

## ADAM AND EVE IN THE "LIFE OF ADAM AND EVE"

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The story of Adam and Eve is one of the most commented-upon texts in the entire Bible. The rabbis and the church fathers spent many a page on the exposition of this terse narrative. As though this early period of scriptural exposition was not adequate, medieval commentators in both traditions returned to the narrative with renewed vigor. In recent times the exegetical labors of these early Jewish and Christian commentators have been the subject of numerous studies. Curiously, one set of sources is often ignored when the exegetical legacy of Genesis 1–3 is surveyed: the apocryphal legends about our first human couple. The world of late antiquity was witness to numerous such narratives, all purporting to fill in for the reader, in humble narrative form, the important details left absent or ambiguous by the biblical author. Among the myriad of apocryphal tales that took root around these biblical chapters, pride of place must go to the "Life of Adam and Eve" (hereafter *Vita*).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, of all biblical apocrypha written

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1. We use the term "Vita" to simplify matters. Since each version has its own unique name, to refer constantly to all of them by their unique names would be chaos. The commonly cited edition for the Latin is Meyer, "Vita Adae et Evae," 185–250. A more recent discussion of the Latin material can be found in Halford, "Apocryphal *Vita Adae et Evae*," 417–27. For the Greek most scholars have consulted Tischendorf, *Apocalypses Apocryphae*. One should compare the more recent text of M. Nagel in Denis, *Concordance grecque*. Nagel's text is very odd; he selects from numerous manuscripts across different families for reasons that are not always clear. For a full discussion of the Greek see Nagel, *Vie grecque*. For the Slavonic one should consult Jagić, "Slavische Beiträge," 1–104. For the Armenian see Stone, *Penitence of Adam*, and for the Georgian see Mahé, "Livre d'Adam géorgien," 227–60. The Coptic fragments await publication. For an excel-

and transmitted in late antiquity, this particular narrative had the largest influence on later Western literature and even art. Evidence of the tale's influence can be found as far afield as early Renaissance literature, including such works as Spenser's *Fairie Queene*<sup>2</sup> and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.<sup>3</sup>

No doubt part of the explanation is due to the fact that the tale became associated with the legend about the origins of the wood of the cross.<sup>4</sup> Because the cross was thought to redeem humankind from the legacy of primal sin, it is not surprising that an apocryphal writer would attempt to connect the origins of this cross with the lives of the very first human couple. And this is, in fact, exactly what happened. When Adam falls ill, at the end of the *Vita*, he sends Seth forth to see if he can procure some of the oil of mercy from the garden in order to alleviate his bodily pain. In the most primitive form of the *Vita*, Seth presents himself at the gate of the garden and makes an impassioned appeal for the oil. The archangel Michael appears and tells Seth that this oil cannot be given to any human being until the Son of God comes.<sup>5</sup> Seth returns and reports this news to Adam, who reacts unhappily and dies almost immediately. But in some manuscripts of the *Vita* one finds a very different ending. In these obviously later, but quite significant Latin manuscripts, Michael gives Seth a branch broken off from the tree of knowledge and tells him to take it back

lent discussion of the text-critical problems that attend the entire range of the various versions of the *Vita*, see the treatment of Stone in *History of the Literature of Adam and Eve*.

2. See Nohnberg's observations about the role of the quest of Seth in Spenser's *Fairie Queene*. In bk. 1, canto 11, Spenser's hero, the Red Cross Knight, engages the Dragon-monster in fierce combat. In a sequence that mimes the conflict between Christ and Satan during Christ's *descensus*, the hero absorbs numerous fearsome blows and twice appears to collapse with mortal injury. The first time he is revived by the Well of Life. On the second occasion he falls underneath the Tree of Life. While he sleeps beneath an olive tree, the unguents of that tree slowly come forth and fall on his head: "From that first tree forth flowed, as from a well — A trickling stream of balm, most sovereign" (stanza 48). The next day, having been anointed with this healing unguent, he comes back to life poised to defeat the Dragon. The combination of being healed by water and oil recalls the pairing of the submersion in water and chrismatic anointing that constitutes the baptismal rite. Both these means of salvation were prophesied in the *Vita* and function prominently therein. On the interaction of these themes in the *Vita* see Stone, "Fall of Satan," 148–53.

