* (and other works) used pre-existing lists of items seen by visionaries: a common apocalyptic revelatory tradition lies behind these works, evident in the formulaic content of the visionary's revealed speculative knowledge.²⁸² Bauckham recognized *LAB* 19:10 as a cosmic tour by Moses, an attribution to Moses of the kind of heavenly tours found in tour apocalypse tradition.²⁸³ Bauckham's discussion of the passage, however, is limited to noting the items in the revelation that reveal heavenly ascent, as well as the specifically Mosaic references to sanctuary, and their parallels in *2 Baruch* and elsewhere. Stone and Bauckham, however, begin to trace the specifically Mosaic thread through apocalyptic visionary ascent tradition, placing *LAB* in that trajectory and suggesting Mosaic dialogue with claims about Enoch and other exalted visionaries. The analyses of Stone and

²⁸⁰ Marc Philonenko, "Essénisme et gnose chez le Pseudo-Philon. Le symbolisme de la lumière dans le Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum," *Numen Supplements* 12 (1967): 401-12.

²⁸¹ Perrot, SC 230, 23.

²⁸² Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature," 414-54.

²⁸³ Richard Bauckham, "Early Jewish Visions of Hell," *JTS* 41 (1990): 355-85, esp. 365-66; also idem, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (NovTSup 93; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 60-66.

Bauckham are limited primarily to the vocabulary of the catalog of revealed items in Moses' vision in *LAB* 19.10.

More recently, Howard Jacobson (1996) in his commentary maintained that Pseudo-Philo was familiar with themes and imagery that recur in later Jewish mysticism, though cautious in his use of such.²⁸⁴ Jacobson, echoing Philonenko, wrote that Pseudo-Philo seems to have known elements of מעשה בראשית, i.e., Jewish mystical speculation about creation. In this important assertion, however, Jacobson cites only passages in *LAB* that have to do with David and Kenaz, and none about Moses, except for a statement that “*locus generationis*” (“place of creation,” or “place of the first-fashioned one”) in God’s revelation to Moses in 13:8 has parallels in Jewish mystical texts.²⁸⁵ Although Jacobson, Murphy, and others have documented *LAB*’s concern for primeval and eschatological matters, an underexplored aspect of scholarly research is Pseudo-Philo’s concern to link *Moses*, specifically, not just to the particular history of Israel, but to the primeval and eschatological history of the world. An analysis of the creational motifs of paradise, protoplast, and the tree of life as elements of God’s revelation to *Moses*, as well as the secrets of the end times revealed to him, relays important information about Moses’ role in *LAB*. Scholarly discussion has viewed Moses’ primary role as that of covenant mediator and intercessor, but my research asserts that *LAB*’s exaltation of Moses is broader than previously thought: Moses’ superlative status lies also in his role as recipient of esoteric revelation of heavenly, primeval and eschatological secrets obtained in his visionary ascent and heavenly and cosmic tour, in the manner of other ascended

²⁸⁴ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.252.

²⁸⁵ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.252.

visionary seers (notably Enoch). This counters David Tiede's conclusion that Moses' role has been *de*-emphasized in *LAB*.²⁸⁶

Also underexplored in scholarship are *LAB*'s references to glory and luminosity with reference to Moses. To date there are no extended discussions of Moses' luminosity in *LAB* aside from observation (Feldman, Perrot, Bogaert, Jacobson) that Pseudo-Philo has shifted the biblical and midrashic episode of Moses' shining face from his second ascent of Sinai to his first ascent. Yet Pseudo-Philo's need to expand Moses' episodes of luminosity begs explanation. (Indeed, Jacobson notes that *LAB* "struggles to incorporate this theme" in Moses' first ascent of Sinai).²⁸⁷ Given the recurrence of the luminosity motif in apocalyptic literature (especially *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, and *2 Enoch*), *LAB*'s particular use of it is worthy of more attention. Willem Smelik has briefly discussed transformation into light in *LAB*, but not with respect to Moses.²⁸⁸ This dissertation explores *LAB*'s luminosity motif in depth, and maintains that Pseudo-Philo has intentionally entwined the luminosity motif with other apocalyptic technical terminology in order grant to Moses and to the righteous an expanded transcendent visionary experience.

There has been a need for comprehensive analysis of Pseudo-Philo's use of allusions to glory and temple in sections about Moses, as well of the apocalyptic nature of certain motifs and vocabulary used with respect to Moses' visionary ascents (including revelation of protology and eschatology, cosmic phenomena, and journeys to heaven and paradise). These potentially significant apocalyptic elements have merited only a few

²⁸⁶ Tiede, *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker*, 183.

²⁸⁷ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.483.

²⁸⁸ Willem Smelik, "On Mystical Transformation of the Righteous into Light in Judaism," *JSJ* 26 (1995): 128-29.

comments on the pertinent verses in commentaries. To my knowledge, there is no work that follows the trajectory of these motifs through ascended visionary Moses material, or that establishes *LAB*'s place in that trajectory. Although Wayne Meeks has covered exalted Moses traditions, his discussion of Moses' heavenly ascents and special revelation is limited to three pages, with *LAB* granted two brief paragraphs.²⁸⁹ Larry Hurtado, in his discussion of exalted Moses traditions, allots Pseudo-Philo one sentence.²⁹⁰ This dissertation is my modest contribution to the extended discussion on visionary Moses traditions.

3.3 Foundations and Presentation

My research examines the panoply of apocalyptic motifs and vocabulary ascribed in *LAB* to Moses in his mountain ascents and revelation, and attempts to establish its possible dialogue with alternative exalted visionary traditions. I build primarily upon the formidable work of James, Stone, Meeks, Bauckham, and Jacobson, who have demonstrated, to varying degrees, the esoteric tendencies of Pseudo-Philo, and who have documented numerous similarities and parallels to apocalyptic literature.

One of the challenges in research on *LAB* is the fact that the extant Latin text is a translation of a Greek translation of an original Hebrew text. Because of the multiple layers of translation history and the subtle changes in nuance that result the further the translator is removed from the original language, the original intent of the author is often unclear. Some scholars content themselves with the extant Latin text and make few assertions about the probable Hebrew original. In his recent translation and commentary,

²⁸⁹ Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, 156-59.

²⁹⁰ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, 57.

Jacobson has proposed numerous emendations of previous translations that would more accurately reflect the original Hebrew text. Some of his reconstructions have opened up new avenues in terms of apocalyptic import of the passages, which I explore.

The following analysis of *LAB*'s apocalyptic features used with reference to Moses' visionary ascents seeks to establish the function and import of such claims for Moses, specifically to answer the question of why Pseudo-Philo has portrayed Moses as an apocalyptic seer with full knowledge of exoteric and esoteric secrets. My conclusion (summarized in chapter 9) is that Pseudo-Philo has made use of the established *typos* of ascended visionary patriarch in order to attribute to Moses the fullness of claims made for other apocalyptic visionaries, especially Enoch. Chapter 4 discusses the cosmic significance of Moses' mountain ascents and heavenly vision. Chapter 5 examines temple and heavenly throne motifs in Moses' visions, and chapter 6 the themes of luminosity and glory. Chapter 7 is an analysis of the ascription to Moses of esoteric secrets of protology and eschatology. Chapter 8 discusses the apocalyptic import of other vocabulary used in Moses' ascents and revelation. The conclusion of this dissertation assesses *LAB*'s place in the growth and development of visionary Moses tradition.

CHAPTER FOUR

MOUNTAIN ASCENT AND HEAVENLY VISION IN *LAB*

4.1 Mountain Ascent and Cosmic Significance

Sinai is the locus of theophany and divine revelation in the written Torah. As discussed above (2.1), the canonical account of Moses' Sinai ascent emphasizes God's *descent* to the earthly mountain. Moses does not enter heaven: he does, however, glimpse heaven from the vantage point of Sinai's summit, which is depicted as a cosmic location linking heaven and earth. From atop Sinai, Moses beholds the lower firmament that is the floor of God's celestial temple. Just prior to his death, Moses has another extraordinary visionary experience on Nebo. Although Moses' divine encounters on Sinai and Nebo are exceptional and unparalleled, the revelation Moses receives is practical and intelligible. The written Torah is reluctant to develop or draw attention to the esoteric nature of Moses' ascents or received knowledge.

In *LAB*'s recasting of the Hebrew Bible, however, Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo take a dramatic turn: they become the place of departure for cosmic journeys and the revelation of heavenly secrets. Like Ezekiel the Tragedian, the author of *Jubilees*, and Philo before him, Pseudo-Philo has gone beyond the biblical framework and has amplified the scope and import of Moses' mountain ascents. As I have demonstrated above (2.4), dialogue with Enochic claims is in evidence in the *Exagoge*, *Jubilees*, and Philo; these texts appropriate Enochic characteristics and apply them to Moses in order to augment Moses' visionary status. In my view, Pseudo-Philo's addition of apocalyptic

features to Moses' ascents evokes Enochic accounts and displays a similar concern to transfer to Moses the transcendent qualities and content of Enoch's ascent and revelation.

Ascent to the deity is a recurrent motif in the writings of antiquity. In ancient Near Eastern literature, the thrones of the gods were often on top of high mountains.²⁹¹ In biblical heavenly throne visions, God's throne is located not on a mountaintop but in the temple or the heavens, or it is mobile (cf. Ezek 1:26; 10:1; Isa 6:1; 66:1; Dan 7:9; also LXX Ps 10:4 [MT 11:4], 102:19 [MT 103:19]).²⁹² Though the Hebrew Bible incorporates the Canaanite notion of the cosmic mountain as the nexus between heaven and earth (particularly for Zion, and to a lesser extent for Sinai), it situates the reception of visions on the mountain, in the temple, or elsewhere on earth.²⁹³ Moses, the Israelite elders, Elijah, and Ezekiel have mountaintop visionary experiences. In certain pseudepigraphic accounts, however, mountains become the point of departure for celestial journeys and esoteric revelation; as Dean-Otting notes, texts such as *1 Enoch*, the *Testament of Levi*, and *3 Baruch* "have moved the very mountain top and Temple setting into the heavens."²⁹⁴ Beginning with the *Book of the Watchers* (*1 En.* 1-36), visionary ascents to the heavenly realm and God's celestial temple and throne are described.²⁹⁵ Enoch ascends to God's "great house" in heaven and has a vision of the

²⁹¹ See Geo Widengren, "Psalm 110 und das sakrale Königtum in Israel," in P. A. H. Neumann, ed., *Zur neueren Psalmentforschung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 191.

²⁹² But see Exod 15:13-17, which incorporates the ancient Near Eastern motif of procession to a mountaintop temple where divine enthronement takes place.

²⁹³ On the cosmic mountain motif in the Hebrew Bible, see Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*; Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 145-76. See also above, Section 2.1.1.

²⁹⁴ Dean-Otting, *Heavenly Journeys: A Study of the Motif in Hellenistic Jewish Literature*, 6. Ascents to heaven are recounted in *1 En.* 14; 39; 71; *T. Levi* 2-5; *L.A.E. (Vita)* 25-29; *T. Ab.* 10 (Rec. A); *Apoc. Zeph.* 1-2; *Ascen. Isa.* 7; Rev 4 (implied); *Apoc. Ab.* 15; *2 En.* 3-22. In *Apoc. Ab.* 9:7, Abraham's ascent is "from the place which I will show you on a high mountain." In *Ascen. Isa.* 2:8, Isaiah and "those who believe in ascension to heaven dwell on a mountain."

²⁹⁵ Klijn lists references to the concept of a heavenly temple in *OTP* 1.617: *1 En.* 90:28-29; 1Q32; 2Q24; 5Q15; 4QFlor; Tob 14:5; *Sib. Or.* 5.402, 414-44; *Jub.* 1:27-29. Not all apocalyptic ascent accounts

divine glory/*kavod* on the heavenly throne (*I En.* 14-16²⁹⁶). Enoch travels to the “mountain whose summit reached to heaven” (*I En.* 17:2²⁹⁷); he journeys to the upper heavens and to the depths of the abyss (*I En.* 17-19), then back to the mountain paradise throne of God (*I En.* 24-25). Levi has a vision of a high mountain where he sees the heavens opened (*T. Levi* 2:6); he then enters the layers of heaven and sees God on the divine throne. In these earliest heavenly tour accounts, the seer’s ascent takes place in a dream vision; the heavenly realm is often situated on a mountain at the extremities of the earth.

I Enoch and other early apocalypses use the typology of Mosaic mountain ascent and revelation, combined with the throne visions of Isa 6 and Ezek 1, but they also incorporate ideas from the pluralistic Hellenistic world, including the motif of the heavenly journey and an interest in the content of heavenly realm.²⁹⁸ Widengren has observed the similarities between pseudepigraphic ascent texts and Mesopotamian accounts of the heavenly enthronement of kings.²⁹⁹ Apocalyptic ascent texts modify the biblical *typos* of visionary mountain ascent in a dramatic way, enhancing it to include heavenly journeys, tours of the cosmos, and esoteric revelation. The alternative visionaries elevated in *I Enoch* and the *Testament of Levi* have been granted the Mosaic features of mountain ascent and extraordinary revelation, but the additional transcendent

include a vision of the divine throne: see, e.g., *T. Levi* 2-5; *I En.* 39-44; 60; 71; *2 En.* 3-22; *Ascen. Isa.* 6-11.

²⁹⁶ The heavenly throne is on top of a mountain in *I En.* 18:8; 24:3; and 25:3.

²⁹⁷ This and all further translations of *I En.* are by George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *I Enoch: A New Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004). Cf. Moses’ ascent to God’s throne on Sinai, which reaches “till the folds of heaven” in the *Exagoge*, lines 68-69.

²⁹⁸ On heavenly journeys in the literature of antiquity, see Bousset, *Die Himmelsreise der Seele*.

²⁹⁹ Geo Widengren, “The Ascension of the Apostle of God and the Heavenly Book,” *UUA* 7 (1950): 1-111. See also Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 34; Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic*. On Enochic literature specifically, see VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*. For the motif of heavenly enthronement in apocalyptic texts, see the *Exagoge*; *Dan* 7; *I En.* 35-71; *T. Levi* 8; *2 En.* 24-36.

claims of ascent from the mountain to heaven and the disclosure of secret, heavenly knowledge add a new (non-biblical) dimension to the texts and signal a new attitude toward revelation.³⁰⁰ As Himmelfarb notes, “The vision of 1 Enoch 14 marks a crucial departure in the history of ancient Jewish literature.”³⁰¹ The abode of God and transcendent truths about God are now deemed accessible to humans. While rooted in the narratives, motifs, and vocabulary of the Hebrew Bible, these ascent texts and traditions are an entirely new development; they do not reflect the literature or traditions of the dominant strand of Judaism in the Second Temple period.³⁰² The assertion of ascent to heaven has profound theological consequences: the ascended visionaries in these apocalyptic texts, pre-dating Moses and Sinai and claiming revealed knowledge of “hidden things” (unknowable to humans according to Job 38 and Sir 1³⁰³), posed a challenge to the authority and primacy of Moses, the ultimate visionary of the Hebrew Bible and the recipient of the all-important and all-encompassing Torah.

As discussed above (1.2), speculative traditions about Enoch’s heavenly ascent and revelation proved troubling to many Jewish authors of the Second Temple period. Bowker writes that Jews addressed the claims about Enoch in two ways: they either transferred Enochic characteristics to other Jewish figures, or they attacked Enoch’s

³⁰⁰ Not all apocalypses contain the motif of heavenly ascent. *4 Ezra*, for example, denies the possibility of heavenly ascent to human visionaries (4:8; 21-23).

³⁰¹ Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 9.

³⁰² Stone, e.g., writes that this reformulation of biblical narratives, using biblical stories but adding to them the notion of the supreme importance of esoteric revelation (*secret* knowledge), is “utterly different in character from the treatment of that text possible in the Rabbinic world. This reflects, it is maintained, not merely a different literary convention or exegetical technique, but a different attitude toward inspiration.” Stone, “Lists of the Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature,” 444-45.

³⁰³ E.g. Sir 1:3: “The height of heaven, the breadth of the earth, the abyss, and wisdom – who can search them out?”

integrity.³⁰⁴ In chapter 2, I discussed the various ways in which Second Temple pro-Mosaic authors incorporated Enochic features into their portrayals of Moses, recapturing Moses' unique authority by expanding his visionary profile with Enochic elements.

It is clear that Pseudo-Philo was aware of expanded traditions about Enoch, either written or oral (see esp. 34:2-3, which reveals knowledge of the story of the watchers from *I En.* 6-16). It is striking that Pseudo-Philo depicts Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo as heavenly journeys, incorporating the apocalyptic motifs of mountain ascent to the heavenly realm and its secrets. Although *LAB* has been understood to reflect the mainstream Judaism of the first century,³⁰⁵ some of the features of its portrayal of Moses' visionary ascents more closely resemble apocalyptic accounts such as were suppressed by what came to be rabbinic Judaism.³⁰⁶ Significantly, Pseudo-Philo's modifications of the traditional canonical account contain apocalyptic motifs and vocabulary that are in common with traditions about Enoch's mountain/heavenly ascents. These similarities suggest more than coincidence or a common pool of source material for haggadic midrash:³⁰⁷ they seem to indicate that Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo in *LAB* were carefully composed to combine biblical elements, popular legends, and *Enochic characteristics*. Pseudo-Philo is connecting mountain ascent to heaven and secret revelation to Moses and the law and covenant mediated by him.

³⁰⁴ Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretation of Scripture*, 146. For a discussion of Jewish authors' interaction with Enochic claims, see Section 2.2-2.7 above.

³⁰⁵ See esp. Feldman, "Prolegomenon," lxviii-lxix; Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible*, 7. Jacobson, however, writes that *LAB* is quite "mainstream" or "normative," but that his mystic tendencies are his "one area of 'deviance.'" Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.251-52.

³⁰⁶ Pseudepigraphic apocalyptic texts were composed and preserved by Jewish groups that opposed the traditions of the rabbis; they were also preserved by Christian groups. Esoteric traditions from these texts eventually entered rabbinic Judaism, but not until after the composition of *LAB*. See Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 271-305; Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition*, 112-13, 264.

³⁰⁷ See Feldman, "Prolegomenon," lxviii, lxix.

4.2 Moses' Ascent to Heaven from Sinai: LAB 9, 11-13, 32

Before Moses' birth, his father Amram is informed of the extraordinary things that God will do through Moses (9:7-8). In the text, God states that God "will show him my covenant that no one has seen" (*ostendam ei testamentum meum quod non vidit ullus*).³⁰⁸ Although most translators and commentators see no difficulty with this phrase, Jacobson claims that the extant Latin text here cannot be correct: the use of the verb *ostendō* ("to show, display, or exhibit") with "covenant" (*testamentum*) is awkward, and the relative clause "that no one has seen" (*quod non vidit ullus*) makes no sense (Jacobson calls it "absurd"), since God has already made covenants with Noah (3:4, 11) and Abraham (8:3) in the text. Jacobson proposes that the translator has misread an original Hebrew בִּיתִי, writing בְּרִיתִי instead; he emends the phrase in 9:8 to read "...and I will show him my house that no one has seen."³⁰⁹ If this emendation correctly reflects the original Hebrew, our text contains a prediction to Amram of Moses' ascent from Sinai to the heavenly temple. Moses, like Enoch in *I En.* 14:10 and 71:5, will ascend to God's celestial "house." Jacobson further notes that the phrase "that no one has seen" (*quod non vidit ullus*) "was commonly used in Jewish and semi-Jewish texts to refer to creatures and phenomena tied to God."³¹⁰ Moses will be privy to divine secrets that are unavailable to other humans. This claim of exclusive disclosure to Moses recalls exalted traditions about Enoch, who was shown "what is hidden" (*I En.* 60:11) and who remarked, "I, Enoch, alone saw the visions...And no one among humans has seen as I saw" (*I En.* 19:3).

³⁰⁸ Harrington translation in *OTP* 2.316; the Cazeaux translation in *SC* 1.111 is identical: "je lui montrerai aussi mon alliance, que personne n'a vue."

³⁰⁹ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.414.

³¹⁰ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.415.

Moses does indeed see the heavenly prototype (the *exemplar*) of the tabernacle and its furnishings (11:15). This is not merely a vision from the mountaintop, as it is in Exod 25. It clear that Moses has, in fact, entered the heavens from Sinai, for his descent from the mountain is described by Pseudo-Philo thus: “And Moses came down. And when he had been bathed with invisible light, he went down to the place where the light of the sun and moon are” (*Et descendit Moyses. Et cum perfusus esset lumine invisibili, descendit in locum ubi lumen solis et lune est* - 12:1). Moses *descends* to the place of the sun and moon; this is a location above the earth, not on the earth (cf. Ps 19:5-6). *LAB* emphasizes the cosmic scope of Moses’ ascent. This recalls heavenly journey texts in which the place of the sun and the moon provide a vantage point for the seer to view earthly matters.³¹¹ In 3 *Bar.* 7:2 and 10:1, the sun and moon are located in the third heaven. *LAB*’s specific mention of the sun and moon in Moses’ descent is reminiscent of *I En.* 41:5-8, which describes the astronomical secrets revealed in heaven to Enoch, including the special place of the sun and moon, their paths, and the impact of their light (cf. *I En.* 78-80). Later in *LAB*, Moses will be told that the sun, moon, and stars are servants to him (32:9; cf. *Exagoge*, lines 76-81). Moses not only ascends to heaven: he is exalted above heavenly bodies.

In Deborah’s hymn in chapter 32, while Moses is dying (presumably on Nebo), God mentions “the heavens that you have entered” (*celum in quo ingressus es*) and “the earth on which you have walked until now” (*et terra in qua ambulasti usque nunc*) (Jacobson translation, nearly identical to that of James). Although Harrington rendered the first phrase as a future (“the heaven that you are to enter” - *OTP* 2.346), the Latin

³¹¹ *Opif.* 70-71; 3 *Bar.* 6-8; see Borgen, “Heavenly Ascent in Philo: An Examination of Selected Passages,” 254-55; Dean-Otting, *Heavenly Journeys: A Study of the Motif in Hellenistic Jewish Literature*, 18-20, 143, 196-97.

verb is unmistakably in the past tense and almost certainly represents the original Hebrew. The phrase signifies Pseudo-Philo's belief that Moses had *already* entered heaven sometime before his death. This can only be a reference to his Sinai ascent.

LAB strongly suggests that Moses saw the divine throne/*merkavah* in his second ascent of Sinai. When Moses ascends the holy mountain and prays, he refers to God's "most high seat" (*sedem tuam altissimam*) and throne (*thronus*), as well as God's "house" (*domus*) (12:8-9). (These visionary elements will be discussed further in the next chapter). Moses describes in detail how God has "adorned" (*inspersisti*; one manuscript has *decorasti* – "decorated") God's house, i.e., the heavenly prototype of the earthly sanctuary. These statements imply actual vision of the heavenly temple and throne, and bolster Jacobson's claim that Moses saw God's "house" (rather than God's covenant) on the mountain (9:8).

Unlike the *Book of the Watchers*, the *Testament of Levi*, and the *Exagoge*, Moses' mountain journeys do not take place in a dream vision; they are described as actual ascents to heaven (12:1; 19:8, 10) and to the ends of the cosmos (19:10). Moses' first ascent of Sinai is the occasion of a cosmic journey to paradise.³¹² After the giving of the

³¹² In Ezek 28:13-16, Eden is depicted as a garden paradise on God's holy (cosmic) mountain. Paradise is located in the third heaven in 2 Cor 12:3-4; *L.A.E.* (Apocalypse) 35:2; 37-40 and 2 *En.* 8:1-5. (2 *En.* 42:3, however, seems to place paradise on earth). Paradise is at the ends of the earth in 1 *En.* 23-25; 32:3; 60:8; 77:3; *Jub.* 4:22-26; 4 *Ezra* 7:53/125, and 8:52. *L.A.E.* (*Vita*) has two paradises, one earthly (where the tree of life is located – *Vita* 36:2) and one in the third heaven – *Vita* 25:3; 29:1.

In Second Temple literature, paradise could be a heavenly or earthly location. Stone writes, "In rabbinic literature, the term פֶּרְדִּים as distinct from גֶּן עֵדֶן is a technical, esoteric term." "Paradise in 4 *Ezra* iv:8 and vii:36, viii:52," 85. "Paradise" in apocalyptic literature, esp. "paradise of righteousness," is a technical term for heavenly paradise, the celestial equivalent to the garden of Eden in Gen 2. See Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 38; also Gershom G. Scholem *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkavah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 5720/1960), 16. By the time of *LAB*'s composition, paradise was associated with esoteric speculation. It is difficult to know whether Pseudo-Philo sees paradise as a heavenly place or a cosmic location at the extremities of the earth. Moses does see paradise in a heavenly ascent, where creational knowledge is disclosed (11:15; 13:8-9), but he also journeys to cosmic locations on Nebo, where the "paths of paradise" are included (19:10). In 13:9, the "ways of paradise" is specifically linked to the story of the first humans in the garden of Eden. Perhaps

law, it is stated that God showed Moses the tree of life (*ostendit ei lignum vite* – 11:15). This surprising claim, linking Moses and Sinai to paradise, strongly evokes Enoch’s vision of the tree of life on the high mountain that is God’s throne (*1 En.* 24:1-25:7; cf. parallel in *1 En.* 18:6-9). (This passage will be discussed at length in ch. 7). Pseudo-Philo has not merely asserted that Moses *knew* the traditions of antiquity (as in *Jubilees*): Moses was actually transported to paradise, an evocation of Enoch’s tours. That this was not a mere vision is confirmed by the fact that Moses cuts off a part of the tree of life (11:15).³¹³ On Sinai, God also shows Moses “the ways of paradise” (*vias paradysi*) (13:9; cf. *2 Bar.* 4:5). The context (paradise as a destination during a cosmic tour) indicates that the *vias* refer to specific locations (roads) in paradise (cf. the similar phrase in 19:10).

The Sinai theophany of Exod 19 (with some elements of Deut 4, 5, and 9) is described in three places in *LAB*: 11:4-5, 23:10, and 32:7-8. Pseudo-Philo’s account contains many of the same elements of the Exodus narrative, notably the emphasis on fire, thunder, lightning, and cloud (an admixture of thunderstorm and earthquake imagery). *LAB* adds certain details to the Sinai event (the winds, the shaking of the whole earth, and the bending of the heavens) that appear to have been influenced by the theophany accounts of Judg 5, Ps 18, and Hab 3. *LAB*’s revision of the Sinai theophany, however, heightens the cosmic scope of the event. In *LAB*’s expanded version, the abysses are disturbed (11:5; 23:10; 32:8; cf. *4 Ezra* 3:18), the courses of the stars are

the precise location of paradise is irrelevant, for in *LAB* it is a mystical location associated with esoteric (including protological) disclosure. Moses journeys to paradise in heavenly and cosmic ascents.