3. Evans, *Paradise Lost*.

4. The classic study is that of Meyer, "Geschichte des Kreuzholzes," 187–250. See the comparative treatment of Quinn, *Quest of Seth*.

5. *Vita* 44:1–3.

to Adam.<sup>6</sup> When Adam sees the branch — which is to become the tree used for the wood of the cross — he rejoices in spite of his pain, for now he knows that his sin will be undone.

A careful reading of the tale discloses that the addition of this motif of the branch not only serves to connect this tale with a burgeoning literature about the origins of the wood of the cross, but also alters substantially the manner in which this portion of the tale concludes. In the early version of the narrative, in spite of the christological promise of Michael, Adam dies unhappily and in pain. Yet those tales that have Adam receive the branch portray Adam's reaction quite differently. His bodily pain, to be sure, remains unabated, but now Adam's spirit is comforted, for he knows that his sin will be forgiven. By almost every reader of the *Vita* in the modern period this late addition has been either ignored or said to be of no consequence for understanding the primitive form of the narrative. At one level, such a perspective can hardly be challenged. There is no question that the manuscripts which contain this material are late and secondary. Yet a close examination of the Latin text will disclose that this late editorial addition is quite in keeping with the way in which the entire narrative was being shaped and redacted in the medieval period. The motif of the Holy Rood is no doubt new, but its harmonious fit with the preexisting narrative is too exact to be considered an "intrusion." Indeed, careful attention to the way this motif becomes part of the *Vita* may tell us something very significant about the way the entire tale functioned in medieval Christianity.

But we have run ahead of ourselves. We will return at the end of this essay to consider this scene and its relation to the *Vita* as a whole. First, we must consider the origins of the work and its extensive reach in late antiquity.

6. This story can be found in the family III manuscripts edited by Meyer. He did not include this material in his critical edition of the *Vita*. Since he believed it to be quite late and secondary, he chose to print these texts in his later study of the legends of the Holy Rood (see n. 4). Meyer claims they could not be earlier than the twelfth century, when we first have evidence of the branch tradition in western Europe (Johannes Belet's *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, ca. 1170). But against this argument one should note the presence of the motif in Slavonic and Armenian tradition (see n. 36), evidence that may argue for an earlier date or at least for a far more complicated pattern of transmission. In the manuscripts edited by Mozley ("Vitae Adae," 121–49) a similar addition can be found, only here Michael gives Seth seeds instead of a branch. But the end is the same: from those seeds, planted in Adam's mouth, comes the wood of the cross.

## Versional Evidence

The tale itself has long been known to Western European readers in Latin. For some time the study of the text meant a study of its Latin textual form. This changed in the late nineteenth century when Tischendorf published an edition of the tale in Greek.<sup>7</sup> Shortly thereafter a Slavonic version appeared.<sup>8</sup> For some time scholars worked diligently on the problem of how the Greek, Latin, and, to a lesser degree, Slavonic texts were to be understood. This is evident from the way in which the text was rendered in the collection of the apocrypha and pseud-epigrapha edited by R. H. Charles.<sup>9</sup> There the text was presented in two columns, one each for the Greek and Latin, though a third column was added for the Slavonic version of the penitence cycle. The more recent edition of Charlesworth has also printed a columnar version of the tale, though only the Greek and Latin are represented.<sup>10</sup>

For the last hundred years or so, scholars have tried to understand the relationship of the Greek and Latin forms of the text (see table 1). This has not been an easy task, for the Latin has several literary units that are absent in the Greek, the most important being the rather long narrative at the beginning concerning Adam and Eve's penitence. The Greek also has a long independent narrative in the middle of its text. In this portion of the text Eve recounts the entire history of how the transgression took place and was punished, an apparent doublet of a similar but far briefer account given by Adam in an earlier portion of the narrative. Because of a general scholarly tendency to consider Greek materials as prior to Latin ones, a consensus gradually emerged that the Latin additions were secondary.

The entire picture changed, however, in 1981 when M. Stone published the Armenian, and J.-P. Mahé the Georgian version of the tale.<sup>11</sup> Each of these Oriental versions contained the major

7. Tischendorf, *Apocalypses Apocryphae*.

8. Jagić, "Slavische Beiträge."

9. L. S. A. Wells, trans., in *APOT* 2.130–54.

10. M. Johnson, trans., in *OTP* 2.249–95.

11. Stone, *Penitence of Adam*; Mahé, "Livres d'Adam géorgien."

Table 1

<i>Narrative Unit</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Latin</i>
Penitence	absent	1–22
Cain and Abel	1–4	23–24 <sup>12</sup>
Adam's Story of the Fall/Quest of Seth	5–14	30–44
Eve's Story of the Fall	15–30	absent
Death and Burial of Adam and Eve	31–42	45–48

additions that were unique to the Latin and Greek. Though one could argue that these Oriental versions were later conflations of the shorter, and more pristine, Greek and Latin texts, there were sufficient grounds for suspecting just the opposite. It appears more and more likely that the Greek and Latin versions derived from an original that looked closer to the present form of the Georgian and Armenian.<sup>13</sup> Both Stone and Mahé have shown that these Oriental versions were translations of earlier Greek *Vorlagen*. G. Anderson and M. Stone have maintained in a series of publications that for a number of individual literary units, the form of the tale found in either the Armenian or the Georgian is more primitive.<sup>14</sup> Thus it appears quite likely that a Greek version of the *Vita* must have circulated in antiquity in a form that differed radically from the Greek that we now possess, and that this form of the Greek has strongest claim to be the most primitive form of the document.

A striking confirmation of this proposal may be close at hand. In 1922, St. John Seymour, while working on a tenth-century poem in Old Irish, the *Saltair na Rann*, concluded that the lengthy section of the work devoted to Adam and Eve had made extensive and systematic use of both the Latin and Greek versions of the *Vita*.<sup>15</sup> This was because the *Saltair* included the penance material

12. We have left out the Latin narrative of Adam's vision (chaps. 25–29). Though it is important in its own right, a discussion of it in this context would prove a needless complication. On this vision and other problems involving the Latin and Greek versions see Nickelsburg, "Some Related Traditions," 2.515–39.

13. This argument was made already by Stone in *Penitence of Adam*.

14. Anderson, "Penitence Narrative," 1–38; Stone, "Fall of Satan."

15. Seymour, "Book of Adam and Eve," 121–33.

(unique to the Latin) and Eve's recapitulation of the fall (unique to the Greek). This assessment was subsequently confirmed and deepened by Brian Murdoch in 1976 in a commentary on the relevant portions of the text.<sup>16</sup> Murdoch, like Seymour, was at a loss as to how this peculiar phenomenon was to be accounted for. Either the composer of the poem had access to both the Latin and Greek versions of the *Vita* or he had a copy of the Greek version in a Latin translation — a translation, we might add, that is unattested anywhere else. A far simpler solution was suggested recently by M. Stone.<sup>17</sup> Rather than presume that both of these independent versions were spliced together by a resourceful editor, why not suppose that the composer of this text had access to the very Greek textual family that had spawned the Armenian and the Georgian versions? Proof of this hypothesis would involve a careful study of each literary unit in the *Saltair* where we have material found only in the Greek, Armenian, and Georgian versions. If the *Saltair* used a text form that conforms more closely to the Armenian or Georgian than to our present Greek, then we would have strong reason to believe that the composers of the *Saltair* had access to a form of the Greek text that underlay those Oriental versions.

Henceforth no serious study of the *Vita* can ignore the important textual witness of the Georgian and Armenian versions. The commonly consulted editions of Charles and Charlesworth are no longer adequate for the study of this text. The recent publication by G. Anderson and M. Stone of a synoptic edition of the story across all five versions is an important step forward in the study of this text.<sup>18</sup> The study of any given unit of the tale must be done in view of the complete range of versional evidence.

### A Jewish "Book of Adam"?

For most of the past century scholars have presumed that the *Vita* goes back to a now lost Hebrew or Aramaic original. Because the

16. Murdoch, "Early Irish Adam and Eve," 146–77.

17. Stone, "Jewish Tradition," 438–41.

18. Anderson and Stone, *Synopsis*.

tale has so few overt references to anything christological, it is assumed that those few references are secondary, editorial additions to an ancient, pristine Jewish document.