³¹³According to Gen 3:22-24, the tree of life is forbidden to all humans. It is interesting that when Enoch inquires about the tree of life, he is told by Michael that no human “has the right to touch” the tree “until the great judgment” (*1 En.* 25:4). *LAB*’s assertion that Moses does indeed touch the tree of life may be polemical. Moses’ active participation (cutting the tree) distinguishes this text from the canonical account of Exodus 19-24 and makes Moses more like visionaries such as Enoch in *1 En.* 14 who actively participate in visions. See Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 260.

altered (*inpedivi cursum stellarum* - 23:10; in 11:5, “the stars gathered together” [*astra congregabantur*]³¹⁴); even the angels are affected (they “ran ahead” [*angeli precurrebant*] – 11:5; “the storm of the heavenly host” is interrupted – *suspendi tempestatem militarium* – 23:10). *LAB* goes further than Exod 19 in portraying the Sinai theophany as an event of cosmic proportions: the entire universe is affected (stars [11:5], angels [11:5, 23:10], the abysses [11:5, 23:10, 32:8], the seas [32:8], trees [32:8], and all creatures [32:8]), not just the mountain and its environs. Even paradise is disturbed: it “gave off the scent of its fruit” (*paradisus reddita inspiratione fructus sui* – 32:8). In his version, Pseudo-Philo has incorporated numerous elements in common with the preoccupations of apocalyptic texts, including interest in the angelic realm, astronomy (the movement of the stars), the extremities of the cosmos (including the abysses³¹⁵ and paradise³¹⁶), and the sources of meteorological phenomena, such as the winds³¹⁷). By portraying the Sinai theophany as a cosmos-altering event, Pseudo-Philo is emphasizing the critical importance of the covenant received there. By granting Moses an ascent to heaven from the mountain, Pseudo-Philo is underlining the mountain’s connection to the heavenly realm and elevating Moses as recipient not just of covenant, but of heavenly and cosmic secrets as well.³¹⁸

³¹⁴ Perhaps “stars” refers to angels here. Angels are often called “stars” in apocalyptic literature. Cf. *1 En.* 18:14-15; 86:1; *Exagoge*, lines 79-80; *Apoc. Ab.* 14:6; Rev 1:20. See also Job 38:7. For angelic presence at Sinai, see Deut 33:2.

³¹⁵ Cf. *1 En.* 17-18; 21:7-10; 2 *Bar.* 48:5; 2 *En.* 40:12 (J). But see also Job 38:16.

³¹⁶ E.g. *1 En.* 24-25; 30-32; 60:8; 77:3; *Jub.* 8:19; 2 Cor 11:14; Rev 2:7; *L.A.E.* (*Vita*) 25:3; 29:1; 36:2; 4 *Ezra* 7:53/125; 8:52; *L.A.E.* (*Apocalypse*) 35:2; 37-40; 2 *En.* 8:1-5; 42:3; 65:10.

³¹⁷ E.g. *1 En.* 18:1; 34:1-3; 36:1, 41:3-4.

³¹⁸ In *LAB* God gives Moses the covenant at Sinai (11:1; 15:6; 23:9; 32:7; 44:6), but Horeb is also mentioned (19:1, 7; 21:9; 23:2; 26:12; 54:1).

4.3 Moses' Ascent to Heaven from Abarim/Nebo: *LAB* 19

Moses' ascent of Nebo in *LAB* is also transformed into a heavenly journey and the occasion of esoteric revelation. In Pseudo-Philo's recasting of Deut 34, Moses' mountaintop ascent prior to his death takes on characteristic apocalyptic features: Moses is given a cosmic tour of the lower heavens and the extremities of the earth (including paradise), and is granted knowledge of cosmological, meteorological, and celestial secrets, as well as secrets of protology and eschatology.

According to Deut 32:49 and 34:1, Moses is commanded by God to ascend Nebo just before his death. In Num 27:12, Nebo is situated in the mountain range of Abarim (cf. Num 33:47; Deut 32:49). On the summit of the mountain, Moses is shown areas of the land that the Israelites will soon enter, including land that is not visible from Nebo. Although the scope of this vision of the land is extraordinary, there is nothing speculative in its content. Moses then dies at God's command, and God buries him (Deut 34:5-6).

LAB 19:8 states, "And Moses ascended Mount Abarim,³¹⁹ as God had commanded him." What follows this statement is a dramatic re-writing of the traditional canonical account: Nebo, like Sinai previously in the text, becomes the locus of Moses' visionary ascent to the heavenly realm and its secrets. Meeks demonstrates the tendency of writers such as Philo and Pseudo-Philo to "assimilate traditions of Moses' (and other heroes') mystical ascent on Sinai with his translation at the end of his life."³²⁰ Ginzberg

³¹⁹ Some manuscripts have Horeb, although many have Abarim. The variant Horeb cannot be correct and is likely a scribal error; cf. Deut 32:49. See Harrington, "Biblical Geography in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*," 220.

³²⁰ Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, 124-25, 159. *Jub.* 1 merges Deut 31-34 with Exod 24. Cf. *Ant.* 4.8.48.

notes later Jewish texts that grant to Moses visions on Nebo.³²¹ In *LAB*, Nebo takes on some of the significance of Sinai, as Pseudo-Philo changes Moses' ascent of Deut 34 into a cosmic event and portrays Moses as an apocalyptic seer who journeys from the mountain to heaven in order to be initiated into speculative secrets.³²²

That Moses' ascent of Nebo is a heavenly tour is evident first of all in God's statement to Moses, "This heaven will be before me like a fleeting cloud and passing like yesterday" (*celum autem hoc erit in conspectu meo tamquam nebula currens et tamquam dies transiens hesternus* – 19:13). The reference to "this heaven" has proved perplexing to scholars. Harrington has suggested emending the text to read "this age" (*seculum hoc*) for "this heaven" (*celum hoc*). Jacobson agrees with this emendation, commenting that the phrase "this age" is common in apocalyptic passages (such as *4 Ezra* 2:36). Jacobson concludes that Pseudo-Philo has in mind Ps 90:4.³²³ Harrington's proposed emendation seems unnecessary, however, for in *LAB*'s scene on Nebo it is clear that Moses is in fact *in the heavenly realm* at this point (see next paragraph). Neither is it strange that God should refer to "this heaven" that will pass away like "a fleeting cloud," for the apocalyptic interpolations of Isa 65:17 and 66:22 both look forward to a renewed cosmos, "the new heavens and the new earth" that God will create.³²⁴ In the apocalyptic revelation to Noah in *LAB* 3:10, God in fact states that "there will be another earth and

³²¹ Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 6.151. Jacobson also notes that in midrashic texts, Nebo is the place where visions are granted to Moses just before his death. Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.523. But cf. *2 Macc* 2:1-5, which does not give Moses speculative knowledge on Nebo.

³²² Sinai and Nebo overlap in *LAB* 19, as the Sinai theophany and revelation color the Nebo episode. Hartman writes that Sinai becomes a *topos* that is often embellished in post-biblical texts. Lars Hartman, *Asking for Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1-5* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1979), 42.

³²³ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 2.644.

³²⁴ Perrot and Bogaert understand this phrase to mean "ce ciel (de maintenant) sera comme un nuage"; they conclude that "l'image du Ciel, liée à celle de nuage, connote l'idée d'un monde qui passe: après *ce ciel* on attend un *autre ciel*." SC 230, 133. Cf. *1 En.* 45:4-5; 91:16; *Jub.* 1:29; *T. Adam* 3:9; *Apoc. Elij.* 3:98; *2 Pet* 3:13; *Rev* 21:1.

another heaven, an everlasting dwelling place” in the eschaton. In *LAB* 19:13, God points out that Moses will eventually “dwell in the immortal dwelling place (*habitabitis inhabitationem immortalem*) that is not subject to time”; this “place” is not equivalent to the present heaven, which will pass away. In the extant Latin text of 19:13 there is also a parallelism between *celum* and *nebula*, which is not maintained if *seculum* is substituted. The original Hebrew must have contained this parallelism. Moreover, reading *celum* (with the manuscripts) rather than *seculum* more accurately reflects the contrast set up, between this sentence and the previous one, by the conjunction *autem* (“but,” “on the other hand”): Moses’ future (eternal) dwelling in the final resurrection of the dead is contrasted with the present heaven that Moses has entered: the present heaven will be transformed in the new age that God will bring about.

Moses’ heavenly ascent is most evident in the content of Moses’ vision on Nebo.

On the mountain, God shows Moses the land, but also:

the place from which the clouds draw up water to water the whole earth
 and the place from which the river takes its water
 and the land of Egypt
 and the place in the firmament from which only the holy land drinks.
 And he showed him the place from which the manna rained upon the people,
 even unto the paths of paradise.
 And he showed him the measurements of the sanctuary
 and the number of sacrifices
 and the signs by which they are to interpret heaven.
 And he said, “These are what are prohibited for the human race
 because they have sinned against me.” (19:10)

The visionary elements attributed to Moses in his Nebo ascent are a significant departure from the canonical account and are an attribution to Moses of the extraordinary transcendent knowledge granted to other seers in apocalyptic texts.³²⁵ In *LAB* 19, Moses

³²⁵ For similar esoteric knowledge granted to Moses, in dialogue with alternative visionary claims, see the *Exagoge*, lines 87-89; *4 Ezra* 14:4-6; *2 Bar.* 59:3-12; *Apoc. Ab.* 12:10; 21:3-5.

not only sees “the land and all that is in it”: he sees places that are not accessible to humans (19:11), including locations in heaven and at the extremities of the earth. Bauckham has recognized that this passage credits a cosmic tour to Moses: Moses sees “the place from which the clouds draw up water to water the whole earth” (*locum unde elevant nubes aquam ad irrigandum omnem terram*), which is located in the fourth heaven according to *3 Bar.* 10:6-8 (cf. *1 En.* 36:1; 76-77), and “the place from which the manna rained upon the people” (*locum unde pluit manna populo*), in the third heaven according to *b. Hag.* 12b.³²⁶ Moses also sees places in the firmament (“the place from which the holy land³²⁷ drinks”) and at the ends of the earth (including “the place from which the river takes its water” – in the far west, according to *1 En.* 17-18).³²⁸ God shows Moses the “paths of paradise” (*semitas paradysi*), located variously in the third heaven or at the far ends of the earth in apocalyptic texts (see n. 301 above). (Moses was given a vision of paradise from Sinai as well – 13:9). To Moses is also revealed “the signs by which they are to interpret the heaven” (*signa in quibus incipient³²⁹ inspicere celum*), a very suggestive phrase that may indicate knowledge of astronomy or astrology.³³⁰ It is conspicuous that the majority of the sites and information revealed to Moses on Nebo are mysteries to humans and echo the locations and hidden knowledge accessible to exalted visionaries in apocalyptic ascent texts.

³²⁶ Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 60. In the Hebrew Bible, manna is understood to originate in heaven: it is “bread from heaven” (לֶחֶם מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם) – Exod 16:4; Neh 9:15. The heavenly storehouses of manna are referred to in *2 Bar.* 29:8; this treasury will descend again in the eschatological age.

³²⁷ Cf. references to the “holy land” in visions of apocalyptic accounts: *Zech* 2:12; *2 Bar.* 63:10; *4 Ezra* 13:48.

³²⁸ Bauckham notes that this is an expansion of Deut 34:1-2 into a revelation of the secrets of heaven, concluding that it is “a visit to the lower heavens (not reaching the throne of God in the highest heaven) rather than to the extremities of the earth.” *The Fate of the Dead*, 60.

³²⁹ Reading *incipiant* with the *editio princeps* (as also James and Kisch), rather than *incipient*.

³³⁰ Feldman (“Prolegomenon,” civ) and Perrot and Bogaert (SC 230, 132) see this as a reference to the zodiac. Jacobson sees this as a possibility, but comments, “Whatever the reference, I do not understand either the relevance or the appropriateness of this in the present context.” *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.637.

Pseudo-Philo's incorporation of the motifs of heavenly/cosmic ascent and speculative (heavenly and cosmological) revelation for Moses on Nebo adds a new dimension to Moses' traditional visionary status. Moses has not just received knowledge *from* heaven (e.g. via tablets, as in Exodus or *Jubilees*, or the oral law, as in rabbinic tradition). Moses' revelation *is* secrets that are hidden in heaven, which Moses receives in a mountain ascent *to* heaven and to the ends of the earth. Pseudo-Philo has deliberately situated Moses' climactic vision in the heavenly and cosmological realm, not on earth; Moses' vision in his ascent from Nebo is above all esoteric disclosure. Such assertions are not innovations on the author's part, nor are they present in the biblical text: Pseudo-Philo has adopted the *typos* of visionary ascent that recurs throughout apocalyptic texts and has applied it to Moses. This striking revision of Deut 34 indicates the text's interactive dialogue with apocalyptic traditions.

Pseudo-Philo's rewriting of Deut 34 may also have polemical implications. Stone has argued that the revelatory elements of *LAB* 19 can be explained by pre-existing catalogs of speculative information ("lists of revealed things") that were available to authors of apocalyptic texts; he concludes that most of the elements of such lists do not originate "in the biblical or apocryphal Wisdom books," but were "catalogues of actual subjects of speculative investigation, study, and perhaps even the contents of ecstatic experiences of the apocalyptic authors."³³¹ It is certainly true that *LAB*'s list of revelatory items contains the kind of transcendent information that Pseudo-Philo deemed important and relevant to the circumstances of his day. Pseudo-Philo wants to accent the cosmic and heavenly scope of God's covenant with Israel, mediated through Moses the

³³¹ Stone, "Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature," 436. Stone adduces that the lists "all occur at the high point of revelation" and summarize "what the writers of the apocalypses thought to lie at the heart of apocalyptic revelation itself." *Ibid.*, 418.

exceptional visionary, who had direct access to heaven and the furthest reaches of the cosmos on Nebo (here merged with Sinai). But as Nickelsburg has observed, revelation often has a polemical function.³³² Pseudo-Philo has carefully transferred to Moses many of the features of apocalyptic traditions about ascended patriarchs, especially Enoch. Meeks has written that Moses' vision of secrets on Nebo in *LAB* 19 is "reminiscent again of the cosmological and eschatological secrets showed to Enoch in his heavenly journeys or to Moses on Sinai."³³³ Moses' extraordinary journey from Nebo, and the content of his revelation, can best be explained by comparison to attributions to Enoch. A statement is being made by the author that *Moses* is the important visionary who ascended to heaven, received the covenant and crucial esoteric information.

4.4 *LAB* 19: Parallels in Earlier Enochic Traditions

Several assertions about Moses' ascent and revelation in *LAB* 19 suggest a positioning of Moses over against exalted claims about Enoch. (More will be discussed in the following chapters). While there is no compelling evidence of *direct* dependence upon specific Enochic texts in *LAB*,³³⁴ Pseudo-Philo does know developed and developing traditions about Enoch (see, e.g., 1:17; 2:5-8; 34:2-3). The following revelatory claims about Moses' Nebo ascent (19:10-12) have clear parallels in earlier Enochic traditions.

³³² Nickelsburg, "The Nature and Function of Revelation in 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and Some Qumranic Documents," 91-119. See also above, Section 1.2.

³³³ Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, 159.

³³⁴ James, however, does claim that some of *LAB* was modeled on the *Book of the Watchers*, and that Pseudo-Philo knew *Jubilees*. James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, 43-46.

4.4.1 The Exclusivity of Moses' Celestial and Cosmological Revelation

After revealing heavenly and cosmological secrets to Moses on Nebo, God makes the strong declaration that Moses alone is able to see these wondrous things that are “prohibited from the human race because they have sinned against me” (19:10). This exclusive claim evokes superlative statements about Enoch, who declares, “I, Enoch, alone saw the visions, the extremities of all things. And no one among humans has seen as I saw” (*I En.* 19:3; cf. 36:4). While *I En.* 19:3 has a close parallel in Dan 10:7, what is stressed about Enoch (and not about Daniel) is that he has seen the extremities of the cosmos. This is precisely what is shown to Moses on Nebo in *LAB*: Moses sees the extremities of the universe, not merely the extent of the promised land as in Deut 34. Early Enochic literature attributes to Enoch visions of things not revealed to other humans; the same is affirmed for Moses here. (Although Num 12:6-8 and Deut 34:10-12 acknowledge Moses' unparalleled visionary capabilities [direct access to God and the ability to see God's form], neither passage attributes to Moses heavenly ascent or cosmological or astronomical revelation).

4.4.2 The Association of Moses with Measuring and Numbering

On Nebo, God shows Moses the “measurements of the sanctuary” (*mensuras sanctuarii*) and the “number of sacrifices” (*numerum oblationum*). All the commentators note Pseudo-Philo's curious placement of this information in the revelation on Nebo, not on Sinai where it belongs.³³⁵ (Instructions about the sanctuary and offerings are given to

³³⁵ About this section, Jacobson writes, “This looks strange since God has already long ago instructed Moses about the sanctuary and its erection has occurred (see *LAB* 11.15, 13.1-3).” A

Moses in 11:15, but there is no mention of numbering or measuring in that context). Nebo and Sinai overlap in ch. 19, but by placing this numbering and measuring knowledge in the context of an apocalyptic visionary tour, it is entirely possible that Pseudo-Philo wanted to attribute to Moses the measuring and counting knowledge associated with Enoch in his visions (e.g. *1 En.* 33:2-4; 61:3-5; 70:1; 93:11-12; *2 En.* 40:2-12; cf. Moses' counting activity in his throne vision in the *Exagoge*, lines 79-80, an echo of Enochic claims). Enochic literature grants Enoch the measuring, weighing, and numbering capabilities are beyond the scope of ordinary human possibility (e.g. in Job 38, Sir 1, cf. *4 Ezra* 4:5-6). Enoch's extraordinary knowledge of cosmic numerical patterns and heavenly calculations attest to his revealed knowledge of the "synchronic relationship between nature and cult."³³⁶ Perhaps the same notion is at work in *LAB* 19, for sanctuary and sacrifices are specifically linked to heavenly *signa* in this passage: "And he showed him the measurements of the sanctuary and the number of sacrifices and the signs by which they are to interpret the heaven." Moses, like Enoch, is singled out as one who is to observe and interpret heavenly phenomena in order to inform cultic practice. (In Exod 25-27, the tabernacle, with its furnishings and rituals, is described as corresponding to the heavenly prototype, and Moses is informed of dimensions and numbers, but Moses is never given the responsibility of interpreting heavenly or cosmological phenomena). In the Nebo vision, Pseudo-Philo has given Moses numerical knowledge, but has "legitimized" it by connecting it to sanctuary and sacrifice – traditional covenantal concerns. The measuring and numbering of covenant items have

Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum, 1.636. He cites very late midrashic texts that include specific measurement for the sanctuary. Ibid.

³³⁶ See discussion in Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*, 92-99 (95).

clear parallels in Moses' vision in *2 Bar.* 59: Moses sees "the measurements of Zion, like present sanctuary" (59:4) and "the number of offerings" (59:9); in this vision, as in *LAB* 19, these covenant items give a Mosaic stamp to the apocalyptic list of revealed things.

4.4.3 Moses' Journey to Paradise

Moses' extraordinary experience on Nebo includes a journey to the "paths of paradise" (*semitas paradysi*). Moses is shown paradise for a second time here, having previously viewed the tree of life (11:15) and the "ways of paradise" (*vias paradysi*), including revelation about the first man and the garden of Eden, on Sinai (13:8-9). In *LAB*, as in apocalyptic texts (*1 En.* 24-25; 28-32; *Apoc. Ab.* 21-23), paradise has become a destination in a visionary's cosmic tour.³³⁷ Moses' ascent and primordial revelation in *LAB* parallels Enoch's vision of the tree of life and paradise on the high mountain that is God's throne (*1 En.* 24:1-25:7; cf. *1 En.* 18:6-9). Moses is linked to primordial traditions in *Jubilees*, but Moses' mountaintop ascent to paradise and access to its creational secrets (including special knowledge about the first man and Noah – 13:8-9) in *LAB* is an incorporation of Enochic motifs and vocabulary (cf. *1 En.* 1-36; 65-68; 83-84; 106-107).³³⁸ (This protological disclosure to Moses will be discussed at length in ch. 7 below).

4.4.4 The Association of Moses with Astronomical "Signs"

During Moses' ascent from Nebo, God also reveals to him "the signs by which they are to interpret the heaven" (*signa in quibus incipient inspicere celum*). If in fact this phrase

³³⁷ On this topic, see esp. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 74.

³³⁸ In *Apoc. Ab.* 21-23, Abraham is shown paradise (the garden of Eden and the tree in the garden), but the apocalypse's debt to the traditions of *1 En.* is well established.

refers to astronomical or astrological information (e.g. the zodiac, which follows the annual path of the sun, moon, and stars/constellations across the sky), as commentators surmise (Feldman, Perrot and Bogaert, Jacobson), then Moses is being initiated into astronomical lore and calculations, in the manner of Enoch. The early Enochic literature, especially the *Book of the Luminaries* (*1 En.* 72-82) presents Enoch as an expert in astronomical knowledge. Enoch is shown “the motion of the heavenly luminaries...their jurisdiction, their time, their name, their origins, and their months” (*1 En.* 72:1); in *1 En.* 33:2-4, Enoch knows the positions of the stars “according to their conjunction and their position and their time and their months.” In *Jub.* 4:17, Enoch is the one who introduces astronomy; he even writes a book about heavenly “signs.” *LAB* attributes such interpretation of the heavens to Moses: it is *Moses*, and no other, who is privileged to know astronomical secrets. It is precisely these *signa* of heavenly secrets, revealed to Moses, that are declared unavailable to other humans, “for they have sinned” (19:10: *Haec sunt que prohibita sunt generi hominum quoniam peccaverunt; Haec* refers back to *signa* here). Only Moses, the worthy visionary, is allowed such disclosure. Dialogue with Enochic claims explains the presence of the interpretation of heavenly signs, so puzzling to Jacobson,³³⁹ in this apocalyptic list of revelatory items. Astronomical disclosure is a characteristic element of revelation in apocalyptic texts; Pseudo-Philo wants his hero, Moses, to be the source of such hidden knowledge.

It is interesting that elsewhere Pseudo-Philo attacks those who “observe the stars” (*inspicere in astra*) and make predictions (*divinationes*) by them (4:16). Perhaps Enoch is being denigrated in 4:16 and 19:10. The author also denies the tradition that Abraham was the first to study the stars and practice divination (*Abr.* 15.67-70; *Apoc. Ab.* 1-8; *Gen.*

³³⁹ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.637.

Rab. 38.13), as well as the tradition that Abraham’s relatives, including Nahor, practiced divination by observing the stars (*Jub.* 11:8³⁴⁰). Astrology is condemned in *LAB*, yet Moses is lauded as one who is initiated into the “signs by which they are to interpret the heavens” (19:10). It appears that the only legitimate interpretation of heavenly *signa*, according to Pseudo-Philo, is that which is linked to Moses and covenant (i.e., the cult).

4.4.5 Revelation to Moses of Meteorological and Cosmological Secrets

The specific revelatory items of meteorological secrets and their places of origin, given to Moses on Nebo, are typical of revelation to Enoch in his ascents and visions. In *LAB* 19, God reveals to Moses the place of the origin of the rainwater (19:10; cf. *I En.* 36:1 and 76-77; see Section 8.2 below), as well as the source of rivers (19:10; cf. *I En.* 17:8).

Such mysterious cosmological locations are typical of Enochic disclosure.

Not all scholars acknowledge *LAB*’s appropriation of characteristics of apocalyptic visionary ascents, nor its specific dialogue with Enochic claims, in the rewriting of Moses’ experience on Nebo. Murphy, for example, sees this chapter as “mostly an original creation,” the author’s own expansion of Deut 34:1-3 to include cosmic elements that reinforce the significance of Israel.³⁴¹ In his discussion of Moses’ extraordinary vision on Nebo, Murphy does not cite parallels in apocalyptic texts, nor does he state that this as a heavenly ascent. While allowing similarities to Enochic traditions, Jacobson prefers to cite parallels in much later traditional Jewish texts that also acknowledge apocalyptic revelation to Moses on Nebo, such as *Sipre Deut.* 357 and

³⁴⁰ In language similar to *LAB* 19:10, *Jub.* 11:8 states that Nahor practiced divination and astrology “according to the *signs of heaven*.” This is equated with idolatry.

³⁴¹ Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible*, 89-93 (89).

Pesiq. Rab. 20, 98a-b. But Bauckham makes the point that later Jewish exegetical tradition (such as these texts mentioned by Jacobson) grants Moses knowledge of future history and eschatology from Nebo, but *not* a tour of the heavens.³⁴² In my view, Pseudo-Philo's appropriation of the heavenly ascent motif, and the content of Moses' esoteric revelation, on Nebo (as on Sinai) is best understood as a transfer of Enochic characteristics to Moses in order to enhance Moses' visionary profile.

It is curious that in Pseudo-Philo's account, Moses did not ascend into heaven after his death (he dies and God buries him with his own hands), but rather before (at least twice, on Sinai and Nebo). Some Jewish texts seem to question that Moses actually died, since no one knows the place of his grave (*Mos.* 2.288-292; *QG* 1.86; *Ant.* 4.8.48). Pseudo-Philo, however, makes no such claim. His insistence that Moses did indeed die, and that his grave is "on a high place and in the light of the whole world" (i.e., a public place³⁴³) is perhaps "a conscious opposition to the view that Moses did not really die."³⁴⁴ In the following chapter, God tells Joshua not "to hope in vain that Moses yet lives" (20:2; cf. 23:1-2). Although Pseudo-Philo transfers Enochic characteristics to Moses, he is not comfortable with the belief that Moses never died. (*LAB* does assert, however, that Moses' leadership is "for always" [*aget semper* - 9:10]; this claim is never made for any other Israelite leader).

³⁴² Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 61.

³⁴³ Although in Deut 34:5-8, Moses' death is witnessed only by God, some Jewish traditions insist that his death and burial were public. See *T. Mos.* 1:15; 11:5-8.

³⁴⁴ Harrington, *OTP* 2.328.

4.5 Esoteric Revelation to Covenant Patriarchs

It may be significant that Pseudo-Philo limits esoteric revelation to covenant patriarchs. In fact, all of the passages in *LAB* that have an apocalyptic character are linked only to figures with whom God has established a covenant (*testamentum*). Pseudo-Philo has crafted his version of Israel's history in such a way as to highlight the extraordinary visionary knowledge that God has granted *only* to the covenant patriarchs, often inserting apocalyptic features into their stories that are not present in the biblical narrative.

1. Noah

The covenant with Noah is established in 3:11-12, a retelling of Gen 9. Just prior to this, God grants to Noah dramatic eschatological disclosure (3:10). This unexpected apocalyptic addition to the Noah story is unique to *LAB*. Many of the end time secrets revealed to Noah have striking parallels in the visions of *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, and *2 Baruch*, including the notion of resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the end of light and darkness; these extensive parallels have been charted by scholars (I do not reproduce them here). In *LAB* 3:10, the eschatological occurrences revealed to Noah include: light and darkness will cease, hell will pay back its debt, all will be strictly judged, death will be abolished and hell will shut its mouth; those forgiven will never be tainted again; the earth will be fruitful, and there will be another earth and another heaven, an everlasting dwelling place.

2. Abraham

The covenant with Abraham is established in 7:4 and 8:3. Abraham is granted a heavenly ascent according to 18:5: he is lifted above the firmament and is given astronomical revelation ("the arrangement of all the stars"). Later in the text, in an

expansion of Gen 15, Abraham is privy to divine eschatological disclosure (23:6-7): he receives apocalyptic revelation of the future, including the places of reward and punishment (cf. *T. Ab.* 11-14). *LAB* contains the earliest extant account of apocalyptic revelation to Abraham.³⁴⁵

3. Moses

Moses is “born in the covenant” (born circumcised) in 9:14. The covenant is established with Moses and the people in 11:3-13. This dissertation has already established that Moses experiences heavenly ascent (9:8; 11:15; 12:1, 8; 19:10-11) and esoteric revelation (throughout chs. 9-19) in the text. Apocalyptic revelatory items attributed to Moses include: astronomical secrets (the place of the light of the sun and moon [12:1] and the signs by which to interpret heaven [19:10]); cosmological and meteorological sites and secrets (“the place from which the river takes its water” and “the paths of paradise” – 19:10); celestial locations (“the place from which clouds draw up water,” “the place from which the manna rained,” and “the place in the firmament from which the holy land drinks” – 19:10); the heavenly temple and throne (God’s “house” that no one has seen [9:8] and God’s most high seat, throne, and house [12:8-9]); protological secrets (the tree of life - 11:15; the place of creation, the serpent, and the protoplast - 13:8, and the ways of paradise - 13:9); and eschatological secrets (the passing away of heaven, God’s end time visit to the world, the hastening of the stars and the diminishing of the light of the sun and moon, the resurrection of the righteous, and the amount of time that has passed and how much remains [all in 19:13-14]).

The apocalypses of Moses in 13:7-10 and 19:10-15 are unique to *LAB*.

³⁴⁵ Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 72. Cf. *Apoc. Ab.* 12 where Abraham sees “all things” from Horeb.

4. Joshua

The covenant with Joshua is established in 23:2. Joshua experiences esoteric revelation in a dream vision in 23:4-14, which includes a historical review (a summary of Israel's history from Abraham to the giving of the land, including an enhanced, apocalyptic description of the events at Sinai) and eschatological disclosure (the rewards in the world to come).

5. Kenaz

The covenant with Kenaz is established in 28:2. In an account that is unique to *LAB*, Kenaz receives esoteric revelation while in an ecstatic state (28:8-9). The vision includes protological secrets (knowledge of the pre-creation disorder and watery chaos, and a strange account of the creation of humans) and eschatological secrets (the transformation of humanity in the last days).

6. David

There is no mention of the covenant of 2 Sam 7 in *LAB*; the text ends before this biblical episode. David expounds upon protological secrets in the form of a psalm used to exorcise an evil spirit from Saul (60:2-3). This apocalyptic psalm is also unique to *LAB*; it includes references to the primordial darkness and silence (cf. *2 Bar.* 3:7) and the creation of evil spirits on the second day (cf. *2 En.* 29:1; *Jub.* 2:2).

Pseudo-Philo has embellished the biblical accounts of these covenant patriarchs with apocalyptic elements, including esoteric knowledge given directly by God. Much of this material is either unique to *LAB*, or *LAB* is the first witness to the tradition. Esoteric revelatory knowledge is clearly an emphasis in *LAB*; the revelatory knowledge contained in these apocalyptic passages undoubtedly contains material that Pseudo-Philo considers

to be important transcendent truth. By portraying this truth as direct revelation to *covenant* patriarchs, Pseudo-Philo validates that truth *and* covenant. But of the covenant patriarchs who are privy to esoteric revelation, only Abraham and Moses are credited with ascent to heaven.³⁴⁶ While Abraham's ascent and esoteric revelation are briefly described in *LAB*, the sections covering Moses' visionary ascents and initiation into divine secrets are extended and detailed. For Pseudo-Philo, Moses is indeed the hero of Israel's history.

4.6 Summary

In his rewriting of Israel's history, Pseudo-Philo has gone beyond the categories of the Hebrew Bible and has incorporated the apocalyptic motifs and vocabulary of mountain ascent to the heavenly realm and the revelation of secrets of heaven and the cosmos. In his chapters about Moses (9-19), Pseudo-Philo asserts Moses' direct acquisition of important esoteric knowledge through *actual ascent* to heaven from Sinai and Nebo. Pseudo-Philo has adopted the "mechanics" of apocalyptic visionary accounts: God didn't come down; the visionary "went up." As we have documented, in *LAB* Moses has been transformed into an apocalyptic seer, and his journey and speculative revelation appear to have been shaped by traditions about Enoch. But in his text, Pseudo-Philo has modified the apocalyptic motif of mountain ascent to heaven and the traditional revelatory "list" of esoteric knowledge by adding to it specifically Mosaic items (the locations of Sinai and Nebo, and the revelation of sanctuary and sacrifices). These Mosaic elements infuse *LAB*

³⁴⁶ In ch. 48, Phinehas has a kind of ascension: he goes up the mountain of Danaben, where he "shuts up" heaven and is assured that he will eventually "be lifted up into the place where those who were before you were lifted up," but he does not receive esoteric revelation. Phinehas and Elijah are the same person in *LAB*. See Robert Hayward, "Phinehas—The Same is Elijah: The Origins of a Rabbinic Tradition," *JJS* 29 (1978): 22-34.

with validity, creating a Mosaic and covenantal framework for visionary ascent and revelation. Secrets of heaven and earth (esoteric knowledge) have been combined with the Mosaic covenant (exoteric knowledge); Moses is the recipient and conduit of both.

In making use of the apocalyptic *typos* of ascent, Pseudo-Philo was in interactive dialogue with alternate visionary traditions. Just as the early Enochic literature incorporated the Mosaic typology of mountain ascent and revelation, applying it to Enoch but surpassing the biblical claims about Moses to include ascent to heaven and secret revelation,³⁴⁷ so Mosaic texts such as *LAB* transfer back to Moses the Enochic characteristics of heavenly ascent and esoteric revelation.³⁴⁸ In doing so, Moses' superlative status has been regained, and his authority strengthened for a new day.

³⁴⁷ *I En.* opens with Enoch portrayed with Mosaic characteristics. This is not a coincidence.

³⁴⁸ For a discussion of the function of traditions of Moses' ascents, see Meeks, "Moses as God and King," 367-70.

CHAPTER FIVE

MOSES' ASCENT TO THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE AND THRONE

5.1 House/Temple/Throne Motifs in Moses' Ascent of Sinai

As the previous chapter of this dissertation has demonstrated, *LAB* attributes to Moses actual ascents to heaven. The narratives of Moses on Sinai and Nebo point toward Pseudo-Philo's adherence to the tradition that Moses ascended bodily to the heavenly temple and possibly to the divine throne. God tells Amram that he will show his yet-unborn son "my house which no one has seen" (9:8).³⁴⁹ In 11:15, God shows Moses the "pattern" (*exemplar*; almost certainly תבנית in *LAB* Hebrew) of the heavenly temple and its furnishings, the celestial prototype of the sanctuary that the Israelites are to replicate on earth. Moses is not only given verbal instructions concerning the tabernacle and cultic objects: God actually "showed him" (*ostendit ei*) the heavenly reality "in order that he (Moses) might make them according to the pattern that he had seen" (11:15; cf. 19:10: God "showed him [*ostendit ei*] the measurements of the sanctuary"). This statement combines Exod 25:9 and 40. The use of the Latin verb *ostendō* (generally used for exhibit, display or expose to view) denotes visual activity and strongly suggests that God is actively involved in opening up his "house" for inspection. (*LAB* Hebrew must have had a *hiphil* of ראה, as in Exod 25:9, 40). Since it is clear in *LAB* that Moses ascends to heaven from Sinai (see esp. 12:1), the sense here seems to be that Moses is conducted around the heavenly temple so that he can examine it, for the earthly sanctuary (not yet built) will be the counterpart and copy of the heavenly temple that God exhibits to Moses

³⁴⁹ Jacobson emendation (see above, 4.2)

(cf. Ezek 40-48; Heb 8:5; Rev 11:19; Wis 9:8; 2 Bar. 4:5; *Gen. Rab.* 55:8; *Exod. Rab.* 33:3; *b. Ber.* 33b; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 15:17).

In his prayer during his second ascent of Sinai, Moses describes the heavenly temple (God's *domus*) in detail (12:8-9), indicating that he has seen the heavenly reality that is the model for the earthly counterpart. The description of the heavenly temple's splendor – its adornment with precious stones and gold and its perfuming with aromatic spices – is biblical commonplace for its earthly counterpart of temple/sanctuary (cf. Exod 30:23; 1 Kgs 5:31, 7:10-11; 1 Chron 29:2; 2 Chron 3:6). The description is clearly influenced by the design and accoutrements of the actual temple.³⁵⁰ In the text, Moses is referring to the celestial prototype, for the temple/sanctuary had not yet been constructed. But in Pseudo-Philo's view, the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly temple may have been irrelevant, for Morray-Jones' observation about the vision of Ezekiel in Ezek 40-48 may well be true for this text: "Whether the 'house' into which he has been transported is the earthly temple or its heavenly counterpart is nowhere specified, and it is perhaps doubtful whether this distinction would have been very meaningful to the author, for whom the ritual identification of the one with the other was not merely a dramatic metaphor."³⁵¹

Moses' prayer atop Sinai also includes a metaphorical description of Israel as God's vine that has roots in the abyss (*in abyssum*) and extends to God's "most high and

³⁵⁰ Rowland writes that the design of the earthly temple influenced apocalyptic beliefs about the heavenly temple: "As the pre-eminent place where God's presence dwelt on earth, it is only to be expected that the earthly shrine would have the form of the heavenly. By the same token the form of the earthly would inevitably colour descriptions of the heavenly." *The Open Heaven*, 83. On the architecture and furnishings of the heavenly temple corresponding to the earthly temple in the *Book of the Watchers*, see esp. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 14-16. Cf. *T. Levi* 3:6.

³⁵¹ Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, "The Temple Within," in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism* (ed. A. D. DeConick; SBLSymS 11; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 147.

eternal seat” (*sede tua altissima et eterna*). Pseudo-Philo often refers to Israel as God’s vine,³⁵² but the idea that the vine has shoots that ascend directly to God’s throne is unique to *LAB*. This imagery has a strikingly close parallel in 1QH^a XIV, 14-16 which describes the pure members of the council (עצה) as a plantation whose crown reaches “up to the heavens” (עד שהקי[ם]) (cf. Job 37:18) with “its roots down to the abyss” (שרשיו עד תהום). The thanksgiving hymn from Qumran expresses metaphorically the possibility of the righteous to reach both heaven and the depths of the abyss; the divine light, however, will burn up the unrighteous and destroy them. Moses’ prayer in *LAB* 12:8-9 contains a very similar notion: the vine that is Israel can reach heaven and even the divine throne, but only if God is merciful and does not “uproot it from the abyss and dry up its shoots from (God’s) most high and eternal seat” (12:8) because of sin, with the result that the vine is “burned up” (*incendisti*). The explicit mention of the vine (Israel) reaching to the divine throne may be Pseudo-Philo’s insistence that access to the throne is a human possibility. Moses’ discussion of the heavenly temple and throne in the context of his second ascent of Sinai strongly suggests that he sees both in this ascent.

What is unusual in Moses’ description of the divine throne in 12:8 is his insistence that the throne can “cool” Israel, God’s vine: “nor will your throne (*thronus tuus*) come to cool (*refrigeret*) that vine of yours that you have burned up” (12:8). The use of *refrigeret* in connection to the divine throne has puzzled scholars. Jacobson suggests that it may refer to rainfall, but more likely merely means to provide shade.³⁵³ But Pseudo-Philo’s unusual verb choice takes on potential significance when it is noted

³⁵² 18:10-11; 23:11-12; 28:4; 30:4; 39:7. Cf. Ps 80; Isa 5; Ezek 31; *Exod. Rab.* 43:9. On Israel as the vine in first century Palestinian writings, see C. T. R. Hayward, “The Vine and its Products as Theological Symbols in First Century Palestinian Judaism,” *Durham University Journal* 82 (1990): 9-18.

³⁵³ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.498. Jacobson does not note the reference to shade in 1QH^a XIV, 14-16.

that the divine throne is described as “icy” in *I En.* 14:18.³⁵⁴ Both *LAB* 12:8 and *I En.* 14:18 describe the divine throne as “lofty,” echoing its description in *Isa* 6:1 (note *LAB*’s specific use of the adjective *altissima* in connection to the throne; cf. *T. Mos.* 4:2), and both texts combine the motifs of loftiness and iciness for the throne. Pseudo-Philo’s assertion of the celestial throne’s capacity to cool the vine and its shoots (12:8) brings to mind *I En.* 14:18, but lacks the accompanying imagery of fieriness (although the theme of God “burning up” the vine is present) and the description of the divine glory on the throne. While a connection between the two texts cannot be pressed or proved, the similar combination of motifs is intriguing. The detail of the heavenly throne’s capacity for cold is not present in the canonical account and may indicate Pseudo-Philo’s knowledge of the motif of the throne’s paradoxical iciness and heat in apocalyptic traditions (*I En.* 14:18, *T. Abr.* 12:4-5).

Some commentators posit that God’s “house” (*domus*) here (12:9) refers to paradise.³⁵⁵ Elsewhere in the text, Moses’ cosmic transport from Sinai and Nebo to paradise as a separate location is indicated (11:15; 13:8-9; 19:10). The *domus* of Moses’ prayer must to be a reference to God’s “house” or heavenly palace/temple, which is linked in Pseudo-Philo’s theology to paradise and creation.³⁵⁶ Biblical and apocalyptic texts often associate the earthly temple (as replica of the heavenly temple) with paradise and the garden of Eden (e.g. *Exod* 25; *Ezek* 28:13-14; *Ezek* 47-48; *Jub.* 8:19 [but see

³⁵⁴ This may merely be a description of the throne’s crystal appearance, but the paradoxical capacity for simultaneous cold and heat in the heavenly realm and in the divine temple and throne is a theme of apocalyptic literature. See Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 15; Nickelsburg, *I Enoch* 1, 259-64; idem, “Enoch, Levi, and Peter: Recipients of Revelation in Upper Galilee,” *JBL* 100 (1981): 575-600. See *T. Levi* 3:2 and Abraham’s vision of a throne that is both crystal and flashing like fire in *T. Abr.* 12:4-5.

³⁵⁵ James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, 44, 112; Perrot and Bogaert, SC 230, 115.

³⁵⁶ On this topic, see esp. C. T. R. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-biblical Sourcebook* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), 154-67. See also ch. 7 below. Sinai and paradise are also linked in *LAB* 32:7-8.

4:26]; cf. *1 En.* 24-25 [esp. 25:5], which describes the future transplant of the tree of life to a holy place by the “house of God”).³⁵⁷ Paradisal imagery is indeed present here, particularly in the lush description of the trees and aromatic plants that contribute to worship. But Moses’ prayer has to do specifically with the connection of Israel to God’s celestial dwelling and throne. Although Pseudo-Philo links both Sinai and Nebo to visions of paradise (see ch. 7 below), and paradise seems to be located on or near Sinai (12:15; 13:8-9; 32:7-8), Moses’ elaborate description of the heavenly temple, throne, and cultic items in 12:8-9 points to an understanding of *domus* as the celestial prototype of the earthly sanctuary.³⁵⁸ The context of Moses’ prayer—Moses’ second ascent of Sinai after the golden calf episode—would seem to preclude a literal understanding of *domus* as the place of creation,³⁵⁹ for Moses’ prayer on behalf of the people echoes his prayer in Exod 32:31 (cf. 34:8-9) and contains a clear description of the heavenly temple that will be the model for God’s dwelling place among the people, should God choose to have mercy on them. The trees and spices mentioned in connection to God’s *domus* all have a cultic function: Jacobson has concluded that these refer to fragrances and “appear by and large to derive from Exodus’ recipe for the oil used to anoint the sanctuary.”³⁶⁰ The description of the great variety of trees and aromatic plants in Moses’ prayer certainly

³⁵⁷ See esp. Martha Himmelfarb, “The Temple and the Garden of Eden in Ezekiel, the Book of the Watchers, and the Wisdom of Ben Sira,” in *Sacred Places and Profane Spaces: Essays in the Geographics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (ed. J. S. Scott and P. Simpson-Horsley; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1991), 64-66; Jon D. Levenson, “The Jewish Temple in Devotional and Visionary Experience,” in *Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible Through the Middle Ages* (2 vols.; ed. A. Green; New York: Crossroad, 1986), 1.51-53. Levenson writes that in prophetic theology, “the Temple was a piece of primal perfection available within the broken world of ordinary experience – heaven on earth.” *Ibid.*, 53.

³⁵⁸ For the idea of a temple in heaven, see *1 En.* 14; *T. Levi* 5; Wis 9:8; Heb 8:2-5.

³⁵⁹ Later in the text (13:8-9) Moses is shown the “place of creation” (*locum generationis*) from Sinai. In *LAB*, paradise appears to be located on or near Sinai (11:15), although Moses is granted journeys to paradise from both Sinai and Nebo (11:15; 19:10). Sinai and Nebo are connected spatially and theologically to paradise, for Moses’ ascents of the mountains include protological disclosure and visionary journeys to paradise, but neither mountain is explicitly equated with Eden.

³⁶⁰ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.500-501.

brings paradise to mind, however, and *LAB* may be a precursor to later texts that specifically posit the paradisaal origin of cultic items such as oil, incense, and spices (e.g. *Tg. Ps.-J. Exod 35:27-28*).

Harrington and Jacobson see *domus* as possibly referring to the universe, of which the temple is a microcosm, for “God’s house is the universe and the universe is mirrored in God’s house on earth.”³⁶¹ This interpretation is consistent with the picture of the heavenly temple in *Exod 24:10*, where the floor of God’s temple is the lower firmament of heaven (cf. *2 Bar. 59:3*). Himmelfarb has demonstrated that in apocalyptic literature the universe is often depicted as a temple that corresponds to the earthly temple.³⁶² While *domus* as universe is a possibility here, Moses’ careful description of the temple furnishings, and the lack of a description of various chambers or levels in the heavenly archetype (as in *1 En. 14* and the *Testament of Levi*), lead me to conclude that the most likely understanding of *domus* is the simplest: that God’s “house” is God’s celestial temple, the heavenly reality to which Moses has ascended and which he must replicate (although the universe may indeed be reflected in the temple’s iconography and represented in the woods, stones, and spices of the cultic paraphernalia). This is thus a fulfillment of the prediction given to Amram by God, that Moses would see “my house” (*9:8*, reading ביתי for בריתי, with Jacobson’s emendation). In *LAB 13*, Moses makes the temple furnishings according to the heavenly exemplars that he has seen in God’s *domus*.

By the time of Pseudo-Philo’s writing, there were already Jewish traditions that linked the Sinai ascent with the divine throne (cf. *Exagoge*, lines 68-76; *Mos. 1.155-58*;

³⁶¹ Harrington, *OTP* 2.320; Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.499-500 (500).

³⁶² Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 33. Cf. also Philo, *Spec.* 1.66.

Tg. Onq. Exod 24:10-12), despite the fact that such an overt assertion is missing from the MT and LXX. Although *LAB* never explicitly connects Moses to a vision of the divine throne, Moses' description of God's "most high and eternal seat" (*sede tua altissima et eterna*) implies ascent to the throne and direct vision. It is noteworthy that *2 Baruch*, which seems to be aware of *LAB* and uses similar motifs and vocabulary (e.g. the shaking of the heavens and the "lamp of the law"), explicitly mentions the divine throne in the context of Moses' heavenly ascent of Sinai (59:3).

5.2 Moses' Visit to the Heavenly Temple from Nebo: *LAB* 19:10

Moses also visits the heavenly temple in his ascent of Nebo/Abarim (*LAB* 19). In a departure from the canonical account, Moses' final mountain ascent includes an extraordinary visionary experience of celestial and cosmological sites, including a revelation of the heavenly temple with its sacrifices (19:10). On Nebo, God shows Moses the "measurements of the sanctuary" (*mensuras sanctuarii*) and the "number of sacrifices" (*numerum oblationum*) (19:10). Again, the verb choice (*ostendit ei*) suggests actual display/exhibition of the heavenly reality. Not satisfied to limit revelation of the heavenly temple to Moses on Sinai (11:15), Pseudo-Philo duplicates this revelation in Moses' pre-death visionary ascent, granting Moses a second ascent-vision of the future sanctuary's heavenly prototype. That this disclosure of heavenly temple particulars (the measurements of God's celestial dwelling and the number of its sacrifices) is esoteric and unusual is verified by the fact that both of these revelatory details are included in the text's listing of speculative secrets that are specifically prohibited from other humans ("these are what are prohibited for the human race because they have sinned against me")

– 19:10). (These Mosaic visionary elements recur in *2 Bar.* 59:4, 9, where they are associated with Moses’ Sinai ascent). Moses is singled out in *LAB* 19 as the exceptional recipient of divine esoteric disclosure.

There is likely a polemical subtext in the claim that only the virtuous Moses is privy to secrets of the heavenly temple and its worship. While revelation to Moses of the heavenly prototype of the temple is biblical, *LAB*’s placement of this revelation within a listing of other esoteric secrets obtained in a visionary mountain ascent to heaven (here on Nebo) reveals *LAB*’s dependence upon alternative apocalyptic seer traditions and probable rivalry with them. Moses’ journey from Nebo to the ends of the cosmos (to the “mouth of all rivers,” “the place from which the river takes its water,” and to the “paths of paradise”) and to the lower heavens (to the “place from which the clouds draw up water,” “the place in the firmament from which the holy land drinks,” and “the place from which manna rains”), as well as to the heavenly sanctuary, is carefully crafted to echo the visionary tours of other exalted patriarchs, notably Enoch, who journeys through the cosmos (*1 En.* 17-36; 71-78) and ascends to heavenly places and to the celestial temple and throne (*1 En.* 14-16).³⁶³ As Bauckham concludes, “this is probably an attribution to Moses of the kind of revelation of the contents of the heavens which the author knew in four apocalypses of which the subjects were other seers.”³⁶⁴ In *LAB* 19, Nebo has been transformed: it becomes the point of departure for an Enochic-style cosmic and heavenly tour, including ascent to the celestial temple. This highly suggestive transferral to Moses of Enochic visionary claims, but with the stamp of

³⁶³ See sections 2.4.3 and 4.3 above for the considerable parallels with Enochic accounts; also Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 60-61; Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature,” 414-54. For the locations of these secret places, see 4.3 above.

³⁶⁴ Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 61.

Mosaic priorities (temple and sacrifice) and a Mosaic location (Nebo), is evidence that the author is presenting Moses as a superior visionary figure.³⁶⁵ Pseudo-Philo further punctuates Moses' visionary authority by granting him, *twice* - on Sinai *and* Nebo, ascent to the heavenly temple (11:15; 19:10; and possibly to the divine throne - 12:8). Other esoteric knowledge, attributed to Moses, is validated by its placement along with covenant and cultic concerns, so important to the author.

Stone writes that *LAB*'s placement of *mensuras sanctuarii* and *numerum oblationum* in the context of Nebo is confusing, for "by any reading of the biblical story, they were revealed to Moses well before his death." Perhaps dialogue with Enochic traditions explains this curious placement. In the perspective of *LAB*, Nebo merges with Sinai as a place of heavenly ascent and divine esoteric disclosure. The Nebo vision, so ambiguous in the Hebrew Bible, provided a literary opportunity to expand upon Moses' visionary profile. Moses is presented in Enochic terms, as one who has ascended to the heavenly temple and received speculative knowledge, but the author found it necessary to include traditional cultic concerns in that context, in order to emphasize the connection of *all* important revelatory disclosure to covenant (temple and sacrifice). The Nebo visionary ascent solidifies Moses' status *vis-à-vis* Enoch, positing Enochic-style ascent and esoteric revelation to Moses but linking it to all-important covenant concerns.

LAB contains no mention of a vision of the divine throne in Moses' Nebo ascent. Bauckham has concluded that this enhancement of Deut 34:1-2 is "a visit to the lower heavens (not reaching to the throne of God in the highest heaven) rather than to the extremities of the earth."³⁶⁶

³⁶⁵ Stone, *Lists of Revealed Things in Apocalyptic Literature*, 418.

³⁶⁶ Bauckham, *The Fate of the Dead*, 60.

5.3 Summary

In Pseudo-Philo's accounts of Moses' visionary ascents, Moses is the exalted patriarch who, through bodily ascent to the heavenly temple from Sinai and Nebo, is able to bridge the gap between the celestial and earthly realms. In *LAB*, Moses alone has access to the secrets of God's heavenly dwelling, the prototype of and counterpart to the earthly temple/sanctuary. Moses also has important knowledge about the divine throne, received directly from heaven. This revealed transcendent knowledge, gained through a heavenly journey, echoes claims made for Enoch in Enochic lore. Pseudo-Philo's embellishment of the traditional canonical narrative to include Enochic apocalyptic motifs (ascent to the heavenly temple and direct revelation of esoteric secrets) strongly suggests dialogue with Enochic traditions. In *LAB* Moses, like Enoch, transgresses the boundaries between heaven and earth and becomes the mediator between the divine and human realms.

CHAPTER SIX

LUMINOSITY AND GLORY

6.1 Pseudo-Philo's Expansion of the Luminosity Motif

The tradition of Moses' shining face in his second ascent of Sinai (Exod 34) is both biblical and midrashic.³⁶⁷ In the Hebrew Bible, the LXX, and all the targumim, Moses' luminosity occurs during his re-ascent of Sinai after the episode of the golden calf.

Pseudo-Philo, however, goes beyond the traditional narrative to ascribe luminosity to Moses multiple times: on his first ascent of Sinai as well as his second, and just prior to his death on Nebo. In *LAB*, luminosity is exhibited by other humans as well: those who unwillingly consent to the making of the golden calf have illuminated faces (12.7; cf. 26:13); David's countenance alters after the killing of Goliath (61.9) and Kenaz's body changes when the spirit of the Lord clothes him (27:9-10), other references to transformed (presumably luminous) visage or form. Pseudo-Philo's expanded use of the luminosity motif is noteworthy, for it suggests dialogue with developing apocalyptic traditions of transformation of the visionary.

The legend of Moses' shining face from Exod 34 influenced many other Jewish and Christian writings. The luminosity of the righteous is a widespread motif in apocalyptic literature (Dan 10; 12; *1 En.* 39, 104; *4 Ezra* 7, 10; *2 Bar.* 51; *2 En.* 19; cf.

³⁶⁷ The motif of luminosity is linked to ancient accounts of theophany and transformation. The motif may have its provenance in Mesopotamian traditions. See Menahem Haran, "The Shining of Moses' Face: A Case Study in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography [Ex 34:29-35; Ps 69:32; Hab 3:4]," in *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström* (ed. W. B. Barrick and J. R. Spencer; JSOTSup 31; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 159-73; Propp, "The Skin of Moses' Face—Transfigured or Disfigured?," 375-86. In biblical accounts, the manifestation of God's glory (כבוד) is an experience of light. God's presence is often surrounded by a luminous radiance (e.g. Ezek 1:27-28; Hab 3:4; Ps 104:2). This luminosity serves to hide the divine form and to protect humans from the dangerous experience of seeing God directly. Light and fire are associated with God's glory and throne.

1QH^a XII, 5, 27; Matt 17:2; Mark 9:3; Luke 9:29; Acts 6:15; 2 Cor 3:18; *inter alia*; see also Judg 5:31). In some apocalypses, transformation into light is available to a select few who are able to ascend to heaven and/or have a vision of God's glory and throne.³⁶⁸ The luminosity of the visionary reveals exposure to the divine and participation in the divine כבוד. The notion of mystical transformation into light was suppressed in rabbinic Judaism, however. Only occasionally does rabbinic Judaism acknowledge human participation in the divine כבוד. The example of Moses from Exod 34 was seen as extraordinary and unique: not even his successor Joshua could duplicate it.³⁶⁹ In most Jewish apocryphal³⁷⁰ literature, as well as in prevailing rabbinic thought, restoration of the radiance of humans, lost due to Adam's sin,³⁷¹ would not occur until the world to come (e.g. Dan 12:3; *T. Ab.* 12:4-13:3 [Res. A]; *Lev. Rab.* 20:2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 11:7, 35:2;

³⁶⁸ *Ascen. Isa.* 7:25; 2 *En.* 22:8-10. In *T. Levi* 8:1-19, Levi is transformed by his investiture in holy and glorious (angelic) garments. Cf. *Rev.* 3:5; *Apoc. Ab.* 13:14; 3 *En.* 12:2, 15:1-2. In 1Q28b IV, 24-25, the priests are blessed so that they may be "like an angel of the face in the holy residence for the glory of the God of the Hos[ts...]"; their liturgy parallels that of the heavenly temple and their transformed visage, like that of the radiant angels, will "shine on the face of the Many." In the Cologne Mani Codex, there is a summary of an unknown apocalypse of Shem in which the patriarch's face is changed as a result of exposure to the divine. See discussion in Martha Himmelfarb, "Revelation and Rapture: The Transformation of the Visionary in the Ascent Apocalypses," in *Mysteries and Revelations* (ed. J. J. Collins and J. H. Charlesworth; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 82. Note also the transformation of Enoch into a divine/angelic being in 1 *En.* 71.

³⁶⁹ E.g. *Sipre Num.* 140: "while the face of Moses was like the face of the sun, that of Joshua was as the face of the moon." On the suppression of ascent and transformation traditions by first- and second-century rabbis, see esp. Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition," 1-31, esp. 14. There are rabbinic traditions that grant a physical transformation to the Israelites at Sinai, similar to that of Moses, but these are very late and postdate our text (e.g. *Exod. Rab.* 51:8; *Pirqe R. El.* 47). Morray-Jones writes that these later midrashim are derived from earlier apocalyptic visionary traditions. *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁷⁰ I use "apocryphal" to designate books that were not a part of the Hebrew Bible, for lack of a better term, noting the caveat of Cohen about the suitability of this word: "I avoid the terms 'apocrypha' and 'apocryphal,' although the rabbis use the latter expression, because the words invariably convey the impression of a fixed list of 'deuterocanonical' books, a list that never existed in any form of ancient Judaism." Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 169.

³⁷¹ There were Jewish traditions that Adam initially had a part in God's glory. In the beginning Adam was a glorious angelic being with a radiant body (4Q504 8, 4; *Gen. Rab.* 11; *Lev. Rab.* 20:2; *L.A.E.* [Apocalypse] 20-21; *L.A.E.* [Vita] 13-14). According to certain traditions, Adam's original garments were made of light (אור), not skin (עור). Adam was stripped of his luminous raiment as a result of the fall. *Deut. Rab.* 11:3 states that the glory taken from Adam was restored to Moses on Sinai. See Alon Goshen-Gottstein, "The Body as Image of God in Rabbinic Literature," *HTR* 87 (1994): 171-95.

Deut. Rab. 1:12, *Num. Rab.* 2:13). Pseudo-Philo, on the other hand, presents some faithful as luminous *before* the eschatological age. In this re-writing, *LAB* is closer to apocalyptic works that portray luminosity (evidence of participation in the divine glory) as a present possibility. Pseudo-Philo also multiplies Moses' experiences of luminosity and presents these episodes as transient but recurring. The canonical account, however, limits Moses' luminous transformation to his second Sinai ascent, and while the midrashim and targumim often assume that Moses' radiance continued throughout his life, they do not portray the phenomenon as intermittent. In addition, the fact that *LAB* links Moses' luminosity to mountain ascents *to heaven* (the motif of heavenly ascent) and to the extremities of the universe (cosmic journey), with accompanying esoteric visions, echoes apocalyptic ascended visionary traditions and seems to place *LAB*'s account in line with these apocalyptic portrayals. Pseudo-Philo presents Moses as a visionary who is transfigured after receiving revelation of secrets of primeval and eschatological times (esoteric disclosure). Although some of these motifs are occasionally in midrashic literature, they are predominantly found in apocalyptic texts that feature heavenly ascents.

This chapter will examine how the luminosity, light, and glory language in Moses' visionary mountain ascents recalls other apocalyptic texts and is best understood in comparison to them.

6.2 Moses' Luminosity Proclaimed: *LAB* 9

LAB 9 contains a colorful introduction to Moses' birth and life, the vast majority of which is not present in the Hebrew Bible. Pseudo-Philo's considerable embellishment of the

traditional canonical text of Exod 1-2 includes the proclamation by God to Amram that Moses will see God's "house"/heavenly temple (9:8) and the statement that Moses was born circumcised (he was "born in the covenant of God and the covenant of the flesh" – 9:13). The text goes on to proclaim that Moses was nursed "and became glorious above all other men" (*et gloriosus factus est super omnes homines*), a declaration of Moses' singularity among humans and a likely reference to Moses' future luminosity.

It is significant that these narrative expansions of the traditional canonical text all have an apocalyptic character. God will reveal his heavenly "house" to Moses; later in the text, it is clear that this occurs during an ascent to heaven (12:1). *LAB* 9:14, stating that Moses was born "in the covenant of God and the covenant of the flesh," is the earliest witness in Jewish tradition to Moses' being born circumcised.³⁷² The commentators note that this is, surprisingly, the only reference to circumcision in all of *LAB*. One may ask why only Moses is singled out as circumcised in the text, and why the author has stressed that the covenant mediator was born that way. It may well be a statement about Moses' unique angel-like identity as one who, like the angels, was born in this holy state. *LAB* knows *Jubilees*,³⁷³ and *Jub.* 15:27 links circumcision to the angels, who were born circumcised ("the nature of all the angels of the presence and all of the angels of sanctification was thus from the day of their creation"). Pseudo-Philo's emphasis on Moses' unnatural (angelic) state at birth takes on added significance when one considers Pseudo-Philo's deliberate expansion of the luminosity motif for the

³⁷² Harrington, *OTP* 2.300. Later Jewish tradition accepts this view: *b. Sot.* 12a; *Exod. Rab.* 1:24. *'Abot R. Nat.* 2:5 and *Midr. Tanh.* 9:7 list people who were born circumcised, including Moses. They link these heroes of righteousness and perfection to Adam/humankind, who was born in the image and likeness of God (Gen 5:2). These texts are much later than *LAB*. To my mind, the fact that circumcision is limited to Moses in *LAB* (not even the covenant of circumcision with Abraham is mentioned), and that Moses is granted considerable transcendent (apocalyptic) qualities and experiences in the text, makes *Jubilees* a likely inspiration for the motif.

³⁷³ Feldman, "Prolegomenon," lii-liii; James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, 43-46.

patriarch: Moses' recurrent radiance in *LAB* renders him as one who has achieved the status of the luminous angels.³⁷⁴ While other humans may experience luminosity in this life (12:7; 27:9-10; 61:9), only Moses regularly exhibits divine radiance. Moses' continued closeness to God's glory, parallel to the experience of the elite angels, results in his own frequent physical transformation.

If Moses' unique birth indicates his participation in angel-like identity, then this colors the interpretation of the assertion a few lines later that Moses "became glorious above all other men" (9:16). Jacobson finds the conceptual roots of this statement in Num 12:3, where Moses is proclaimed as "very humble (ענוו), more so than anyone else on the face of the earth."³⁷⁵ But the incorporation of the language of glory seems to point to a more transcendent reality, for glory (כבוד) is a *terminus technicus* for the luminous manifestation of the divine presence and is a prominent motif of apocalyptic literature.³⁷⁶ By describing Moses' future glorious existence, the text is very likely drawing attention to Moses' proximity to the divine כבוד, which results in Moses' own transformation into light during his visionary ascents. The proclamation of Moses' greatness in *LAB* 9:16, as one who "became glorious above all other men," brings to mind the exaltation of Moses in Sir 45:2a and 4b: "He made him (Moses) equal in glory to the holy ones (אלהים = angels)," "choosing him out of all humankind."³⁷⁷ Given Pseudo-Philo's portrayal of

³⁷⁴ Cf. 2 Bar. 51:10. In Second Temple Judaism, to shine is to achieve angelic status: Dan 10:6; 12:3; 1 En. 39:7; 46:1; 62:13-16; 104:2; 2 En. 22:9-10; 37:2. The radiance of the angels is described in 1 En. 71:1; 2 En. 1:3; 2 Bar. 51:10; Matt 28:3; Luke 24:4; Acts 6:15; *inter alia*. On righteous individuals given angelic qualities or even angelic status in pseudepigraphic texts, see esp. James H. Charlesworth, "The Portrayal of the Righteous as an Angel," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms* (ed. J. Collins and G. W. E. Nickelsburg; SBLSCS 12; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1980), 135-51.

³⁷⁵ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.430.

³⁷⁶ See, e.g., Klaus Koch, *Ratlos vor der Apokalypik* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1970); English transl., *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1972), 28-33.

³⁷⁷ Fletcher-Louis sees Ben Sira's glorification of Moses as a witness to the divine Moses tradition: Moses is exalted to angelic status. *All the Glory of Adam*, 140, 142.

Moses as an apocalyptic seer, he may be lifting up Moses as one who, more than any other human, participates in the divine glory because of his frequent experience of theophany and subsequent transformation. The statement *et gloriosus factus est super omnes homines* in the extant Latin text anticipates later declarations of Moses' luminosity: on Sinai "his face had become glorious" – 12:1 (*gloriosissima facta fuerat facies eius*), and again on Nebo: "his appearance became glorious; and he died in glory" (*mutate est effigies eius in gloria, et mortuus est in gloria*) – 19:16. This literary foreshadowing through terminological similarity was presumably present in the Greek and Hebrew stages of the text as well. The glorification language of 9:16, coupled with the prior statement about Moses being born circumcised (9:13), suggests an understanding of Moses' angel-like luminous identity.³⁷⁸

It is noteworthy that prior and developing apocalyptic traditions about other visionary patriarchs highlight those visionaries' glorified/angelic existence and transformation into light. Transferring the canonical motif of Moses' luminosity to their own favored patriarch, and expanding upon it, these traditions exalt their hero by ascribing to him the radiant countenance of angels and the language of glory. A few examples should suffice: Enoch's face changes when he ascends to heaven (*I En.* 39:14); his face is "like one of the holy angels" (*I En.* 46:1; cf. 1Q20 II); Enoch becomes luminous, "like one of the glorious ones" (*2 En.* 22:9-10, 37:2); Noah's luminous birth is a portent for his life of glory (*I En.* 106:1-13; 1Q19 3, 2-6); Levi is clothed in holy and glorious (angelic) vestments (*T. Levi* 8:1-19); Methuselah is glorified and radiates like the

³⁷⁸ Moses' angelic identity is affirmed other Second Temple texts, including the *I En.* 85-90). *I En.* 89:36 describes Moses' transformation from an animal to a human, the author's way of designating Moses' angelic identity. On Moses' physical transformation into a heavenly being, see also *Orphica*, lines 32-39.

sun before all the people (2 *En.* 69:1-5, 10 [longer rec.]); Joseph is the radiant son of God (*Jos. Asen.* 22:7-10); Zadokite priests are blessed to be like angels of the face in 1Q28b IV, 24-25. Pseudo-Philo's amplification of the Torah account to stress even further Moses' transcendent, luminous identity is quite conceivably the author's attempt to ramp up Moses' visionary status in light of these alternative exalted patriarch traditions.

6.3 Moses' Luminosity on Sinai: *LAB* 12:1

In a re-writing of the traditional Sinai account, *LAB* states that Moses became luminous in his initial ascent of Sinai:

And Moses came down. And when he had been bathed with invisible light, he went down to the place where the light of the sun and the moon are; and the light of his face surpassed the splendor of the sun and the moon, and he did not even know this. And when he came down to the sons of Israel, they saw him but did not recognize him....And afterward, when Moses realized that his face had become glorious, he made a veil for himself with which to cover his face. (12:1)

The commentators note Pseudo-Philo's shifting of the episode of Moses' shining face from his second ascent to his first. Jacobson in fact observes a certain clumsiness in the text because of this transposition: "Having transferred this to the first ascent, *LAB* struggles to incorporate this theme here without its intruding upon the important Golden Calf episode that follows. As a consequence, the fluidity of his narrative suffers."³⁷⁹ Because this is such a noticeable deviation from the traditional narrative, it is certainly important to speculate on the author's purpose in such a re-writing. It could be that Pseudo-Philo has a particular interpretive agenda: he seeks to confer upon Moses even more episodes of transcendent transformation, due to multiple occasions of access to the divine glory. Just as Pseudo-Philo has restaged Moses' Sinai and Nebo ascents as apocalyptic heavenly tours, so now the author increases the extent of Moses' direct

³⁷⁹ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.483.

encounters with God's כבוד, which result in Moses' luminous, angel-like identity.

Unlike the visionary patriarchs of other texts and traditions, whose luminosity is usually connected to a single event (e.g., a heavenly ascent), Moses' multiple experiences of luminosity demonstrate his superlative transcendent reality: he repeatedly exhibits the divine radiance throughout his career as visionary and mediator, from his first ascent of Sinai to just before his death on Nebo. Pseudo-Philo's portrayal of Moses may therefore have polemical overtones: only Moses regularly comes into contact with the divine glory (directly in heaven) and manifests that glory in his transformation into light. Instead of limiting Moses' luminosity to one episode (that of Exod 34), Pseudo-Philo provides three. The expansion of the luminosity motif serves to accent Moses' position as the matchless visionary patriarch; it also valorizes and gives authority to Moses' revelation.

Moses' recurrent episodes of transformation into light also suggest that Pseudo-Philo sees Moses as the luminous counterpart to the pre-lapsarian Adam: Moses is the one who restores the radiant identity that Adam had lost. This is a theme that recurs in other Jewish literature (e.g. *Deut. Rab.* 11:3; *Lev. Rab.* 20:2; *Midr. Tadshe* 4; also implied in 4Q504 8³⁸⁰). Hayward has demonstrated that *LAB* is aware of pre-existing speculative traditions about Adam, including the notion that Adam's sin led to the loss of his luminous body.³⁸¹ Moses' repeated association with light³⁸² in the text, as well as his frequent physical transformation into a glorious and radiant form, point toward *LAB*'s

³⁸⁰ See also discussion in Goshen-Gottstein, "The Body as Image of God in Rabbinic Literature," 171-95.

³⁸¹ Hayward, "The Figure of Adam in Pseudo-Philo's Biblical Antiquities," 1-20.

³⁸² See the numerous examples identified by Hayward, "The Figure of Adam in Pseudo-Philo's Biblical Antiquities," 13-14.

identification of Moses with Adam: Moses restores what Adam lost. Hayward goes so far as to posit that Moses is the antithesis of Adam in *LAB*.³⁸³

LAB 12:1 declares that when Moses descended from his heavenly ascent on Sinai, his radiant face “surpassed the splendor of the sun and moon” (*vicit lumen faciei sue splendorem solis et lune*). Jacobson writes that comparisons to the sun and moon are fairly commonplace in classical Greek and Latin texts, and that “a nearly exact parallel is found at *Pal. Hist.* p. 242 where Moses’ face is said to shine ὑπὲρ τὸν ἥλιον.”³⁸⁴ The idea that Moses’ shining face surpassed the brilliance of the sun is also found in *Lev. Rab.* 20:2.³⁸⁵ Later in *LAB*’s text, however, in a description of Moses’ dying, God says to Moses that “the sun and the moon and the stars are servants to you” (32:9). Elevation of Moses over the stars is a motif also found in Ezekiel’s *Exagoge*: in Moses’ throne vision, the stars (angels) bow down before Moses in worship (line 79; cf. *Mid. Tanh.* 150; *2 Bar.* 51:12).³⁸⁶ Perhaps Pseudo-Philo’s statements serve to exalt Moses’ status even further, by depicting him as one who is not only angel-like (luminous), but also as one whose greatness surpasses that of the heavenly bodies and even the angels. The angels and

³⁸³ Hayward, “The Figure of Adam in Pseudo-Philo’s Biblical Antiquities,” 14. Hayward, *ibid.*, also claims that in *LAB* the Mosaic cult restores the light lost by Adam’s sin, in part because the precious stones of the priestly breastplate had their origin in paradise (his interpretation of 26:13). Jacobson disagrees with Hayward’s assessment: *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 2.775. The link to paradise in 26:13 is not clear, and the connection of precious stones to light in this section points toward the eschatological age, not the present cult.

The superiority of Moses and his luminosity over Adam and the radiance he lost became a prevalent motif in Samaritan and rabbinic literature. See *Memar Marqah* 5:4 and discussions in April DeConick, *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas* (SVC 33; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 159; Jarl Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Mediation Concepts and the Origin of Gnosticism* (WUNT 36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), 93; Meeks, “Moses as God and King,” 363-65; Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, 270-71.

³⁸⁴ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.482.

³⁸⁵ Cf. Adam outshining the sun in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 66.203-04, and the righteous shining seven times brighter than the sun in *2 En.* 66:7.

³⁸⁶ Angels are often equated with stars in apocalyptic literature. See also *1 En.* 39:4-7; 104:4-7. Cf. *Judg* 5:20; *Job* 38:7. On the righteous surpassing the angels, see *2 Bar.* 51:12; *Mart. Ascen. Isa.* 8-9; cf. *1 En.* 62:15-16.

celestial phenomena in fact grieve when Moses dies *in gloria* (luminous) – 19:16, and the angels do not know the place of his burial.

Among known Jewish texts about Moses, *LAB* alone claims that Moses' shining face rendered him unrecognizable to the Israelites: "And when he came down to the sons of Israel, they saw him but did not recognize him" (*Et factum est cum descenderet ad filios Israel, videntes non cognoscebant eum* - 12:1). In Pseudo-Philo's re-telling, Moses' altered (luminous) appearance results in his non-recognition until he speaks, a situation that recalls for the author Joseph's experience with his brothers, who fail to recognize him in Egypt (Gen 42:7-8). Yet Pseudo-Philo's connection of the two stories is awkward, as scholars note.³⁸⁷ *LAB*'s unique emphasis on the lack of recognition of Moses invites speculation as to its origin. The non-recognition motif in the context of luminosity brings to mind similar claims of altered and therefore unrecognizable identity in apocalyptic texts about Noah. Noah, born luminous and with eyes that shine like the sun, is not recognized as human by his own father (1Qap Gen^{ar} V, 5-13; cf. 1Q19 3; *1 En.* 106:1-12). Perhaps Pseudo-Philo has employed this known apocalyptic motif and has applied it to Moses. The claim further emphasizes Moses' transcendent identity.

³⁸⁷ About this puzzling connection, Jacobson writes, "Whether the Joseph episode occurred as an afterthought to *LAB* once he had invented the 'lack of recognition' theme here or there is a deeper and more significant connection, I do not know." *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.483. Fisk observes that Pseudo-Philo "conveniently ignores the fact that *Joseph's* identity remained hidden long after he first *spoke* to his brothers." Bruce N. Fisk, "One Good Story Deserves Another: The Hermeneutics of Invoking Secondary Biblical Episodes in the Narratives of *Pseudo-Philo* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*," in *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition* (ed. C. A. Evans; Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 7; JSPSup 33; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, c2000), 227. Emphasis in original. This inconsistency is also noted by Eckhart Reinmuth, *Pseudo-Philo und Lukas* (WUNT 74; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 101.

6.4 Moses and the Divine Glory

Given Pseudo-Philo's portrayal of Moses' Sinai and Nebo experiences as heavenly ascents in the style of apocalyptic texts, it is curious that there is no mention of Moses' encounter with the divine glory in the relevant passages (although "glory" language abounds [9:16; 12:1; 19:16], as we have noted above). Moses' repeated episodes of luminous transformation reveal his contact with God's כבוד, but the extant Latin text of his visionary ascents does not explicitly state that Moses beholds the divine glory. God's glory (*gloria Dei*) does appear to Moses after the return of the twelve spies from Canaan (15:5), but there is no specific language about Moses' beholding of the divine glory in his Sinai or Nebo ascents. However, this may well be due to mistranslation at some stage in the translation history between the original Hebrew and the extant Latin. Already in God's discussion with Amram prior to Moses' birth (9:7), God states, "*faciam in eis gloriam meam*" (translated by Harrington in *OTP* as "I will act gloriously among them"³⁸⁸). Jacobson, in agreement with the Cazeaux translation in *SC* ("je mettrai ma gloire en eux"), argues for the translation "I will place my glory among them." Jacobson writes, "If LAB wrote אשים כבודי, this probably became θήσω, which in turn might have become *faciam*."³⁸⁹ This statement then points toward the future manifestation of God's glory to Moses, and through Moses to the people (see 30:2). This section of *LAB* 9 (the foretelling of Moses' greatness prior to his birth) contains multiple parallels to Exodus 33-34. God's announcement to Amram of Moses' singularity among humans is, in fact, a foretelling of Moses' encounter with the divine glory on Sinai, resulting in Moses' luminosity.

³⁸⁸ Cf. James's translation: "I will perform in them my glory."

³⁸⁹ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.412.

<i>LAB</i> 9	Exodus 33-34
9:7 “I will work through him signs and wonders for my people that I have not done through anyone else” (<i>faciam signa et prodigia populo meo que non feci ulli</i>)	34:10 “Before all your people I will perform marvels, such as have not been performed in all the earth or in any nation”
9:7 “and I will place my glory among them” (transl. Jacobson and Cazeaux) (<i>faciam in eis gloriam meam</i>)	33:18 “Show me your glory, I pray”
9:7 “and proclaim to them my ways” (<i>et annuntiabo eis vias meas</i>)	33:13 “show me your ways “
9:8 “And I, God, will kindle on his behalf my lamp to reside in him” (<i>incendam pro eo lucernam meam que habitet in eo</i>)	34:30 “the skin of Moses’ face was shining”
9:8 “and will show him my “house” that no one has seen” (<i>ostendam ei testamentum [read “house”] meam quod non vidit ullus</i>)	<i>Exodus 35-40 Moses oversees the building of God’s “house” among the people (sanctuary), having already seen the heavenly prototype</i>
9:8 “And I will reveal to him my <i>superexcellencia</i> (glory, majesty?)” (<i>patefaciam ei superexcellenciam meam</i>)	33:19-23 God’s goodness and glory pass by Moses; Moses sees God’s back 34:5 “The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there”
9:8 “And statutes and judgments” (<i>iusticias et iudicia</i>)	34:11-26 Listing of cultic laws
9:8 “And I will burn an eternal light for him” (<i>lumen sempiternum luceam ei</i>)	34:34-35 God’s light (radiance, glory) is evident in Moses’ luminosity

The allusions to Exod 33-34 in *LAB* 9:7-8, as well as *LAB*’s later assertions of heavenly ascent for Moses, suggest that the revelation of glory to Moses was indeed present in *LAB* Hebrew. These allusions in chapter 9 provide interpretive clues that inform the translation of several Latin words in *LAB* that have proved perplexing. The context of theophany and revelation, combined with the motif of heavenly ascent, gives important insight into one of the thorniest issues in scholarship of *LAB*: how to translate

superexcellencia (9:8; 12:2; 30:2)³⁹⁰ and the related word *superexcelsa* (19:4; cf. *excelsa* at 11:1 and 44:6). These words are all associated with Moses and occur in theophanic contexts on Sinai (or Nebo in 19:4).

a. *superexcellencia*

9:8 “And I will show him (Moses) my *house*³⁹¹ that no one has seen. And I will reveal to him my *superexcellenciam* and statutes (*iusticias*) and judgments (*iudicia*)”

12:2 “For Moses will come, and he will bring judgment (*iudicium*) near to us and will illumine the Law (*legem*) for us and will explain from his own mouth the *superexcellenciam* of God and set up rules (*iusticias*) for our race”

30:2 “And I sent to them Moses my servant, who would declare my *superexcellenciam* and statutes (*iusticias*)”

b. *superexcelsa*

19:4 “God has revealed the end of the world to you (i.e., to Moses) so that he might establish his *superexcelsa* with you and kindle among you an eternal light”

c. *excelsa*

11:1 “For them I will bring out the eternal *excelsa* that are for those in the light but for the ungodly a punishment”

44:6 “...when I established (*ponerem*) *excelsa* on Mount Sinai, I showed myself to the sons of Israel in the storm”

James³⁹², Harrington³⁹³, Murphy³⁹⁴, and Reinmuth³⁹⁵ claim that *superexcellencia*

is synonymous with “law” or “Torah.” Perrot and Bogaert’s conclusion about

superexcellencia, *superexcelsa*, and *excelsa* is that these terms:

se referent à la Loi ou à une expression connexe servant à la désigner en tout ou en partie, par ex. les Dix Commandements. Il faut observer aussi que ces mots sont les plus souvent accolés à *iustitias* et *iudicia* d’une part et introduits par *ponere* ou *disponere*

³⁹⁰ About *superexcellencia*, Harrington summarizes, “This expression (or one like it) must mean “law” or “statute” as in 11:1; 12:2; 19:4; 30:2; and 44:6, but its origin is not now recognizable.” *OTP* 2.316, n. j.

³⁹¹ Jacobson emendation.

³⁹² James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, 106.

³⁹³ Harrington, *OTP* 2.316

³⁹⁴ Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible*, 58.

³⁹⁵ Eckhart Reinmuth, “Beobachtung zum Verständnis des Gesetzes im Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum (Pseudo-Philo),” *JSJ* 20 (1989): 151-170 (164, n. 48).

d'autre part. Il est malaisé cependant de refaire le cheminement qui a conduit à ces mots latins. Nous ne pouvons faire que des hypothèses.³⁹⁶

The revelatory context in which these terms all occur, coupled with the frequent references to light in the verses, suggests that these terms may indicate something other than law. There are already numerous references to the law, using various terms, in these passages (law – *legem*; statutes, rules – *iusticias*, judgment/s – *iudicium, iudicia*). Perhaps *superexcellencia* refers to something else, in addition to the law, that was revealed to Moses in his visionary ascents, and through him to the people: God's effulgent glory. Jacobson's observation is critical and decisive: "we must recognize the distinct possibility that LAB's *superexcellencia* really has little to do with the Law per se, but rather means exactly what it says: God's excellence, superiority, majesty, *vel sim.*"³⁹⁷ The theophanic framework, and the fact that *superexcellencia* and *superexcelsa* occur only in passages about Moses and mostly in narratives or descriptions of heavenly ascent (*LAB* 9:8; 11:1-3; 12; 19), suggest that these terms render what was originally כבוד, or something very similar, in *LAB* Hebrew.

A closer look at *LAB* 9:7-8 supports this conclusion. As the above chart demonstrates, the multiple allusions to Exod 33-34 in these verses foreshadow the events of those chapters, which highlight Moses' reception of the law, the beholding of God's glory, and Moses' subsequent luminosity. In *LAB* 9:7, God declares to Amram, "I will place my glory (*gloriam*) among them and declare to them my ways (*vias meas*)." The statements of 9:8 may be understood to declare that God's glory (*superexcellencia*) and ways (*iusticias et iudicia*) will be revealed to Moses, who alone has seen God's "house" (accepting, with Jacobson, that the original Hebrew had ביתי instead of ברייתי). If

³⁹⁶ Perrot and Bogaert, SC 230, 104-5.

³⁹⁷ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.415.

superexcellencia renders a term synonymous with glory in *LAB* Hebrew, as Jacobson has argued (he suggests כבוד, גודל, גאון, or הדר as possibilities³⁹⁸), the term refers back to God's statement about glory in 9:7 and is parallel to it. The structure of Pseudo-Philo's narrative of God's speech, which reflects what must have been present in *LAB* Hebrew, in fact suggests that this is the case:

9:7 I will place my glory (*gloriam*) among them
and proclaim to them my ways (*vias meas*)

9:8a And I, God will kindle on his behalf my lamp³⁹⁹ to reside in him (Moses)
and I will show him my house that no one has seen
(*references to Moses' luminosity and heavenly temple vision)

9:8 And I will reveal (*patefaciam*) to him my glory/majesty (*superexcellenciam*)
And statutes and judgments (*iusticias et iudicia*)

This speech by God to Amram foretells Moses' heavenly ascent, luminosity, and revelation. The motif of ascent, with its concomitant apocalyptic technical vocabulary (glory [*gloria*]; reveal/disclose [*patefacio*]; vision of God's "house"/heavenly temple), makes one expect mention of the divine glory in the passage. It appears that *superexcellenciam* may parallel *gloriam* in the text, and may in fact render a term designating "glory" in *LAB* Hebrew (cf. God's "glory [כבוד] and greatness" [גדלו] in Deut 5:24). If so, this passage describes the future revelation of the divine כבוד to Moses. It is significant that the Hebrew fragments in the *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* specifically mention כבוד for this passage (42:7). God's declaration to Amram in 9:7-8 proclaims the future revelation of both the divine glory and the law, foretelling that Moses' luminosity

³⁹⁸ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.417.

³⁹⁹ *lucernam meam*. Many commentators see this as a reference to the Torah, but see 2 Bar. 17:4 which seems to distinguish the light/lamp of God from the Law and appears to refer to Moses' luminosity. Cf. Ezra, the Moses *redivivus*, as the "lamp in a dark place" in 4 Ezra 14:25. Cf. the juxtaposition of lamp and laws in *LAB* 15:6.

will be a theophanic witness to God's presence in Israel's midst (this must be the meaning of *lumen sempiternum luceam ei* later in God's speech).

The meaning of *superexcellencia* in 12:2 and 30:2, as well as *superexcelsa* in 19:4 and *excelsa* in 11:1 and 44:6, is not as clear. The commentaries consistently claim that these terms must refer to the law or something connected to it. In all the passages, the context is revelation. In 11:1 and 19:4, there are clear references to light, which could support an understanding of glory for the terms, although light is often associated with the law.⁴⁰⁰ In 12:2, however, *superexcellencia* is juxtaposed with *iusticias* (rules), just as lamp (*lucernam*) and laws (*terminus*) are in 15:6. Although an understanding of law for *superexcellencia* fits, it seems more likely that Pseudo-Philo would want to highlight the dual nature of Moses' revelation as both exoteric and esoteric, which is a theme of *LAB*. Our author, after all, portrays Moses throughout his text as an apocalyptic seer and visionary of exoteric *and* esoteric disclosure. It is not inconceivable that *superexcellencia* and its cognates in these passages refers therefore to the transcendent disclosure of God's glory, which is balanced with statements about the revelation of God's law. In my view, Jacobson's interpretation of *superexcellencia* as glory or majesty is plausible.

In *LAB* 15:5, upon the return of the twelve spies from their inspection of Canaan, it is expressly stated that the glory of God (*gloria Dei*) appears to Moses and speaks. Although this is not in the context of an ascent, it does directly connect Moses to the divine כבוד. Yet Moses' luminous transformations on Sinai and Nebo witness to his intimate connection to God's glory and signify Moses' transcendent identity after those visionary encounters. Moses' luminosity makes him the locus of theophany for Israel.

⁴⁰⁰ See Geza Vermès, "The Torah is a Light," *VT* 8 (1958): 436-38.

6.5 Moses' Luminosity on Nebo: LAB 19:16

Just prior to his death, Moses ascends Abarim/Nebo, where he journeys to places at the extremities of the cosmos and in the lower heavens; on Nebo God also gives Moses revelation of protological and eschatological secrets (see next chapter). After this extraordinary disclosure, Moses' "appearance became glorious; and he died in glory according to the word of the Lord" (*et mutata est effigies eius in gloria, et mortuus est in gloria secundum os Domini* –19:16). This assertion of Moses' pre-death luminosity is not present in Deut 34. Although the targumim and midrashim often assume that Moses' luminosity of Exod 34 continued throughout his life until his death (e.g. *Tg. Onq.*, *Tg. J.*, and *Tg. Neof.* Deut 34:7; *Gen. Rab.* 11:3),⁴⁰¹ Pseudo-Philo is unique among Jewish sources in its claim that Moses' luminosity was intermittent (but see 2 Cor 3:12-13).⁴⁰²

It is interesting to speculate upon Pseudo-Philo's reason for insisting that Moses' radiance came and went, and in particular to question why the author has added the specific vocabulary of change/transformation (*mutata* in the extant Latin; almost certainly שנה/שנה in *LAB* Hebrew) into his account (19:16). In the narrative of Moses' luminosity in Exod 34:29-35, in the Hebrew Bible as well as the LXX, there is no descriptive verb that denotes the process of transformation, yet *LAB* seems to accent this notion here.

Jacobson points out that the phrase *mutata est effigies eius* occurs in the Latin translation

⁴⁰¹ The view of the written Torah on this is not clear, as Jacobson summarizes: "The Bible never explicitly speaks of the shining of Moses' face after Exod. 34, so there is no necessary reason to assume that the shining abided (Exod. 34:34-35 can be variously interpreted). But it is a fact that Targumim and midrashic sources do often assume that the splendor was abiding and LAB...appears to differ from this view." Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 2.653.

⁴⁰² See Feldman, "Prolegomenon," lxviii; Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 2.653; Martin McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), 174.

of Dan 5:6; 7:28; 10:8.⁴⁰³ In these verses, altered countenance is the result of visionary experience. It is possible that Pseudo-Philo had these verses in mind. But it is striking that the same vocabulary of altered appearance, with an emphasis on the *process* of change into luminous identity, is often found in apocalyptic accounts of visionary transformation:

- a. *I En.* 39:14 (about Enoch in his heavenly ascent)
“and my face was changed”⁴⁰⁴
- b. *I En.* 71:11 (about Enoch in heavenly ascent)
“and I fell on my face, and all my flesh melted, and my spirit was transformed”⁴⁰⁵
- c. 1Qap Gen^{ar} II, 12 (about Lamech)
“When Bitenosh, my wife, realized that my countenance had altered”
וכדי חזת בתאנוש אנתתי די אשתני אנפי עלי⁴⁰⁶
- d. 1Qap Gen^{ar} II, 17 (about Lamech)
[Why is the expression] of your face so changed and distorted”
[למא צלם] אנפיך כדנא עליך שנא ושחת⁴⁰⁷
- e. *Ascen. Isa.* 7:25 (about Isaiah)
“the glory of my face was being transformed as I went up from heaven to heaven”⁴⁰⁸
- f. unknown *Apocalypse of Shem*⁴⁰⁹ (about Shem)
“Then the appearance of my face was changed so that I fell to the ground”⁴¹⁰

Many of the above passages describe the luminous transformation the seer undergoes in a heavenly ascent.⁴¹¹ Pseudo-Philo’s deliberate use of a verb of change

⁴⁰³ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 2.653.

⁴⁰⁴ Translation by Nickelsburg in *I Enoch: A New Translation*, 54. This concurs with the translation by Isaac, “1 Enoch,” *OTP* 1.31. Knibb’s translation is “And my face was transformed until I was unable to see.” *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, 2.127.

⁴⁰⁵ Translation by Nickelsburg, *I Enoch: A New Translation*, 94. Knibb’s rendering is nearly identical: “And I fell upon my face, and my whole body melted, and my spirit was transformed.” *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, 2.166.

⁴⁰⁶ Text and translation are from García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1.28-29.

⁴⁰⁷ García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1.30-31.

⁴⁰⁸ Translation by M. A. Knibb, “Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah,” *OTP* 2.167.

⁴⁰⁹ This unknown apocalypse is summarized in the Cologne Mani Codex, in the section attributed to Baraies. See discussion in Himmelfarb, “Revelation and Rapture: The Transformation of the Visionary in the Ascent Apocalypses,” 79-82. Citation is from Himmelfarb’s article.

⁴¹⁰ Text cited in Himmelfarb, “Revelation and Rapture: The Transformation of the Visionary in the Ascent Apocalypses,” 82.

⁴¹¹ Note also the “change” language of 2 Cor 3:18 and the terminology of Luke 9:29: “the appearance of his face changed” (τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἔτερον).

(assuming of course that *mutate* in the extant manuscripts does indeed render a verb for transformation in the original Hebrew) in the context of Moses' heavenly ascent on Nebo echoes the "change" motif of other exalted visionary accounts. It is highly likely that *LAB* Hebrew contained the verb שנה/שנא and hence displayed the process of Moses' glorious physical transformation (cf. Kenaz's body changing [*transmutatus*] in 27:10 and David's appearance being changed⁴¹² by the angel of the Lord in 61:9). While it cannot be claimed that the author had these other apocalyptic texts at his disposal, the motif of altered identity and mystical transformation into light, in the context of heavenly ascent, was known to him and was incorporated into his portrayal of Moses. The author evidently saw Moses' radiance as an experience of actual transmutation into transcendent form. As Feldman points out, in this passage about Moses on Nebo, Pseudo-Philo differs from all extant midrashim;⁴¹³ it is quite possibly a deliberate addition by the author to enhance Moses' traditional profile. Moses' final luminous transformation was the exclamation point that preceded his death "in glory according to the word of the Lord" (*in gloria secundum os Domini*). The fact that Moses' glorious radiance was not constant throughout his life as mediator of revelation (as many targumim and midrashim interpret Deut 34:7), but rather recurred at various moments of extraordinary access to the divine כבוד, may indicate the author's hesitancy to claim permanent apotheosis for Moses, with the resultant implication of deification or angelomorphy. Assertions of permanent glorification were made about other exalted patriarchs in other texts, e.g., about Methuselah: "you will be glorified all the days of your life" – 2 *En.* 69:5 [longer rec.]. Moses is not a divine being in *LAB*, despite his frequent (but transient) participation in

⁴¹² The manuscripts all have "raised" (*erexit*), but Ginzberg posits that *erexit* was the result of misreading נשא ("raised") for שנה ("changed"). *The Legends of the Jews*, 6:252.

⁴¹³ Feldman, "Prolegomenon," lxviii.

the divine glory and luminous angel-like identity. The final lines recounting Moses' end on Nebo emphasize his death. *LAB* contains no hint that Moses did not, in fact, die.

Pseudo-Philo is emphatic that Moses died at God's word, was buried by God's own self "on a high place and in the light of the whole world," and that his death was grieved by angels and celestial phenomena (19:16). The stress on Moses' actual death is likely in polemical dialogue with traditions that he was assumed directly to heaven.⁴¹⁴

6.6 Luminosity of the Righteous: *LAB* 12:7

The tradition of Moses' shining face influenced Second Temple Jewish and also Christian writings. Just as Moses' luminous face reflected God's glory (Exod 34:29-35), it came to be believed that those who are righteous would exhibit a similar radiant countenance in the world to come. The idea that the faithful will "shine" is found in Dan 12:3: "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever" (cf. Judg 5:31: "But may your friends be like the sun as it rises in its might"). Luminosity (participation in angel-like existence) was considered the reward of the righteous after death. In *I En.* 39:7, the righteous dead are "like fiery lights" (cf. *I En.* 104:2: "you will shine like the luminaries of heaven"). In *4 Ezra*, it is explained to Ezra that upon death, the righteous will see the glory of God (7:91), and then it will be shown to them "how their face is to shine like the sun, and how they are to be made like the light of the stars, being incorruptible from then on" (7:97; cf.

⁴¹⁴ Wadsworth has demonstrated that Pseudo-Philo knew traditions that Moses did not die but was assumed to heaven, but that the author rejected this notion. Michael Wadsworth, "The Death of Moses and the Riddle of the End of Time in Pseudo-Philo," *JJS* 28 (1977): 12-19.

10:25).⁴¹⁵ Similarly, in *2 Baruch*, the righteous “will be like the angels and equal to the stars; they will be changed into any shape which they wished, from beauty to loveliness, and from light to the splendor of glory (51:10). In these texts, to shine is to achieve the status of angels.⁴¹⁶

Rabbinic tradition, however, was cautious about the notion of angelic identity and luminous transformation. It limited the possibility to the faithful departed in the eschatological age (*Lev. Rab.* 20:2; *Pesiq. Rab.* 11:7, 35:2; *Deut. Rab.* 1:12, *Num. Rab.* 2:13), when the radiance lost by Adam would be restored. Smelik summarizes the hesitance of the rabbis to accept the notion of luminous transformation:

Obviously, the rabbinic reluctance to articulate the concept of mystical transformation is inextricably bound up with the designation of the righteous as gods. It is not doubt not the transformation itself they feared but the impact of apotheosis. Similarly the comparison or identification of the righteous with angels, evoked by their supernatural state of being as light, would become suspect, even though it was never completely abandoned.⁴¹⁷

In some (mostly apocalyptic) texts, luminosity was seen as a present possibility (e.g. *1 En.* 39; 71; 104; *T. Levi* 8:1-19; 1Q28b IV, 24-25; *4 Macc.* 17:5; *Apoc. Shem*; *Apoc. Ab.* 13:14; *Ascen. Isa.* 7:25; *2 En.* 19:10; 22:8-10; *3 En.* 12:2, 15:1-2; cf. *Matt* 13:43; 17:1-8; *Mark* 9:2-8; *Luke* 9:28-36; *Acts* 6:15; *2 Cor.* 3:18). In these accounts, certain extraordinary visionaries are able to experience transformation into light in this life. Himmelfarb explains what transformation into angelic luminous existence means for these righteous individuals: “...for most this experience is reserved until after death. But certain exceptional men can have a foretaste of it while still alive, thus serving as

⁴¹⁵ On the connection between the righteous and the stars, and the notion of astral immortality, see esp. Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things in Apocalyptic Literature,” 430-31. See *Dan* 12:2:2-3; *1 En.* 104:2, 6; *As. Mos.* 10:9.

⁴¹⁶ E.g. *Dan* 10:6; 12:3; *1 En.* 39:7; 62:13-16; 104:2; *2 En.* 22:9-10; 37:2; cf. *Acts* 6:15; *Rev* 3:5. Luminosity is one of the traits of angels in Second Temple Jewish and also Christian writings. See *Dan* 10:6; *2 Bar.* 51:10; *2 En.* 19:1; *Matt* 28:3; *Acts* 6:15, *inter alia*.

⁴¹⁷ Smelik, “On Mystical Transformation of the Righteous into Light in Judaism,” 123.

examples of the future intimacy with God to which all of the righteous can look forward.”⁴¹⁸

LAB understands the afterlife to be a radiant existence: the righteous “will be like the stars of heaven” (33:5) and “they will not lack the brilliance of the sun or the moon” (26:13). But *LAB* also sees luminous transformation as a present possibility. In the text, certain righteous individuals experience transformation into light before death. *LAB* 12:7 describes the shining faces of the Israelites who did not want the golden calf: “if he had been forced by fear to consent, *his face shone*” (*splendebat visus eius*). These righteous Israelites were, like Moses, temporarily glorified by radiant countenances.⁴¹⁹ After Kenaz prays about the Amorites, the text states that “the spirit of the Lord clothed him” (27:9) and his body “was changed” (*transmutatus* - 27:10). Although this is another example of Pseudo-Philo’s use of the non-recognition motif, it could also signify transfiguration into a glorious form. Similarly, the angel of the Lord “changed David’s appearance” (*erexit*⁴²⁰ *faciem David*) after the killing of Goliath (61.9). Pseudo-Philo could well be modeling the stories of these righteous Israelites after that of Moses, whose radiant face rendered him unrecognizable to his people: “And when he came down to the sons of Israel, they saw him but did not recognize him” (*Et factum est cum descenderet*

⁴¹⁸ Himmelfarb, “Revelation and Rapture: The Transformation of the Visionary in the Ascent Apocalypses,” 90. On righteous individuals given angelic qualities or even angelic status in pseudepigraphic texts, see esp. Charlesworth, “The Portrayal of the Righteous as an Angel,” 135-51. On the apocalyptic seer participating in the divine glory and having a foretaste of eschatological glory, see Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 113-20.

⁴¹⁹ Fisk has recognized this, surmising that Pseudo-Philo thus “acquits them from charges of apostasy.” “One Good Story Deserves Another: The Hermeneutics of Invoking Secondary Biblical Episodes in the Narratives of *Pseudo-Philo* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,” 232.

⁴²⁰ Reading “changed” (שנה) instead of *erexit* (“raised” - גשא), with Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 6:252.

ad filios Israel, videntes non cognoscebant eum - 12:1).⁴²¹ In the case of Moses, non-recognition was due to his luminous transformation.

The above examples from *LAB* reveal that Pseudo-Philo was not uncomfortable ascribing luminosity to some faithful individuals during their earthly life. The altered countenance and form experienced by these heroes was a foretaste of the eschatological radiance to come. Pseudo-Philo's presentation of luminosity as a present possibility, at least for certain righteous individuals from Israel's past, echoes claims about visionaries and other extraordinary figures in apocalyptic or mystical works.

6.7 Summary

Among known Jewish texts about Moses, *LAB* alone claims that Moses' shining face rendered him unrecognizable and that he experienced multiple but intermittent episodes of luminous transformation. By his expanded use of the luminosity motif with respect to Moses' visionary ascents, Pseudo-Philo proclaims Moses as the one whose participation in the divine glory surpassed that of all other humans. Moses regularly exhibits the divine radiance, but although Moses is angel-like, he is not divinized, for he dies on Nebo. Moses' recurrent transcendent identity anticipates the radiant existence that he and all the faithful will enjoy in the world to come. Other righteous individuals in *LAB*, who duplicate Moses' experience but to a lesser extent, also experience luminosity as a present possibility.

Luminosity serves to validate Moses' authority as visionary. It is conceivable that Pseudo-Philo has multiplied the biblical episodes of Moses' luminosity to heighten Moses' profile in light of other visionary traditions that adopted the Mosaic luminous

⁴²¹ But see 7:5 and 64:4, where non-recognition is not due to luminous transformation.

patriarch motif. Using vocabulary that is terminologically similar to that used for other exalted visionaries in apocalyptic accounts, Pseudo-Philo accents the language of transformation into glorious, angelic form. The luminosity motif in *LAB* is entwined with other apocalyptic assertions about Moses, including his heavenly ascent and esoteric revelation. It is my view that Pseudo-Philo has deliberately incorporated apocalyptic conceptual developments into his narratives about Moses and other righteous heroes of Israel's history in dialogue with other elevated patriarch accounts.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PROTOLOGY AND ESCHATOLOGY AS REVELATION TO MOSES

7.1 Primordial Revelation in *LAB*

Although *LAB* follows the biblical narrative from Genesis to 1 Samuel quite closely, it is striking that this text's re-telling of Israel's history does not begin with the creation accounts of Gen 1 and 2. In *LAB*, some narratives about the primeval period are skipped over entirely, such as the Torah's dual accounts of the creation of the first man and woman; others, including the first humans' disobedience in the garden of Eden, are thrust into chronologically later sections that cover Moses and Kenaz.⁴²² On Sinai, after Moses receives the law, he is abruptly shown the tree of life (11:15). In 13:8-9, an apocalyptic vision is given to Moses, including revelation about the first man (the *protoplastus*), the garden of Eden ("the place of creation and the serpent" – *locum generationis et colubrum*⁴²³), and the "ways of paradise" (*vias paradysi*).⁴²⁴ This apocalypse of Moses is unique to *LAB* and it has been called "a locus desperatus" by Jacobson in his exhaustive commentary.⁴²⁵ Paradisal revelation is inserted into Moses' ascent of Nebo: he is shown the "paths of paradise" (*semitas paradysi*) in a heavenly and cosmic ascent (19:10). Kenaz is granted a pre-death vision of the primordial chaos and the creation of human (or possibly angelic) beings (28:6-9).

⁴²² Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, is only a name in Judg 3:9,11. In his lengthy section about Kenaz (chs. 25-28), Pseudo-Philo has created a history for this figure in order to advance his own theological agenda. See Nickelsburg, "Good and Bad Leaders in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*," 54-55. Kenaz is presented as the recipient of revelation.

⁴²³ Reading *colubrum* instead of the *colorem* of all the manuscripts. All the commentators agree that *colorem* makes no sense. See discussion in Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.520.

⁴²⁴ On paradise as a location in Second Temple texts and *LAB*, see n. 312 above.

⁴²⁵ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.519.

Scholars have noted Pseudo-Philo's penchant for inserting one biblical episode into the context of another.⁴²⁶ But it is intriguing that several stories about the primeval history are given *apocalyptic* features and are placed within the context of covenant revelation. The re-shaping of these episodes as esoteric revelation of protology to covenant patriarchs (Moses and Kenaz) suggests interactive dialogue with Jewish apocalyptic traditions.⁴²⁷ In the first part of this chapter, I provide an analysis of Pseudo-Philo's account of the primeval history and of Moses' apocalyptic vision of creational secrets on Sinai and Nebo. There is evidence in *LAB* that the author was aware of traditions about Enoch as the recipient of primordial disclosure (see esp. 34:2-3). Pseudo-Philo's enhancements of the biblical narrative, notably the vocabulary used about Enoch, the interpretive expansion of the primeval history, and the deliberate placement of primordial secrets within Mosaic contexts, appear to have polemical import. Pseudo-Philo is not just re-telling the Bible; he is shaping it with his own particular pro-Moses and pro-Torah perspective, linking creation to covenant and emphasizing Moses as the superlative visionary of all secrets.⁴²⁸ *LAB*'s revision of the biblical account to include Enochic features indicates that interaction with Enochic traditions was a formative factor in the author's writing.

⁴²⁶ See Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.225; Perrot, "Introduction Littéraire: La Pensée Théologique," in SC 229, 39-65; Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible*, 23.

⁴²⁷ *LAB* contains apocalyptic features and the text's affinity to the apocalypses of 4 *Ezra* and 2 *Baruch* is well documented.

⁴²⁸ Cf. the conclusion of Hayward: "*LAB* appears not simply as a transmitter, but also as a moulder of traditional material." "The Figure of Adam in Pseudo-Philo's Biblical Antiquities," 20.

7.2 Enoch and Primordial History in *LAB*

LAB begins with the genealogies of Gen 4 and 5, in reverse order. Several features of Pseudo-Philo's reshaping of Gen 5 and 4 invite speculation. Some scholars have suggested that the author has reordered the biblical genealogies in order to present a positive family line (the descendents of Seth, leading to Noah) before that of a negative one (the descendents of Cain).⁴²⁹ The genealogies from Adam to Noah (ch. 1) and from Cain to Lamech (ch. 2) mostly agree with the LXX, although some embellishments are added. In the brief section about Enoch, however, there are deviations from both the LXX and the MT of Gen 5:21-24.⁴³⁰ There is no statement that Enoch "walked with God," as in the MT and Vulg. of vv. 22 and 24 (the LXX has "pleased God" for both).⁴³¹ In Pseudo-Philo's rendering of v. 22, Enoch "lived" (*vixit*), the exact word used for all of his predecessors. For Gen. 5:24, *LAB* agrees with the LXX: Enoch "pleased" (*placuit*) God (1:16), as did Noah (3:4), but to this verse Pseudo-Philo adds a phrase that suggests a lessening of Enoch's status before God: "Now Enoch pleased God *in that time (in tempore illo)* and he was not to be found, for God took him away." This insertion is unattested in any known tradition, and about it Jacobson writes, "It is hard to see the point of this phrase."⁴³² But the addition of *in tempore illo* is an unambiguous indication

⁴²⁹ See Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.293-94; Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible*, 29.

⁴³⁰ *LAB* is based on an exegetical tradition that is independent of the LXX and the MT. Pseudo-Philo freely embellishes the biblical account with legends or his own material. Jacobson writes, "In any given case it is hard, if not impossible, to determine whether *LAB* was himself innovating, or was exploiting a piece of exegesis that was already in circulation." Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.273.

⁴³¹ MT: ויִתְהַלֵּךְ חֲנוּךְ אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים; Vulg. Gen 5:22: "ambulavit Enoch cum Deo"; Vulg. Gen 5:24: "ambulavitque cum Deo." Cf. LXX: εὐηρέσητοσεν Ἐνωχ τῶ θεῶ.

⁴³² Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.289.

that Enoch was not always perfect.⁴³³ Similar to the LXX, which asserts that Enoch was pleasing to God only after he became the father of Methuselah,⁴³⁴ *LAB* qualifies the extent of Enoch's divine favor. This may signal discomfort with traditions about Enoch's perfection.⁴³⁵ The text also adds details about the numbers of sons and daughters Enoch had after Methuselah, as well as information about Enoch's wife, which may be a way of adding emphasis to Enoch's earthly life. The expanded detail about five sons and three daughters after the birth of Enoch's first son, including their names – detail not in the MT or the LXX – makes the genealogical description of Enoch more like that of his predecessors listed in the text.

Pseudo-Philo's account of the spread of civilization from Gen 4 takes on a decidedly pessimistic view that is not present in the biblical account and is curiously reminiscent of *I En.* 6-11. Whereas the written Torah presents the stories of Jubal and Tubal-cain as the *advance* of culture, providing positive (or at least neutral) assessments of the development of music and metal tool-making (Gen 4:21-22), Pseudo-Philo unexpectedly depicts these activities as corrupting influences on humanity: they contribute to the spread of immorality. In *LAB*, Jubal and Tubal-cain are not merely the ancestors of musicians and metalworkers; these figures are rewritten as *corruptors* of society, the teachers of evil arts. The notion of certain kinds of knowledge, especially metallurgy, as causing the spread of sin is documented in Enochic lore: the evils of metallurgy and other arts is a motif of the *Book of the Watchers* (chs. 6-16, esp. 8; cf. *I En.* 65:6-8; 69). But while *I Enoch* asserts that forbidden arts were taught to humans by

⁴³³ The same expression (or the variation *in illo tempore*) is used in 2:8; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1, and elsewhere to indicate a limited period of time.

⁴³⁴ LXX Gen 5:21; cf. *Tg. Onq.* and *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 5:22.

⁴³⁵ Cf. Enoch as an example of repentance in Sir 44:16 and *QG* 1.82-84.

rebellious angels (“watchers”), *LAB* stresses their human origin. Gen 4:22 states that Tubal-cain⁴³⁶ “made all kinds of bronze and iron tools”; Pseudo-Philo, however, expands this list to include lead and tin, but also silver and gold, metals explicitly linked to immoral behavior in the listing of evil secrets disclosed to humans by the watchers in *I En.* 8:1. *LAB* 3:9 also links metalworking to the making of idols (“those inhabiting the earth began to make statues and to adore them”), a rewriting of Gen 4:22 which associates knowledge of this art only to the (beneficial) making of tools. It is striking that this linkage of metalworking to idolatry parallels *I En.* 65:6-8, which calls metallurgy (the casting of “molten images in all the earth”) one of the evil “secrets of the angels” and specifically mentions silver, lead, and tin – metals that Pseudo-Philo has added to his version of Gen 4. (In *I En.* 8, metalworking is an evil skill linked to warfare and the seductive art of jewelry-making). The expansion of the canonical text to make Tubal the teacher of *all* metallurgy, with an emphasis on the corrupting influence of this art, evokes *I En.* 8 and 65, as does Pseudo-Philo’s specific insertion of verbs of instruction into his account: Jubal “was the first to *teach* (*docere*) all kinds of musical instruments”; Tubal “*showed*” (*ostendit*) techniques in using metals; this echoes the teaching function of the evil watchers (*I En.* 8:1-3; 9:6; 69:1-12).

Pseudo-Philo knows the tradition of fallen angels transmitting forbidden knowledge: he refers to it in 34:2-3. Although Pseudo-Philo is aware of this tradition, and incorporates some of its themes into his work, he does not consider it authoritative. He does not place the origin of civilization’s evils in the angelic realm, preferring rather to blame primeval patriarchs for the development and transmission of corrupting knowledge. In my view, the reshaping of Gen 4:21-22 to include the profoundly negative

⁴³⁶ The MT has Tubal-cain; *LAB* has Tubal, in agreement with the LXX and the *Vetus Latina*.

assessment of certain occupational arts, especially metallurgy, is influenced by Enochic lore.⁴³⁷

Pseudo-Philo modifies Gen 4 to include the themes of adultery and idolatry. *LAB* 2:8 adds worldwide indulgence in adultery to his examples of primeval moral corruption. The motif of unbridled forbidden sex evokes the mating between the sons of God and human women of Gen 6:1-2, told in *LAB* 3:1-2.⁴³⁸ Pseudo-Philo's narrative of Gen 6:1-4 is intriguing, for in this section he appears to switch to a different exegetical tradition. Pseudo-Philo uses the phrase "sons of God" (*fili Dei*) here, which is consonant with the MT and Vulg., but up to this point his text has followed the LXX quite closely.⁴³⁹ Most manuscripts of the LXX, however, have "angels of God" rather than "sons of God" for Gen 6:1, as do Philo, Josephus and the *Vetus Latina*.⁴⁴⁰ Perrot and Bogaert find it noteworthy that Pseudo-Philo uses neither "angel" nor "watcher" here, and suggest that the author may identify the *fili Dei* with the Adamites.⁴⁴¹ It may well be pertinent that *LAB* uses *angeli* for fallen angels in 34:2-3, but not in his rendering of Gen 6:1. Perhaps the author's emphasis on the human origin of sin has led him *not* to identify the "sons of God" with angelic beings. This conclusion is bolstered by the fact that *LAB* omits

⁴³⁷ Jacobson sees the origin of this idea in the Greco-Roman world; *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.213-15, 304-305. But given Pseudo-Philo's knowledge of Jewish fallen angel traditions (34:2-3), and the strong parallel to the evils of teaching metallurgy in *1 En.* 8 and 65, it does not seem necessary to look for the origin of his thought outside the compass of Judaism. The commentators cite a rabbinic parallel in *Gen. Rab.* 23:3, which links metalworking to the making of weapons, but this text is much later than *LAB* and does not link metallurgy to the making of idols, as does *LAB*.

⁴³⁸ Jacobson in fact points out that *LAB* 2:8 is based on Gen. 6:1. Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.302.

⁴³⁹ Jacobson notes the "occasional and interesting phenomenon" that Pseudo-Philo goes between exegetical traditions. He points out that the author chooses two different exegetical tradition for Gen 6:3; one for *LAB* 3:2 and a different one for same verse at 9:8. *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.417.

⁴⁴⁰ *Gig.* 2.6, *A.J.* 1.73. Cf. 4Q180 1, 8.

⁴⁴¹ Perrot and Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques*, 2.85-86. Emphasis in original. Perrot and Bogaert note that *Tg. Neof.* Gen 6:2 uses "sons of judges" or "sons of kings" (marginal reading). *Ibid.*, 86.

entirely any reference to the Nephilim, the warrior giants who were the product of the divine/human liaisons according to Gen 6:4. Although Pseudo-Philo freely inserts popular legends into his narrative, he does not do so with Gen 6. He may be uneasy with Enochic expansions of this story, which include graphic accounts of the Nephilim's violent deeds (*I En.* 7-9, 15; cf. *I En.* 86, *Jub.* 5).

In their commentary on *LAB*, Perrot and Bogaert give another example of possible dialogue with exalted Enoch traditions. They cite *LAB*'s non-biblical insistence in the genealogy of ch. 1 that Noah was named after his birth (1:20). In their opinion, "Si le nom de Noé est donné *après* sa naissance, l'auteur s'oppose ici aux traditions anciennes suivant lesquelles Hénoch ou Matusalem donnèrent le nom bien avant la naissance, cf. *Hénoch* 106 et *II Hénoch* 1 et 18."⁴⁴²

As we have seen, Pseudo-Philo's description of Enoch and elaboration of the biblical account of the spread of sin hint at interaction with Enochic developments. While Pseudo-Philo's re-workings of the biblical text may seem subtle or even insignificant, when combined with the later, Enochic-style assertions about Moses' visions later in the text, it becomes apparent that our author has more in mind than merely explicating the biblical material. In chs. 11, 13, and 19, primordial secrets are disclosed to Moses in apocalyptic revelation on Sinai and Nebo. Moses' visionary ascents of these mountains are depicted as heavenly journeys, as this dissertation has demonstrated (ch. 4). The story of the first man and first woman's sin in the garden of Eden, and knowledge about the ways and content of paradise, are placed in an unambiguously Mosaic context and are combined with revelatory knowledge of heavenly and cosmological secrets. This is not merely a stylistic device: it is an intentional revision of

⁴⁴² Perrot and Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques*, 2.83.

the biblical text. Pseudo-Philo has made Moses into an Enoch-like expert in esoteric primordial knowledge.

7.3 Primordial Secrets as Revelation to Moses

Pseudo-Philo does not begin his re-written narrative of Israel's history with the creation accounts of Gen 1 and 2. It is curious that Eden is ignored in the beginning of *LAB*, but information about the first man, the garden of Eden, the serpent, the tree of life, Noah, and "the ways of paradise" is abruptly inserted into later narratives about Moses. Moses is shown creational secrets in 11:15, 13:8-9, and 19:10. Kenaz, the judge who parallels Moses in many ways, has a vision of creation in 28:8-9.⁴⁴³ In the written Torah, there is a cursory description of creation and no esoteric disclosure is associated with it; Moses is never explicitly connected to the primeval history in the text. Pseudo-Philo, by contrast, has placed creational disclosure firmly within a Mosaic framework and has combined it with esoteric knowledge received in heavenly ascents and dream visions.

In placing primeval accounts in the context of later history, Pseudo-Philo is connecting seemingly unrelated biblical episodes to each other. As many scholars have pointed out, Pseudo-Philo often uses this technique, placing secondary biblical stories in the context of a primary story. Scholars have suggested that the author's purpose in doing this is to organize his work around certain themes,⁴⁴⁴ leaders,⁴⁴⁵ or to create

⁴⁴³ At the end of Kenaz's life, and at Kenaz's bidding, Phinehas recounts his father Eleazar's dream vision of the time before creation, when there were no humans, hence no sin (28:4-5). Kenaz then experiences an ecstatic revelation of protology and eschatology. He has a vision of pre-creation disorder and watery chaos, followed by the creation of humans (or divine beings); the vision ends with Kenaz's ominous pronouncement about sin (28:6-9). Kenaz is also shown the eschatological transformation of humanity in the last days.

⁴⁴⁴ See, e.g., Hayward, "The Figure of Adam in Pseudo-Philo's Biblical Antiquities," 2. Jacobson notes Pseudo-Philo's technique of "reading backward," using prior biblical stories (that are seen as

patterns of cause and effect.⁴⁴⁶ But it is undoubtedly significant that details about creation and paradise are given in the context of *apocalyptic* revelation. Creational secrets are disclosed to *covenant* patriarchs (Moses and Kenaz) in visions; such knowledge is unavailable to other humans. In a significant departure from biblical tradition, God makes a covenant with Kenaz, after which Kenaz has an ecstatic vision of the primordial “stew” and subsequent creation. Primordial secrets are disclosed to Moses on Sinai, at the same time as the revelation of the covenant, but Moses’ ascent here is to a heavenly, illumined place, for Moses is “bathed with invisible light” and descends “to the place where the sun and moon are” (12:1; cf. *1 En.* 41:5-8). In a cosmic journey, Moses also sees the “paths of paradise” (*semitas paradysi*) and heavenly secrets, including locations in the lower heavens, on Nebo, just prior to his death (19:10-12).⁴⁴⁷ Primordial knowledge is ascribed to Moses as revelation obtained in heavenly journeys; this knowledge is combined with esoteric disclosure. Pseudo-Philo has given Moses’ ascents and revelation an obvious apocalyptic bent, going beyond what is preserved in the Torah. Such paradisaal disclosure also goes beyond the midrashim, as Bogaert summarizes in a comment about similar claims for Moses in *2 Bar.* 4:1-7: “Les midrashim qui font

analogous) to explain later episodes. Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 1.224-53.

⁴⁴⁵ Nickelsburg, “Good and Bad Leaders in Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*,” 49-65.

⁴⁴⁶ So Richard Bauckham, “The *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* of Pseudo-Philo and the Gospels as ‘Midrash’,” in *Studies in Midrash and Historiography* (ed. R. T. France and D. Wenham; Gospel Perspectives 3; Sheffield: JSOT, 1983), 33-76. Murphy emphasizes narrative patterns; *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible*, 15-21.

⁴⁴⁷ Bauckham has observed that *LAB* 19:10-13 (a re-writing of Deut 34:1-4) is in fact a cosmic journey; “Early Jewish Visions of Hell,” 355-85.

allusion aux visions extraordinaires de Moïse ne spécifient généralement pas qu'il eut aussi la vision de la Jérusalem céleste ou du paradis, comme il est dit en *II Baruch*.”⁴⁴⁸

The placement of protological disclosure into narratives about Moses and covenant, and the reshaping of the biblical creation accounts into divine revelation given to Moses in a heavenly ascent, may provide clues as to Pseudo-Philo's message and purpose. James Kugel, in *The Bible as It Was*, writes that deviations from the biblical text may be the author's attempt to explain or interpret the text.⁴⁴⁹ Kugel asserts that such deviations are not necessarily polemical, i.e., “motivated by the reteller's political allegiance or religious agenda or some other matter of ideology.”⁴⁵⁰ In his work on *LAB* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, both of the genre Rewritten Bible, Bruce Fisk has argued that this practice of inserting one biblical episode into another is a form of early Jewish exegesis: integrating secondary biblical episodes into a primary narrative serves the author's (or the tradition's) *exegetical* agenda. But Fisk also makes a crucial point: “When two biblical stories are linked, elements and themes in the principal narrative can subtly shape or even transform the meaning of the secondary episode.”⁴⁵¹ In other words, the meaning of the second account is altered by its placement in the midst of the primary account.

In *LAB*, creational history is placed in a new context, and that context determines its meaning and significance. In the biblical account, Moses' revelation is not esoteric,

⁴⁴⁸ Bogaert, *Apocalypse de Baruch*, 2.17. See also Vermès, “La figure de Moïse au tournant des deux testaments,” 77-78.

⁴⁴⁹ James Kugel, *The Bible as It Was* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 25. On the purpose of texts that rewrite the Bible, Najman writes, “In recent scholarship there is a general consensus among scholars who work on Second Temple literature that the essential function of Rewritten Bible is interpretive.” Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, 43.

⁴⁵⁰ Kugel, *The Bible as It Was*, 25.

⁴⁵¹ Fisk, “One Good Story Deserves Another: The Hermeneutics of Invoking Secondary Biblical Episodes in the Narratives of *Pseudo-Philo* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,” 221.

but encompasses the practical truths of the law and covenant as a way of life; Moses receives this knowledge in a descent by God to the earthly mountain.⁴⁵² In *LAB*, primordial knowledge has become esoteric revelation, and Moses has been transformed into an apocalyptic seer who ascends to heaven to receive protological (and other) secrets, in addition to the law.⁴⁵³ Pseudo-Philo's revision of Israel's history has considerable theological consequences, for now primordial revelation is inseparably linked to Moses and covenant, and is obtained by Moses in a heavenly ascent. *LAB*, like *Jubilees*, has appropriated apocalyptic motifs from Enochic and other sources, and has connected Moses to the traditions of antiquity, including those not preserved in the written Torah. In *LAB*'s interpretation, Sinai is the locus of key primordial disclosure, as well as of covenant revelation. Nebo has become the place where Moses, in a cosmic journey, receives Enochic-style revelation of cosmological, meteorological, and celestial secrets, including protology. By reshaping the biblical accounts of creation and paradise as apocalyptic revelation to Moses, Pseudo-Philo is no longer explaining or "filling in" the biblical narrative; he is making a statement about where all transcendent truth is to be found: in fidelity to Israel's covenant and covenant patriarch. This may well have polemical implications, for revelation often functions as a polemical device.⁴⁵⁴ *LAB*'s enhancement of Moses' visionary profile to grant to him an enormous amount of

⁴⁵² Deut 30:11 stresses that the revelation to Moses is clear and intelligible. The assertion has polemical overtones, contrasting Moses' revelation of the accessible, intelligible law and covenant with other claims to knowledge of esoteric mysteries. Cf. the skepticism about ascent to heaven in Deut 30:12 and Prov 30:4.

⁴⁵³ Primordial events and secrets are elements of esoteric revelation to a chosen visionary in the *Book of the Watchers*, *Apoc. Ab.*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Bar.*, *3 Bar.*, and *2 En.* Moses sees "the greatness of paradise" in an apocalyptic vision on Sinai in *2 Bar.* 59:8.

⁴⁵⁴ Nickelsburg has observed that revelation not only forms and authenticates a community's self-identity; it also serves to define what that community *is not*, functioning polemically to distinguish the community's understanding of transcendent, authoritative truth from the claims of other, rival groups. Nickelsburg, "The Nature and Function of Revelation in 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and Some Qumranic Documents," 91-119.

speculative revelation, including a total view of history from creation to end times,⁴⁵⁵ in the context of heavenly ascents and cosmic journeys, evokes Enochic lore and appears to be in dialogue with traditions that elevate Enoch as recipient of such esoteric knowledge.⁴⁵⁶ Placing creational history in Mosaic apocalyptic contexts renders Moses, not Enoch, the expert in primordial secrets.

The text of *LAB* contains interpretive clues that substantiate this conclusion. One example is *LAB*'s seemingly forced intrusion of paradisaal disclosure into Moses' Sinai experience in ch. 11. While Moses is in the theophanic cloud, he is instructed about covenantal law and is shown the pattern of the sanctuary (11:15), but *LAB*'s text goes on to assert that at this time God "commanded him many things" (*ei mandavit multa*), an open-ended phrase that introduces the possibility of further revelatory knowledge.⁴⁵⁷ The text then surprisingly states that God showed Moses "the tree of life" (*ostendit ei lignum vite*). In order to explain the sudden and unlikely insertion of the tree of life in the context of the Sinai revelation, some scholars have suggested that "tree of life" here is a metaphorical reference to the Torah⁴⁵⁸ or wisdom.⁴⁵⁹ Jacobson, however, has emphasized that "there is manifestly no metaphor in *LAB*."⁴⁶⁰ Moses' vision of the tree of life *on Sinai* appears to be in dialogue with an earlier tradition that equates Sinai with Eden and

⁴⁵⁵ Moses also receives eschatological knowledge in 19:13-15. Cf. *Exagoge*, line 89: to Moses is revealed "what is, what has been and what shall be." This recalls the designation for esoteric knowledge in *Sipre Zutta* 84. Enoch learns about past, present, and future in *1 En.* 12-16.

⁴⁵⁶ In *1 En.*, Enoch is granted extraordinary esoteric knowledge through divine revelation, including primordial, eschatological, celestial, cosmological, and meteorological secrets. For primordial disclosure revealed to Enoch, see esp. *1 En.* 6-16; 24-26; 60; 65-68; 70; 83-89; 106-107.

⁴⁵⁷ A parallel to this is found in *4 Ezra* 14:4, where the phrase signifies eschatological knowledge given to Moses on Sinai. See Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra*, 419.

⁴⁵⁸ So Ginzburg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 6.14, n. 82; Perrot and Bogaert. *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques*, 2.113. Cf. 'Abot R. Nat. 157; Pal. Tg. Gen 3:24.

⁴⁵⁹ Veronika Bachmann, "Rooted in Paradise? The Meaning of the 'Tree of Life' in *1 Enoch* 24-25 Reconsidered," *JSP* 19 (2009): 83-107. Cf. the figurative use of the tree of life in Prov 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4; Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14.

⁴⁶⁰ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 1.478.

the tree of life. In Ezek 28:13-16, Eden is portrayed as God's garden paradise at the summit of a cosmic mountain, but there is no reference to the tree of life in this context. *Jub.* 8:19 associates the garden of Eden with the Temple, but distinguishes it from Sinai.⁴⁶¹ In portraying paradise with its tree of life as an *actual destination* visited by Moses in a heavenly tour, the author has incorporated the (developing) apocalyptic motif of paradise as a location visited by an apocalyptic seer, either in a dream vision or an actual ascent (e.g. *1 En.* 24-25; 30-32; *L.A.E.* (Vita) 25; *Test. Ab.* [Rec. A] 11; *2 Bar.* 59:8; *Apoc. Ab.* 12:10; 23:4; Rev 22; cf. *4 Ezra* 8:52). Pseudo-Philo's account, with its specific mention of the paradisaical tree of life as a revelatory item in the context of a heavenly and cosmic journey from the summit of a holy mountain, most closely echoes Enoch's tour in *1 En.* 24-25. Enoch is associated with the garden of Eden in *Jub.* 4:23-27; *1 En.* 24:4-5; 25:4-6; 30-32; 70:3; 4Q206 and *2 En.* 8. The connection of Moses to the tree of life in *LAB* 11:15 evokes *1 En.* 24-25, which also locates the tree of life on or near Sinai,⁴⁶² and places revelation of the tree of life in the context of a vision to Enoch on the high mountain that is the throne of God (*1 En.* 24:1-25:7; cf. parallel in *1 En.* 18:6-9). Both *1 En.* 24-25 and *LAB* 11:15 connect the tree of life and the temple in Jerusalem. The link between Sinai, the temple, and paradise in *LAB* could be explained by the Hebrew Bible's frequent association of the earthly temple with paradise (e.g. Exod 25; Ezek 28:13-14; 47-48). However, in his explicit use of the apocalyptic motif of journey to paradise during a visionary mountain ascent, Pseudo-Philo appears to be depicting

⁴⁶¹ *Jub.* 5:26 also distinguishes the garden of Eden from Sinai.

⁴⁶² Sinai is not named in *1 En.* 24-25, but Bautch interprets the "highest mountain" of *1 En.* 24 as referring back to Sinai. See discussion in Kelley Coblenz Bautch, *A Study of the Geography of 1 Enoch 17-19: "No One Has Seen What I Have Seen,"* (*JSJSup* 81; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 107-14, 120-26 (esp. 123). So also Bachmann, "Rooted in Paradise? The Meaning of the 'Tree of Life' in *1 Enoch* 24-25 Reconsidered," 3. Bachmann argues that in *1 En.* 24-25, the site of God's descent to earth on the day of judgment refers back to 1:3-9 and 18:6-8 (1:4 states that this place is Sinai). But note that *1 En.* 32:3 situates the original paradise in the east, beyond the seven mountains.

Moses' Sinai experience with Enochic features, linking Moses, not Enoch, to the primeval paradise on the holy mountain.⁴⁶³

In *LAB* 11:15, God not only reveals the tree of life to Moses on Sinai: Moses actually touches the tree, cuts off one of its branches, and throws it into Marah. This surprising assertion contradicts Gen 3:22-24, which declares that the tree of life is forbidden to all humans. It is perhaps noteworthy that Enoch, during his journey to paradise recounted in *I En.* 24-25, admires the tree of life but is *not* allowed to touch it (cf. *I En.* 32:3-5). When Enoch inquires about the tree of life, the archangel Michael tells him that no human “has the right to touch” the tree “until the great judgment” (*I En.* 25:4). *LAB*'s claim that Moses does touch the tree of life may have polemical implications, if we hold that Pseudo-Philo knew the text of *I Enoch*, as did James.⁴⁶⁴ Moses is elevated over Enoch. In most apocalyptic literature, the tree of life is inaccessible until the end times: this idea is developed in *L.A.E.* (Apocalypse) and *L.A.E.* (Vita), and is also an explicit theme in *T. Levi* 18:10-11 and alluded to in Rev 2:7). In *LAB*, however, the tree is accessible to Moses – another example of his singularity. In addition, Moses' active participation (cutting from the tree of life) makes Moses more like visionaries in apocalyptic texts, such as Enoch in *I En.* 14, who actively participate in visions.

If Pseudo-Philo is indeed recalling apocalyptic traditions such as *I En.* 24-25, this may explain the puzzling connection between the tree of life and Marah expressed in 11:15: God “showed him the tree of life, from which he cut off and took and threw into

⁴⁶³ Himmelfarb notes that Enoch's tour in the *Book of the Watchers* is indebted to Ezek 40-48, but that the Enochic account goes further than Ezekiel in making the garden of Eden an actual stop on a visionary tour. *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 73-74. *I En.* is the first Jewish account to make such a claim.

⁴⁶⁴ James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, 43.

Marah, and the water of Marah became sweet.” If the tree of life is the incomparable, fragrant and never-decaying tree described in *1 En.* 24, it certainly would have the purifying powers proclaimed in *LAB* 11:15. Such a notion is also present in *L.A.E.* (*Vita*) 36:2, where healing oil flows from the tree of life in paradise, and *Rev* 22:2, where the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations. The transformative power of oil presumably from the tree of life is also a motif of *2 En.* 22:9.⁴⁶⁵ In *Exod* 16:25 it is a tree (γῦ) that Moses throws into Marah; developing apocalyptic traditions about the healing and restorative properties of the tree of life could well have influenced Pseudo-Philo’s interpretation that the tree in question in the Marah incident was in fact the paradisaical tree of life.

LAB 13:8-9 contains an apocalyptic vision of creational secrets given to Moses; this “apocalypse of Moses” (Feldman’s term) is unique to *LAB*. These confusing verses have baffled scholars, as Jacobson summarizes: “This whole section is a locus desperatus. Not only do we have two distinct textual transmissions here...but it is hard to get a clear and satisfactory sense from either.”⁴⁶⁶ In this apocalyptic account, God explains “the place of creation and the serpent” (*locum generationis*⁴⁶⁷ *et colorem*⁴⁶⁸) and reveals to Moses that the first man (*protoplastus*) sinned and was persuaded by his wife. God then continues to show Moses “the ways of paradise” (*vias paradysi*). This sudden—and intrusive!—protological disclosure is bookended by revelation about cultic law and festivals (13:1-7) and God’s warning of the consequences of forgetting covenant (13:10).

⁴⁶⁵ See Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, 229-30.

⁴⁶⁶ *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.519.

⁴⁶⁷ This expression is unclear, but Jacobson has argued that in the Greek stage of *LAB* this could “represent τόπος γενέσεως, a phrase often found in Neo-Platonic and mystical texts...and thus might be suitable in an apocalyptic context.” *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.520.

⁴⁶⁸ With the commentators, reading *colubrum* for *colorem*, which makes no sense.

The deliberate placement of primeval knowledge, not at the beginning of his historical narrative but *in the context of cultic/covenant revelation* helps the reader determine Pseudo-Philo's interpretive agenda: creation is linked to covenant, and creational disclosure is *subordinate* to covenant revelation. *LAB*'s careful re-crafting of Israel's history makes it clear that Moses has received both primordial and covenant revelation, but of the two, covenant is the all-important and ultimate revelatory truth.⁴⁶⁹

Jacobson has written that "the expression *locus generationis* (13:8) has parallels in other mystical texts."⁴⁷⁰ This could be said of *protoplastus* as well (LXX Wis 7:1 and 10:1, but see also *QE* 2.46; preface to *Apoc. Mos.*; *T. Ab.* 11:9, 11; cf. *3 Bar.* 9:7). For Moses' initiation into the secrets of protology, Pseudo-Philo has used terminology at home in apocalyptic accounts, and it can be concluded that he sees knowledge of creation as esoteric revelation.

Moses' visionary ascent of Nebo includes a journey to the "paths of paradise" (*semitas paradysi*). This paradisaal disclosure is one of many Enochic revelatory items that are ascribed to Moses here, but the author has given this list a Mosaic stamp by inserting "the measurements of the sanctuary" and "the number of sacrifices" to the vision. Again, Pseudo-Philo is careful to combine revelation of paradise with covenant concerns, and to limit this revelation to Moses, for such knowledge is "prohibited from the human race because they have sinned against me" (19:10). Only Moses, or his largely invented parallel, Kenaz,⁴⁷¹ is granted primordial disclosure. (Although David

⁴⁶⁹ Hayward in fact claims that Pseudo-Philo has shaped his narrative in such a way as to suggest that "the cult provides those *ways* of God which, should they be observed, might undo Adam's curse and lead men to the ways of Paradise which Adam lost." "The Figure of Adam in Pseudo-Philo's Biblical Antiquities," 6. See also *2 Bar.* 4:1-7, which also grants Moses a vision of paradise.

⁴⁷⁰ *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 1.252.

⁴⁷¹ There are numerous parallels between Moses and Kenaz in *LAB*. God establishes a covenant with both; both are zealous about obedience to covenant. Kenaz sends out spies (27:6), as did Moses

sings of the pre-creation darkness and silence in 60:2, this is not presented as divine revelation).

In the written Torah, Moses is associated with the distinctive history of Israel and not with the primeval history of all humanity. Like *Jubilees*, *LAB* connects Moses to the traditions of antiquity and incorporates Enochic features in its presentation of Moses. In expanding Moses' visionary profile, *LAB* appears to be in dynamic dialogue with traditions that associated Enoch with revelation of primordial secrets. It is intriguing that in *1 Enoch*, which predates *Jubilees* and *LAB*, it is *Enoch* who is told by Gabriel about the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden (32:6). Enoch's visions in the Enochic literature are mediated by angelic figures who must interpret what Enoch sees. In *LAB*, however, Moses' primordial knowledge, like the revelation of covenant, is direct and unmediated. Moses has unparalleled access to divine secrets.

7.4 Creational Revelation to Kenaz

Both Moses and his largely invented parallel, Kenaz, receive creational revelation in *LAB*. Moses sees the garden of Eden with its tree of life, along with undisclosed information about the (pre-sin) "ways" and "paths" (roads?) of the created paradise. Most of this knowledge is given to Moses in an actual journey to paradise and is combined with other esoteric disclosure. Kenaz, on the other hand, has an ecstatic vision of the *process* of creation in 28:6-9, from the primordial watery chaos to the emergence of "images of men, who were walking around" (*imagines hominum, et perambulabant*);

(15:1). Kenaz's arms are held up by an angel during a battle (27:10), an echo of Exod 17:8-13. Both Moses and Kenaz have a visionary experience prior to death, and both give a testamentary speech. Both experience bodily transformation after visions (Moses in 12:1 and 19:16; Kenaz in 27:9-10). Both Moses (12:1) and Kenaz (28:8-9) are associated with "invisible light." To both God gives protological disclosure (Moses – 11:15; 13:8-9; 19:10; Kenaz – 28:6-9). Kenaz is an invented *Moses redivivus*.

these “men” come forth “from the light of the invisible place” (*de lumine invisibilis loci advenerunt*) which is situated between two foundations (*fundamentum*⁴⁷²). This unusual and perplexing apocalyptic vision is difficult to interpret, but most commentators see this as a description of the pre-creation chaos through the creation of humans, with a description of humanity’s ultimate end because of sin.

In an intriguing assessment of Kenaz’s vision that is pertinent to this dissertation, however, Rowland offers another opinion. His remarks are worth citing at length:

The first point to note is that the apocalypticist says that these beings come forth from invisible light. This can hardly be a reference to the creation of man as a number of beings are seen in the vision. If this is a reference to human beings, it must presuppose a belief in the pre-existence of human souls. Their coming from a place of light suggests that these beings have been with God. While this is by no means an impossible belief in a Jewish document, one must inquire about other possible interpretations before resorting to this one. It would appear that the most natural way to take the reference in Biblical Antiquities 28.8 is as a reference to angelic beings.⁴⁷³

Rowland maintains that the images of “men” in Kenaz’s primordial vision are in fact the angels of Gen 6:1 and *1 En.* 6. Angels are often compared to or called “men” (Rowland cites *Apoc. Ab.* 15:6 and Dan 8:15; but see also Gen 18:2; *T. Levi* 8:2; Luke 24:4, *inter alia*). Rowland concludes:

These verses would be equally applicable to fallen angels as to human beings. They await the final judgement for their punishment, and in the later Enochic literature a place is appointed for them to wait in the second heaven (Slav. Enoch 7.1ff. cf. 18). Thus the sin mentioned here is not Adam’s sin but that of the fallen angels who are situated at a particular point in the cosmos waiting for the final judgement, when the heavens would be changed.⁴⁷⁴

If Rowland is correct, we must ask why Pseudo-Philo would include this vision of the genesis and sin of the fallen angels, but insist elsewhere that the origin of sin lies in the human realm (esp. 2:8-10). We noted above that Pseudo-Philo refers to the sin of the

⁴⁷² The two *fundamenta* are understood by most scholars to be the firmament of heaven and the foundations of the earth, or the upper and lower firmaments of heaven.

⁴⁷³ Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 154.

⁴⁷⁴ Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 154.

sons of God with human women in 3:1-2, but he truncates the canonical account and eliminates any reference to the Nephilim (section 7.2). Later in his text, however, in a story about the magician Aod (unique to *LAB*), Pseudo-Philo associates fallen angels *only* with the teaching of magical arts: “Because in that time before they were condemned, magic was revealed by angels and they would have destroyed the age without measure; and because they had transgressed, it happened that the angels did not have the power...” (34:3). In Pseudo-Philo’s view, it seems, the angels of Gen 6 are responsible for the reprehensible art of magic in addition to intermingling with human women, but not the multitude of other corrupting arts taught by the evil angels in the legends of *I En.* 8. *LAB* places the origin of evil, with the exception of magic, firmly in the human realm, blaming primeval patriarchs for all corrupting knowledge. Kenaz’s apocalyptic vision could be a revelation of the watchers’ heavenly origin, transgression and future punishment; the sin of the watchers likely included the teaching of magic, which leads people away from the law (34:1).

In sum, Pseudo-Philo is aware of Enochic traditions of the fall of the watchers, but he does not consider this version of human history authoritative.

7.5 Conclusions about Protology as Revelation to Moses in *LAB*

In *LAB*, primordial history takes on added significance in that it becomes esoteric revelation to covenant patriarchs, primarily to Moses, Israel’s pre-eminent leader and the hero of Pseudo-Philo’s narrative. The ascription to Moses of primordial knowledge has theological consequences, for now Moses is portrayed in apocalyptic terms as the recipient of protological disclosure, and creational secrets are inseparably linked to Sinai

and covenant. I have argued that the hesitation about Enoch in *LAB*, as well as the attribution to Moses of heavenly ascent and primordial and other esoteric knowledge, suggests dialogue with exalted Enoch accounts. It is impossible to know whether the writer of *LAB* had access to a written Enochic text. Yet Enochic motifs are undeniable in *LAB*, and suggest that the author's emphasis on Moses as Israel's superlative patriarch may have deeper theological import than has previously been demonstrated. Bowker has written that Jewish writers displayed discomfort with Enochic claims in two major ways: by denigrating Enoch's status, and by attributing to other figures Enoch's transcendent qualities.⁴⁷⁵ Pseudo-Philo does both. His re-writing of Enoch and primordial history advance his own particular theological viewpoint. In the troubling times that occasioned his writing, Pseudo-Philo wants his community to honor Moses, the unparalleled visionary to whom God directly spoke relevant and eternal truths about covenant, but also about creational secrets.

7.6 Eschatological Revelation to Moses in *LAB*

Moses is not only the recipient of protological secrets in *LAB*: just before his death on Nebo, God also reveals to him secrets of the end times, including the passing away of the present heaven and the shortening of time before God's eschatological return (19:13).⁴⁷⁶ These signs signal that the end of the present age is at hand. Moses then requests to

⁴⁷⁵ See Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretation of Scripture*, 146.

⁴⁷⁶ "And when the time draws near to visit the world, I will command the years and order the times and they will be shortened, and the stars will hasten and the light of the sun will hurry to fall and the light of the moon will not remain; for I will hurry to raise up you who are sleeping in order that all who can live may dwell in the place of sanctification I showed you."

The motif of God shortening time in the last days for the sake of the righteous is present in other apocalyptic writings. Harrington cites 2 *Bar.* 20:1; 54:1; 83:1; and Mark 13:20 (Matt 24:22); *OTP* 2.328, n. r. Perrot also lists 1 *En.* 80:2; 4 *Ezra* 4:26, 34; 3 *Bar.* 9:7; SC 230, 133.

know from God “what amount of time has passed and how much remains” (*quanta quantitas temporis transit et quanta remansit* - 19:14). This is an apocalyptic question, and Moses’ request for eschatological knowledge echoes that of other apocalyptic seers (4 *Ezra* 4:33; 6:59; 8:63; 2 *Bar.* 16:1; 21:10; 24:4; Mark 13:4; cf. Acts 1:6-7).⁴⁷⁷

The motif of the visionary as recipient of eschatological knowledge is prevalent in apocalyptic literature.⁴⁷⁸ The underlying idea is that such knowledge is a divine secret, unveiled only to chosen seers. In some apocalyptic literature, revelation of the end of time, as of the beginning of time, is granted to one who is especially close to God; this disclosure of history, from creation to the promised (imminent) end, is an assurance that all of human history is known and directed by God. Transcendent eschatological disclosure, mediated through exceptional visionaries, is thus a message of encouragement and hope. Pseudo-Philo has incorporated this known apocalyptic motif and has presented Moses as a visionary who has been given eschatological, as well as primordial, revelation. The author of *LAB* has embellished Moses’ biblical pre-death experience on Nebo in order to portray the covenant patriarch as the exalted one to whom secrets of the end, including its timetable, are divulged.

The notion that Moses knew what was to come is as early as *Jubilees* and the *Exagoge*, both composed in the second century B.C.E. In *Jub.* 1:4, the Lord reveals to Moses on Sinai “both what [was] in the beginning and what will occur [in the future], the account of the division of all the days of the Law and the testimony.” Moses is instructed

⁴⁷⁷ It must be noted that there is no *distinctive* apocalyptic eschatology. As Collins summarizes, the genre apocalypse “is not constituted by one or more distinctive themes, but by a distinctive combination of elements, all of which are also found elsewhere.” *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 12. See also Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 29-37, 71.

⁴⁷⁸ Dan 7:9-28; 12:1-13; 1 *En.* 12-14; 38; 50-51; 58; 60-63; 90:39-41; *T. Levi* 4, 18; 4 *Ezra* 3:14; 11:39-12:39; 14:4; 2 *Bar.* 59:8-10; 72-74; 3 *En.* 10:5; 11:2-3; 45:1; 48 (D):7. Cohen writes that eschatological doctrines, including rewards for the righteous and punishment of the wicked, were “innovations of Second Temple Judaism.” *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 10.

to write “what [was] in the beginning and what [will be] in the future” (1.26). In the *Exagoge*, line 89, Moses knows “what is, what has been, and what shall be.” Josephus also emphasized Moses’ ability to see the future (*Ant.* 4). In apocalyptic literature that post-dates *LAB*, Moses is a seer to whom eschatological secrets are revealed. In *4 Ezra* 14:5, Moses receives esoteric eschatological disclosure: God “showed him the secrets of the times and declared to him the end of the times.” Moses is granted knowledge of end time events, including “the end of the periods,” “the beginning of the day of judgment,” “the worlds which have not yet come,” “the picture of the coming punishment,” and “the changes of the times” in his vision recorded in *2 Bar.* 59. Each of these texts, with the exception of Josephus’ *Antiquities*, exhibits the influence of Enochic revelatory traditions (see section 2.4 above).

In Jewish texts, to my knowledge, the earliest exalted patriarch to receive eschatological disclosure is Enoch.⁴⁷⁹ Enoch receives information about the past, present, and future in *1 En.* 12-18, and esoteric eschatological knowledge continues to be attributed to him throughout the texts that make up *1 Enoch* (see especially chs. 38; 50-51; 58; 60-63; 90). Nickelsburg writes that the imminence of eschatological judgment “is clear from the timetables in the Animal Vision and the Apocalypse of Weeks.”⁴⁸⁰ Enoch is privy to secrets of history through the final judgment and eternity (90:39-41), and he knows that the cosmological realities revealed to him will continue “until a new creation

⁴⁷⁹ The exaltation of Enoch in Enochic lore pre-dates the similar exaltation of Moses, which came as a response to Enochic claims. See Alexander, “From Son of Adam to Second God,” 107-8. The *Book of the Watchers* (*1 En.* 1-36) is now dated as early as the fourth century B.C.E. On the dating of the early Enochic literature and its prehistory, see the sources cited in ch. 1, n. 7 above.

⁴⁸⁰ Nickelsburg, “The Nature and Function of Revelation in *1 Enoch*, Jubilees, and Some Qumranic Documents,” 96.

lasting forever is made” (72:1).⁴⁸¹ The tradition of Enoch’s eschatological knowledge influenced the portrayals of later exalted patriarchs, and it is likely that Enochic lore also played a role in Pseudo-Philo’s portrayal of Moses as visionary of eschatological secrets. (The influence of Daniel is less likely. Although the biblical Daniel had eschatological visions, at the time of *LAB*’s composition [just before or just after 70 C.E.], Daniel was not understood to address eschatology. Wills attests that “because prefigurations of Christ and Christian resurrection were seen in Daniel by the early church, the rabbinic tradition hesitated to embrace the visions of Daniel. The Rabbis denied that Daniel was predicting events after the Maccabean revolt, and especially not the end of time”⁴⁸²). Pseudo-Philo, as other authors before him, has re-created Moses into an Enoch-like visionary of impending eschatological events.

God informs Moses of his future resurrection and reveals to Moses the signs that precede the end (19:12-13). In response to Moses’ question about how much time has passed and how much remains, Moses is told: “four and a half have passed, and two and a half remain” (*quatuor enim semis transierunt et duo semis supersunt*).⁴⁸³ The precise meaning of these numbers is variously interpreted.⁴⁸⁴ The idea that history is divided into fixed segments is a theme of apocalyptic literature (e.g. Dan 7; *1 En.* 85-90; *Jubilees*, 2

⁴⁸¹ These and other eschatological revelations to Enoch in *1 En.* are concisely summarized in Nickelsburg, “The Nature and Function of Revelation in 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and Some Qumranic Documents,” 96.

⁴⁸² Lawrence M. Wills, “Daniel in Jewish Tradition,” in his introduction to Daniel in *The Jewish Study Bible* (ed. A. Berlin and M. Z. Brettler; New York: Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 1642.

⁴⁸³ Prior to this statement, God says: “An instant, the topmost part of a hand, the fullness of a moment, and the drop of a cup; and time has fulfilled all things.” The first phrase, in the Latin manuscripts, is *Istic mel, apex magnus* (“there is honey, the topmost peak” in Harrington’s translation). This confusing expression is almost certainly corrupt, and was emended by James to *Stigma et apex manus* (“an instant, the topmost part of a hand”), on the basis of *4 Ezra* 4:48-50 and 6:9-10; *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, 131. For an excellent summary of the difficulties of this passage, and the various attempts to translate and interpret it, see Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 2.646-50.

⁴⁸⁴ Again, see the summary of scholarly positions in Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, 2.651-52.

Bar. 53-66). Pseudo-Philo has made use of this theme and in so doing has demonstrated the point that the times are fixed and foreordained by God. This apocalyptic revelation is given to Moses to assure him before he dies that the promised deliverance at the end of time will indeed take place. The motif of divinely fixed times, the key to which is revealed to a seer, has import because it further clarifies Pseudo-Philo's beliefs about Moses' exalted status and the imminent, pre-determined end (revealed to Moses) that makes fidelity to Moses and the covenant so crucial in the present trying circumstances, for God will be faithful to God's promised future despite human sin. The Mosaic covenant has "saving power" (32:14) and it is eternal.⁴⁸⁵ Moses and his covenant can be trusted, for Moses is the unparalleled visionary to whom God has revealed the unfolding of human history up to its eschatological conclusion. Moses' direct, unmediated access to divine secrets of history establishes him (not Enoch, or any other) as the ultimate authority figure for Israel.

LAB revises Moses' Nebo experience to point toward the deliverance that awaits Israel when God visits the world in the age to come (19:12). Content with this revelation, Moses is "filled with understanding" and can die in peace, after a final experience of luminous transformation (19:16). The readers of *LAB* are assured that Moses' confidence in the covenant-keeping God can be theirs as well.

7.7 Moses as Leader in the Eschatological Age

In *LAB* 9:7, God reveals to Amram that his soon-to-be-born son "will serve me forever" (*mihi serviet in eternum*). Later in 9:10, Miriam has a dream vision that Moses will be a

⁴⁸⁵ The motif of "eternal covenant" runs through the text: see 4:11; 7:4; 8:3; 11:2, 5; 30:7. Cf. Lev 26:42. See also Frederick J. Murphy, "The Eternal Covenant in Pseudo-Philo," *JSP* 3 (1988): 43-57.

perpetual leader, even, apparently, in the world to come. In the dream, an angel announces that Moses “will exercise leadership always” (*ipse ducatum eius aget semper*). The vocabulary of these passages is noteworthy, for it suggests that Moses’ rulership will continue after he is raised from death (see 19:12). The notion of Moses as a hero in the eschatological age is present in the targumim: e.g, *Tg. Neof.* Deut 33:21 declares, “Just as he went in and came out at the head of the people in this world, so will he go in and come out in the world to come” (so also *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 33:21; cf. *Pal. Tg.* (including *Neof.*) Exod 12:42). *LAB* may reflect traditions that Moses’ leadership was eternal.

7.8 Summary of Protological and Eschatological Disclosure to Moses in *LAB*

A characteristic element of apocalyptic literature is that the seer has a total view of history, from the primeval through the eschatological age.⁴⁸⁶ The tradition that Moses received revelation of all secrets of human history is as early as *Jubilees* and the *Exagoge*; it is also present in *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*. Pseudo-Philo’s *LAB*, historically situated midway between these texts, also portrays Moses as an expert in protological and eschatological secrets. The author has incorporated apocalyptic features into his presentation of Moses, and has utilized revelatory topics (primordial and eschatological secrets) that have their conceptual roots in Enochic developments. *LAB* is a text that must be considered in the trajectory of works that depict Moses as an apocalyptic visionary who knows the whole drama of history.

⁴⁸⁶ E.g. Dan 2; 7-12; *1 En.* 85-90; 91:12-17; 93; *Jub.* 1:4, 26; *4 Ezra* 11-12, 14; *2 Bar.* 36-40; 53-74; *Apoc. Ab.* 21-22; 27.

Murphy claims that in *LAB*, “protology and eschatology supply a temporal frame within which all of the action takes place.”⁴⁸⁷ He sees the recurring narratives about the beginning and the end as mere stylistic devices on the author’s part. Murphy’s view is shortsighted, especially with respect to *LAB*’s profile of Moses, for it downplays the heightened esoteric character of Moses’ visionary presentation in the text, and does not take seriously the function of such apocalyptic disclosure as *revelation*, with theological and polemical ramifications. Claims of divine revelation serve to elevate a seer over others, for such direct access to the divine will confers authority and authenticity to the visionary recipient. Moses is portrayed in *LAB* as one who, uniquely, understands the divinely revealed secrets of the times, and their significance.⁴⁸⁸ In my view, Pseudo-Philo has supplemented the biblical material with Enochic revelatory features in order to augment Moses’ profile. The addition of protological and eschatological secrets as revelation to Moses renders Moses an apocalyptic seer, as does the assertion that he ascended to heaven and received celestial, meteorological and cosmic speculative knowledge. This appears to be an attempt by the author to position Moses over against rival Enochic traditions.

The result of *LAB*’s rewriting of the biblical narrative is that Sinai (and Nebo, to which Sinai traditions have been assimilated⁴⁸⁹) becomes even more central to the Jewish people, for it is not just the place of covenant revelation, but the revelation of all secrets. Sinai is inextricably linked to Israel’s creational past (protology), but also its

⁴⁸⁷ Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible*, 18.

⁴⁸⁸ Abraham is shown the future in 23:6-8, but it is not eschatological. Kenaz receives protological but not eschatological disclosure.

⁴⁸⁹ On the merging of these traditions in some literature, see Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, 159; in Philo, *ibid.*, 124.

eschatological future. The covenant patriarch is depicted as the exalted one who was specially chosen by God to know the totality of history, from creation to end times.

CHAPTER EIGHT

OTHER APOCALYPTIC MOTIFS IN *LAB*

8.1 Introduction

There are several Mosaic visionary elements in *LAB* that have been confusing to scholars of *LAB*, including dew as a possible “everlasting sign,” the celestial place of the origin of rainwater and of manna, and honey. These revelatory items are all situated in the text in apocalyptic contexts; a consideration of this context may help to elucidate what is being stated about Moses’ visionary experience. In this chapter, I compare these revelatory items credited to Moses to similar ones in other exalted visionary traditions. Such a comparison yields insight into the possible apocalyptic import of these motifs.

8.2 Dew: *LAB* 13:7

On Sinai, God summarizes to Moses the festivals that the Israelites are to celebrate (13:4-7). Cosmological phenomena are described (clouds, winds, lightnings, thunderstorms, and the fixing of the stars) after this cultic revelation, followed by a reference to an “everlasting sign” (*signum sempiternum*). It is not clear what that “sign” is, although most commentators posit that it is a reference to Gen 9:12, or to the “everlasting sign” (אֹת עוֹלָם) of Isa 55:13,⁴⁹⁰ which is connected in Jewish tradition to Tabernacles (*Num. Rab.* 22:23).

A closer look at the text may yield another interpretation. *LAB* 13:7 states: “And this will be an everlasting sign, and the nights will yield dew, as I said after the flooding

⁴⁹⁰ This is the opinion of Jacobson (*A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 1.518-19), who notes that this text also mentions myrtle, as does *LAB* 13:7.

of the earth” (*Et hoc erit in signum sempiternum, et rorem dabunt noctes, sicut locutus sum post diluuium terre*). Murphy writes, “It is unclear whether the *hoc* refers to the preceding list or to what follows, the dew that the nights produce seen as a fulfillment of something God predicted after the Flood [13:7]. Neither the Bible nor Pseudo-Philo records a prediction of dew.”⁴⁹¹ Murphy concludes that *hoc* must refer to dew *and* to the ordering of the universe. Still, the reference to dew is unusual, for dew is usually associated explicitly with morning, not with night, as Jacobson notes.⁴⁹² In the biblical flood narrative, there is no mention of dew as a sign of the covenant. The commentators struggle to relate the promise of abundance of dew to prayers for rain during the Feast of Tabernacles.⁴⁹³

Dew is, however, specifically called a “sign” of winter in *1 En.* 2:3, where the predictable course of the seasons pointed out to Enoch strongly evokes Gen 8:22.⁴⁹⁴ If the promise of dew in *LAB* 13:7 alludes to Gen 8:22, the *signum sempiternum* may refer to the continued cycle of the agricultural seasons that God vowed to preserve after the flood; dew and rain in winter provide water for crops (see 23:12). This early Enochic text, with which Pseudo-Philo was familiar, may provide the key to understanding why dew is a “sign” linked to the flood in 13:7. (The reference to dew in fact immediately precedes a cryptic reference to the lifetime of Noah in 13:8).

There may be another interpretive possibility, however, although perhaps less likely. The statement about dew is followed by an apocalyptic disclosure to Moses about

⁴⁹¹ Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible*, 74.

⁴⁹² Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 1.519. But see Num 11:9.

⁴⁹³ James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, 115; Perrot and Bogaert, SC 230, 117-18; Hayward, “The Figure of Adam in Pseudo-Philo’s Biblical Antiquities,” 4. See Zech 14:16-17; *Ta’an.* 1.1.

⁴⁹⁴ See discussion in Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 156. Cf. 4Q201^a 1 2:2-3.

paradise (13:8-9), then a divine speech about the eschatological salvation that awaits the people, despite their sin (the forgetting of the covenant), for God remains faithful (13:10). Perhaps dew in 13:7 is to be understood in an eschatological sense, pointing toward the age to come when the covenant promises are fulfilled. In apocalyptic literature, dew comes from heaven⁴⁹⁵ and is often associated with the end of time and the messianic era. Dew is an eschatological gift in *1 En.* 60:20 (see also 34:1-2; 36:1; 75:5). In an eschatological section, *2 Bar.* 29:1-8 states that in the messianic age, “winds will go out in front of me every morning to bring the fragrance of aromatic fruits and clouds at the end of the day to distill the dew of health.” The motif continues in *2 Bar.* 73:2: “And health will descend in dew, and illness will vanish, and fear and tribulation and lamentation will pass away from among men, and joy will encompass the earth.” Dew is a symbol of resurrection in Ps 110:3, as well as in well as rabbinic lore.⁴⁹⁶ In the Armenian version of *4 Ezra* 4:49, dew represents the tiny amount of time that remains until the end, following dense clouds and a violent thunderstorm, which denotes the present age that has nearly passed (in *LAB* 13:7, storm imagery immediately precedes the promise of dew). Dew may also symbolize the resurrection in *Apoc. Ab.* 19:4. Dew has a life-giving quality in *1 En.* 39:5.⁴⁹⁷

LAB 13 ends with God’s statement, “For they will know in the last days that on account of their own sins their seed has been abandoned, because I am faithful in my ways.” The text proclaims that after the present abandonment (affliction), God’s mercy and faithfulness will prevail, despite human sin. This assurance points toward the

⁴⁹⁵ Dan 4:15, 33; 5:21; *1 En.* 60:20; *2 Bar.* 10:11; *3 Bar.* 10:9, et al.

⁴⁹⁶ On this see Otting, *Heavenly Journeys: A Study of the Motif in Hellenistic Jewish Literature*, 133, 149.

⁴⁹⁷ Cf. also *Jos. Asen.* 16:4, in which honey is like life-giving dew from heaven, and *2 En.* 22:10, where the myrrh oil with which Enoch is anointed is like dew and like the rays of the sun.

eschatological age (“in the last days” – *in novissimis diebus*). Because this emphasis closes out the chapter, it is not inconceivable that the “everlasting sign” of 13:7 is this healing, eschatological dew promised by God for eternal healing.

8.3 Place of the Source of Rain: *LAB* 19:10

In 19.10, Moses is shown the “place from which the clouds draw up water to water the whole earth” (*locum unde elevant nubes aquam ad irrigandum omnem terram*) in a heavenly journey. This source of rain is in the heavenly realm. Knowledge of the place of the origin of rainwater is a divine secret unavailable to humans according to Job 38:25-26 and 37; neither can humans know how many drops of rain there are (Sir 1:2). Despite this wisdom motif, the place of the origin of the rain is revealed to Moses on Nebo.

The place of clouds and the source of rain as a revelatory item is a characteristic element of apocalyptic visionary tours.⁴⁹⁸ Knowledge of such meteorological secrets is granted to Enoch in his transcendent journeys in early Enochic lore. In the *Book of the Watchers*, Enoch sees the place in heaven from which rain emerges (36:1; cf. 34:1); this knowledge is also revealed to him in the *Book of the Luminaries* 76-77. Enoch sees the “secrets of the clouds” and their storehouses in *1 En.* 41:3-4, and in *1 En.* 60:21-22, the heavenly storehouses of the rain, as well as how rain scatters on the land, are disclosed to him. The motif is taken up again in *2 En.* 23 and 40: Enoch is privy to hidden secrets of clouds and rain (cf. the same claim for Baruch in *3 Bar.* 10:6-8)

⁴⁹⁸ About this and the following visionary elements in *LAB* 19, Stone writes, “The repetition of *locum* at the start of each of the phrases is notable and it is found with one exception (*terram Egypti*) through the end of the revelation of the land. This technique is to be observed in other lists, such as ‘the secrets’ in *1 Enoch* 41:3 and ‘the chambers’ in *1 Enoch* 41:4-5, et al.” Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature,” 418.

Beginning with *LAB*, divine disclosure of the secrets and source of rain becomes a theme of advanced Moses traditions. To Moses, God reveals “the place from which the clouds draw up water to water the whole earth” (19:10). In *2 Bar.* 59:6, Moses gains hidden knowledge of the raindrops in a vision on Sinai (cf. *2 En.* 47:5). Enochic secrets of the place of the origin of the rain are now unveiled to Moses on Nebo (*LAB* 19:10); similar secrets are divulged to Moses on Sinai (*2 Bar.* 59:6). This apocalyptic motif is a clear transferral to Moses of an Enochic revelatory element.

8.4 Manna: *LAB* 19:10

In *LAB* 10:7, manna is the “bread of heaven” (*de celo panem* – surely מן־השמים לחם in *LAB* Hebrew) that rained down upon the Israelites. This is the terminology used for manna in *Exod* 16:4 and *Neh* 9:15 (cf. *John* 6 [throughout]). In Moses’ farewell speech on Nebo/Abarim, he reminds the Israelites that they have eaten “the bread of angels” (*panem angelorum*) for forty years (19:5). The notion that manna was the food of the angels is prevalent in Jewish texts (*Ps* 78:25; *LXX Ps* 77:25; *Wis* 16:20; *Mut.* 259-260; *Fug.* 137-139; *4 Ezra* 1:19; *b. Yoma* 75b; *Exod. Rab.* 25:6).⁴⁹⁹ The literature insists that manna is of celestial origin. According to *b. Hag.* 12b, manna is produced in the third heaven.

Manna is indeed heavenly, angelic food, but the motif also has eschatological significance in apocalyptic writings. Manna may take on a heightened mystical quality as

⁴⁹⁹ In other Jewish literature, the angels do not eat in heaven, nor do the righteous who ascend to heaven: *Gen. Rab.* 48; 18:4; *Exod. Rab.* 47:4-5; *Tob* 12:19; *T. Abr.* 15. The underlying notion is that angels and the righteous are nourished by the divine presence and have no need for actual food. See David Goodman, “Do Angels Eat?” *JJS* 37 (1986): 160-75. In *3 Bar.* 6:11, heavenly manna is the food of the phoenix.

a revelatory item during Moses' final visionary ascent later in ch. 19.⁵⁰⁰ After Moses' final words to the people before his death, he ascends Nebo/Abarim, where he experiences an apocalyptic vision of esoteric secrets and undergoes a heavenly and cosmic journey that includes "the place from which the manna rained upon the people" (*locum unde pluit manna populo* - 19:10). Moses' pre-death vision of the heavenly place where manna is kept may have an eschatological implication, for the heavenly storehouses of manna are described in apocalyptic literature as descending again in the world to come. Manna will be the source of food in the eschatological age. Rev 2:17 notes the "hidden manna" (τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου) that is eschatological nourishment from heaven. The motif is also present in *2 Bar.* 29:8: "And it will happen at that time that the treasury of manna will come down again from on high, and they will eat of it in those years because these are they who have arrived at the consummation of time." According to *Sib. Or.* 7:149, the righteous in the world to come will not need food or drink, but will eat "dewy manna;" so also *Frag.* 3:4, which points toward the "feasting on sweet bread from starry heaven."⁵⁰¹ (*2 Macc* 2:4-7 also describes the ark [in which a pot of manna was preserved according to *1 Kgs* 8:9; cf. *Exod* 16:32-34] hidden away by Jeremiah until the messianic age [cf. *Heb* 9:4], but this hiding place is not in heaven but in a cave near Nebo).

Moses' esoteric vision in 19:10 is thus of the secret, hidden place in heaven from which manna once rained *and will rain again*. The pre-death disclosure of manna's celestial provenance may be a statement that Moses will soon be enjoying this heavenly

⁵⁰⁰ Manna is not mentioned in the biblical account of Moses' ascent of Nebo; it is, however, referred to in *Tg. Ps.-J.* Deut 34:8: because of Moses' merit, the Israelites were able to eat manna for thirty-seven days after his death.

⁵⁰¹ All translations of the *Sibylline Oracles* are by John J. Collins, *OTP* 1.327-472.

sustenance in the coming age. With this visionary element, Pseudo-Philo could well be making a somewhat veiled statement about Moses' righteousness and eschatological reward. Having just received apocalyptic revelation of the storehouse in heaven from which manna originates, it is implied that Moses will soon be eating this celestial, angelic nourishment in the world to come.⁵⁰² The motif of manna in *LAB* may be functioning as a kind of *inclusio*: manna was miraculously provided by God in the beginning of Israel's history,⁵⁰³ and manna will descend again for them in the approaching restoration of the world. Moses and the Israelites go "from manna to manna." Moses, under whose leadership manna first rained, will soon enjoy this heavenly sustenance again "in the immortal dwelling place that is not subject to time" (19:13). Moses' pre-death vision of the storehouse of manna has apocalyptic import, for this esoteric visionary element has an eschatological character (see Rev 2:17; 2 Bar. 29:8; *Sib. Or.* 7:149). This conclusion is bolstered by the fact that the heavenly provenance of manna in heaven is cited in the vision along with the reservoirs of rain, clouds, and water, a combination of visionary elements that is also present in 2 Bar. 29:7-8. Manna is a manifestation of the world to come, about which Moses is privileged to receive unparalleled secret knowledge (see section 7.6 above).

⁵⁰² The linking of manna to esoteric divine knowledge and heavenly nourishment is a theme in Philo. See Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo* (NovTSup 10; Leiden: Brill, 1965). Manna also has a mystical quality in Origen; see esp. *Comm. on John* II, 1-11.

⁵⁰³ The *Jerusalem Targum* Num 22:28 lists manna as one of the ten things created on the eve of the Sabbath during God's creational acts. According to *b. Pes.* 54a, manna is one of the seven things prepared by God before the creation of the world. Malina writes that such lists were already in existence by 100 C.E.; Bruce J. Malina, *The Palestinian Manna Tradition: The Manna Tradition in the Palestinian Targums and its Relationship to the New Testament Writings* (AGSU 7; Leiden: Brill, 1968), 58. Cf. *Jub.* 2:7.

8.5 Honey: *LAB* 19:15

One of the most perplexing passages in *LAB* occurs in the text just before Moses' death on Nebo. After a heavenly ascent and esoteric revelation on the mountain, Moses bids God, "Show me what amount of time has passed and how much remains." In the extant Latin manuscripts, God's response to this question is, "*Istic mel, apex magnus*" ("there is honey, the topmost peak" in Harrington's translation). The meaning of this enigmatic phrase is lost, and nearly all scholars view the text as corrupt.⁵⁰⁴ To add to the confusion, these words are capitalized in two of the major manuscripts, indicating their special nature. James has emended this phrase to *Stigma et apex manus* ("an instant, the topmost part of a hand"), on the basis of *4 Ezra* 4:48-50 and 6:9-10.⁵⁰⁵

Several scholars have offered interpretations of this difficult passage that do not involve emendation of the text. Wadsworth has suggested that the text originally said: *istic mel(chiel pontif)ex magnus* (the letters in parentheses are proposed by Wadsworth to fill in the damaged text).⁵⁰⁶ Perrot and Bogaert suggest that *mel* (honey) is in fact meant, but in the sense of fermented or spoiled honey; they write, "la situation est là (*istic*) comme du miel fermenté ou gâté, la situation est pourrie."⁵⁰⁷ Jacobson has effectively dismissed both of these interpretive possibilities as implausible: the lacuna due to textual damage, filled in with only two letters (*ap*) by the scribe at the Latin stage, could not possibly have contained eleven letters in the original text, as in Wadsworth's rewriting, nor is it likely that "spoiled honey" could be intended, for honey has positive

⁵⁰⁴ Jacobson provides a succinct summary of the various attempts to translate and interpret this difficult passage in his commentary, 2.646-50.

⁵⁰⁵ James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo*, 131.

⁵⁰⁶ Wadsworth, "The Death of Moses and the Riddle of the End of Time in Pseudo-Philo," 12-19.

⁵⁰⁷ Perrot and Bogaert, SC 230, 134. They note that in biblical and Talmudic Hebrew, the word for honey evokes the idea of fermentation, such as in Lev 2:11.

connotations in Hebrew, and this in no way answers the apocalyptic question of “how much time remains?”⁵⁰⁸

Although James’ emendation has been the most accepted to date, I wonder if there is another possible interpretation that doesn’t require emendation of the text and that takes into consideration the phrase’s placement in an apocalyptic passage of eschatological import. Jacobson states outright, “*Mel* obviously can have no point.”⁵⁰⁹ But if the text is not corrupt, the reference to honey (*mel*) might in fact echo apocalyptic notions of honey as heavenly, angelic food that the righteous will enjoy in the world to come. According to *Jos. Asen.* 16:14, honey is “made from the dew of the roses of life that are in the paradise of life. And all the angels of God eat of it and all the chosen of God and all the sons of the Most High, because this is a comb of life, and everyone who eats of it will not die for ever (and) ever.”⁵¹⁰ In *Joseph and Aseneth*, honey is the bread of life, the life-giving dew of heaven (16:8 [4]; cf. the healing and health-promoting qualities of honey in Prov 16:24 and 24:13); when Aseneth eats of the honeycomb, she has “eaten bread of life, and drunk a cup of immortality, and been anointed with ointment of incorruptibility” (8:16).⁵¹¹ Honey, like manna, is the heavenly food of the eschatological age. In *Sib. Or.* 3:746, there is also an eschatological reference to the drink of “sweet honey of heaven” that the righteous will enjoy on the day of judgment. Honey and milk flow from the heavenly paradise in *2 En.* 8:6 [longer rec.]). Although neither *Joseph and Aseneth* nor the *Sibylline Oracles* is of Palestinian provenance, it is

⁵⁰⁸ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*. 2.647-48.

⁵⁰⁹ Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*. 2.649.

⁵¹⁰ All translations of *Jos. Asen.* are those of C. Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth,” in *OTP* 2.202-47.

⁵¹¹ George J. Brooke summarizes the angelic overtones of Aseneth’s transformation upon eating honey (the food of angels), in “Men and Women as Angels in *Joseph and Aseneth*,” *JSP* 14.2 (2005): 159-77 (esp. 167-71).

possible that Pseudo-Philo was aware of Jewish traditions of honey as eschatological, angelic nourishment. A statement promising such food would be an appropriate divine reply to Moses' question about how much time remains before the consummation of the age, although how *mel* relates to the rest of God's response ("There is honey [*mel*], the topmost peak, the fullness of a moment, and the drop of a cup") is unclear. It is noteworthy that the eating of honey precedes Aseneth's transcendent transformation; the divine utterance about honey in *LAB* 19:15 immediately precedes Moses' final luminous transfiguration and death (19:16).

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

9.1 *LAB* and the Trajectory of Visionary Moses Tradition

The first section of this dissertation traced the development of visionary Moses tradition from its origins in the Hebrew Bible through pro-Mosaic Second Temple literature and rabbinic texts. It demonstrated that the biblical accounts of Moses' ascents of Sinai and Nebo contain transcendent elements, yet there is a reluctance to expand upon the visionary ascent motif. In the written Torah, the exoteric content of Moses' revelation (law and covenant) is given priority over the visionary experience itself. In the non-biblical Mosaic texts that were analyzed, however, there is an increasing interest in the esoteric content of Moses' revelation on the mountains, as well as a developing tendency to portray Moses' ascents as heavenly journeys. Moses' revelatory experiences on Sinai and Nebo are progressively invested with vocabulary, imagery, and motifs that are characteristic features of apocalyptic literature.

This investigation has shown that while advanced Moses traditions are rooted in key biblical texts, the esoteric elements that are increasingly attributed to Moses' ascents and revelation have conceptual origins in early apocalypses. Early apocalyptic texts such as *1 Enoch* incorporated ideas from the diverse Hellenistic world, including the motif of heavenly ascent and esoteric divine disclosure. These texts often appealed to revelation in the name of other exalted visionaries who antedated Moses and to whom esoteric secrets were unveiled in an ascent the celestial realm. Mosaic texts and traditions

responded to these developments by re-envisioning Moses' own ascents and revelation in similar terms.

Beginning with *Jubilees* and the *Exagoge* in the second century B.C.E., there is textual evidence in pro-Mosaic texts of interactive dialogue with alternative, non-Mosaic visionary traditions. Each of the texts we have examined exhibits dynamic interaction with the revelatory claims of Enochic lore; Moses' portrayal in these texts is often crafted in such a way as to echo traditions that exalt Enoch as the ultimate revealer of transcendent knowledge. Throughout this variegated, pro-Mosaic literature, Moses is frequently recast as an apocalyptic seer who ascends to the celestial realm; Moses' exoteric revelation is augmented to include speculative secrets of heaven, the cosmos, protology and eschatology; such esoteric knowledge was attributed to Enoch in earlier Enochic texts and traditions. These Mosaic developments not only display awareness of Enochic revelatory traditions: Moses' presentation in these texts often appears to be a polemical response to prior Enochic claims. Advanced Moses traditions provide evidence of a desire to secure the place of Moses as the superlative visionary of Jewish history *vis-à-vis* alternative and competing revelatory traditions. In each of the writings that were analyzed, Moses' experience on Sinai or Nebo provided the vehicle to impart the revelatory truth deemed crucial by the author; the *content* of that truth was influenced by apocalyptic, especially Enochic, visionary accounts. Ascription of such definitive revelation to the revered covenant patriarch established its authoritative status; Moses and his revelation thus became the conduit of pertinent esoteric secrets as well as the all-important truths of law and covenant.

The second part of this dissertation explored Moses' visionary ascents in Pseudo-Philo's *LAB*. As in the other pro-Mosaic texts that were investigated, Moses' mountain ascents are no longer described only in the categories of the written Torah: they take on the heightened transcendent qualities typical of apocalyptic visionary accounts. Pseudo-Philo has rewritten Moses' story in dramatic ways, incorporating legendary material but also characteristic apocalyptic features and motifs: Moses' ascents are recast as occasions of heavenly ascent and esoteric disclosure. The text's interpretive expansions of Moses' revelatory experiences on Sinai and Nebo reveal a desire to exalt Moses as an apocalyptic seer. Two sections about Moses' apocalyptic visions (13:7-10 and 19:10-15) are in fact unique to *LAB*; it appears that Pseudo-Philo has deliberately crafted these narratives to embellish Moses' visionary status in apocalyptic terms. The result is that in *LAB*, Moses is not only the covenant mediator: he is the ultimate visionary of all important, transcendent knowledge, exoteric and esoteric.

Such rewriting of Moses' ascents and revelation suggests polemical developments. Analysis of the apocalyptic features of *LAB* has revealed the formative role of alternative visionary traditions in Pseudo-Philo's portrayal of Moses. In *LAB*, Moses often takes on the exalted traits of Enoch, including the experience of mountaintop ascent to heaven and esoteric disclosure of heavenly, cosmic, meteorological, protological and eschatological secrets, all of which have parallels in earlier Enochic revelatory claims. This dissertation has demonstrated that Pseudo-Philo was aware of Enochic traditions, but it is clear that he did not consider them authoritative. Multiple assertions about Enoch and Moses in *LAB* have polemical overtones and appear to signify the author's discomfort with Enochic visionary claims:

1. *LAB* lessens Enoch's status by limiting the extent of his divine favor. Although *LAB* incorporates Enochic themes in its portrayal of the spread of sin, it stresses the human origin of corrupting knowledge.

2. *LAB* grants to Moses an Enochic-style journey to paradise and links Moses to the garden of Eden and the tree of life. Although this association of Moses with paradise and the tree of life has clear parallels in Enochic texts, *LAB* eclipses those accounts by insisting that Moses actually touched the tree of life. *LAB* makes Moses, not Enoch, the recipient of protological disclosure.

3. *LAB* grants to Moses Enochic-influenced esoteric disclosure, including cosmological and celestial revelation and the measuring and numbering knowledge that is associated with Enoch, but *LAB* expressly connects this knowledge to covenant concerns. Esoteric knowledge is given a Mosaic stamp.

4. In *LAB*, heavenly *signa* are revealed to Moses; such knowledge is declared unavailable to other humans because of sin (19:10). This appears to be a not-so-veiled attempt to discredit traditions about Enoch's knowledge of astronomical secrets. *LAB* condemns all forms of astronomy and astrology, with the exception of the heavenly *signa* disclosed to Moses.

5. Although *LAB* is interested in angelology, it never gives angels a role in interpreting Moses' visions. Moses' esoteric and exoteric revelation is direct and unmediated. Although the ascent motif and the esoteric content of Moses' revelatory disclosure echoes Enochic claims, there is no *angelus interpretis* as in the Enochic accounts.

A few other passages may also display polemical positioning. *LAB* asserts that Moses cannot enter the promised land lest he see idols (19:7). This preservation of Moses' character, unique to *LAB*, evokes similar claims about *Enoch's* perfection: in Wis 4:10-11, Enoch is "taken" so that he does not have to live among sinners and be corrupted by evil; this theme is also present in *Gen. Rab. 25:1*, according to which Enoch is removed so that his character can be preserved. The careful and elaborate account of Moses' death in *LAB*, including cosmic phenomena and descriptions of the grief of the angels and the ceasing of the angelic liturgy, is summarized in *LAB* by the potent statement that there never was such a day "from the one on which the Lord made man upon the earth, nor shall there be such forever...because he (God) loved him very much" (19:10). Even Enoch, who was "taken away," did not enjoy such status before God. Further investigation of *LAB* may yield other examples of polemical import.

The assertion of this dissertation, that interactive dialogue with Enochic and other apocalyptic traditions was formative in Pseudo-Philo's writing, sheds new light on why Moses' story was revised and embellished the way it was in the text. Moses was already the unparalleled visionary of Israel's history; why did Pseudo-Philo feel a need to further enhance his visionary profile? The claim of dialogical and even polemical developments explains the apocalyptic features in Moses' portrayal, and also helps to decipher some of the puzzling passages about Moses in *LAB*, the interpretation of which has challenged or eluded scholars. Dialogue with Enochic claims offers an explanation, for example, for the seeming intrusion into the Sinai narrative of paradisaal disclosure, the rewriting of the Nebo episode to include heavenly ascent and esoteric revelation, the revision of the biblical account of the spread of sin, and the addition of *in tempore illo* to the

genealogical reference to Enoch. Pseudo-Philo's noticeable expansion of the luminosity motif may also have conceptual roots in alternative visionary traditions.

The apocalyptic features of Moses' visionary ascents mark *LAB* as an important text to consider in any study of advanced Moses developments. *LAB* is situated chronologically between the earliest works that expand upon Moses' visionary capacity (*Jubilees* and the *Exagoge*), and later portrayals (*4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*). *LAB* is a bridge between these texts, and it is interesting to consider which transcendent qualities for Moses he incorporates from exalted Moses traditions, and which he refuses to accept or develop. In *LAB*, Moses is angel-like in that he is born circumcised and exhibits recurrent luminosity, yet *LAB* does not go so far as to claim divinization for Moses (as in the *Exagoge* and Philo). Moses' luminous identity is not permanent. *LAB* links Moses to primordial traditions, as does *Jubilees* (and some later targumim), yet *LAB* goes beyond *Jubilees* in ascribing to Moses heavenly ascent and eschatological revelation (a position developed further in *2 Baruch*). *LAB* freely adopts the notion of Moses' heavenly ascent, an idea that the Qumran literature does not develop and of which early rabbinic tradition was wary. *LAB* does not adhere to the tradition that Moses, like Enoch, never died (as did Philo in *QG* 1.86); *LAB* insists that Moses did indeed die and was buried by God. As in many targumim and other rabbinic texts, Enoch's status in *LAB* is lessened (as also in *4 Ezra*, which denies the possibility of Enochic-style esoteric disclosure to humans). But Pseudo-Philo was comfortable applying the Enochic visionary profile to Moses, hence connecting it to the all-important covenant and its mediator. *LAB* continues the tradition in these texts of enhancing Sinai and Nebo in apocalyptic ways, and contains discernible dialogue with exalted Enochic lore, as do the other texts we have explored.

9.2 The Purpose of Moses' Transcendent Portrayal in *LAB*

This investigation of *LAB* has demonstrated that the text does not merely supplement the Moses traditions of the written Torah: it revises them. This revision of Moses' biblical portrayal was likely a reaction to forms of Judaism that sought to de-emphasize the authority of Moses and the Mosaic law and covenant. In rewriting Moses' ascents and revelation to include new understandings of transcendent truth, such as were developed in alternative visionary traditions, Pseudo-Philo has linked those truths to Moses and covenant. Moses' ascents and revelation on Sinai and Nebo are re-crafted in *LAB* to speak to changing circumstances and historical situations. Pseudo-Philo is addressing threats to the primacy of Moses and his law; his apocalyptic elevation of Moses serves to underscore Moses' visionary authority and his pre-eminent position as the recipient of all divine knowledge. As Najman writes, "re-presentations of Sinai serve to authorize the re-introduction of Torah into the Jewish community at times of legal reform and of covenant renewal."⁵¹² In Pseudo-Philo's view, his people, undergoing a time of suffering just before or just after 70 C.E., need to return to the covenant mediated by Moses, to whom alone God has revealed *all* truths, exoteric and esoteric. Return to Moses and covenant was not only urgent: it was necessary for the restoration of God's favor and protection.

Joshua's last words in *LAB* are about his incomparable predecessor: Joshua urges the people, "Be mindful of me after my death and of Moses, the friend of the Lord, and

⁵¹² Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 36.

let not the words of the covenant that he established with you depart from you all the days” (24:3). These parting words summarize the message of *LAB*.

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