Perhaps the most brilliant expositor of this viewpoint was L. Ginzberg.<sup>19</sup> In his article on the "Book of Adam" (= *Vita*) he asserted that this book must have been of Jewish origin and then proceeded to outline its most archaic (yet nowhere attested) form. He summarized the penitence section of the tale as follows:

Banished from the garden... Adam and Eve settled in the neighborhood of Eden in the East (*Gen. Rab.* 21:9). They were no sooner out of their blissful abode than a paralyzing terror befell them. Unaccustomed to the earthly life and unfamiliar with the changes of the day and of the weather — in paradise an eternal light had surrounded them (*Gen. Rab.* 11:2) — they were terrified when the darkness of night began to fall upon the earth (*b. 'Abod. Zar.* 8a), and the intercession of God's word (*memra*) was necessary to explain to them the new order of things. From this moment the sufferings of life began; for Adam and Eve were afraid to partake of earthly food, and fasted for the first seven days after their expulsion from paradise, as is prescribed in Talmudic law before an imminent famine (*m. Ta'an.* 1:6).

Humiliated and weakened by hunger and suffering, Adam became conscious of the gravity of his sin, for which he was now prepared to atone (*b. 'Erub.* 18b; *Gen. Rab.* 22:13). He, therefore, like Moses, Elijah, and Abraham (*Apoc. Abraham* 12) fasted for forty days, during which he stood up to his neck in the waters of the river Gihon (*gihôn*), the name of which is etymologically connected by the writer with the roots *g-h-n* "to stoop" and *g-h-y* "to pray aloud" (*Pirqe R. El.* 20). According to the *Vita Adae et Evae*, Adam stood in the Jordan — a version which may be ascribed to the Christian copyists who, for obvious reasons, wished to represent Adam as having had his baptism in the Jordan, forgetting that since Eve, as they themselves stated, bathed in the Tigris, Adam would have selected another of the rivers of paradise for that purpose.

It is striking that the summary presented here represents no extant literary work. Ginzberg has taken the basic story line of the *Vita* and filled it out with references to comparable material in rabbinic sources or other apocrypha. Thus each and every narrative detail that has a Jewish parallel is glossed accordingly. If the Jewish parallel shows any significant variation from the *Vita* narrative itself, then Ginzberg concludes that the Jewish source must

19. Ginzberg, "Adam, Book of," 1:179–80.

be primary. Hence he describes Adam's penance in the Gihon in conformity to the tradition found in *Pirqe R. El.* 20, but in contrast to the *Vita* itself. This example is particularly revealing, for its influence can be seen as late as the 1985 edition of the *Vita* printed in Charlesworth.<sup>20</sup> There the editor of the text cites the very reference to *Pirqe R. El.* 20 found in Ginzberg.

A close inspection of the penitence narrative will disclose that the development of that narrative is far more complicated than Ginzberg's summary would allow. Equally complicated, we might add, is the question of the tale's Jewish or Christian origin. To illustrate this point let us consider the story's structure:

Adam and Eve leave the Garden of Eden and find themselves bereft of their paradisaical food. Having begun to search for comestibles, they soon discover that none are to be had. Several unsuccessful searches and pleafull petitions later, they decide to embark on a formidable penance: to fast in separate rivers for forty days (thirty-four for Eve)<sup>21</sup> in hopes of procuring better food. A little more than halfway through the cycle, Satan appears to Eve in the guise of an angel and tempts her to leave the river and rejoin Adam as their prayers have been heard and their food now awaits them. Adam, upon seeing Eve, immediately bemoans her decision to disobey their penitential vow. Eve, having recognized her fault, begs leave of Adam to go to the west, where she will die. Adam meanwhile remains in the Jordan.

At the end of Adam's period of penance in the Jordan, Eve suddenly feels the sharp pains of childbirth — evidently she became pregnant prior to their expulsion from the Garden — and cries out to Adam from halfway across the world. Adam, hearing this plea, steps out of the river to go assist Eve. However, since this is also the exact moment when the penance cycle concludes, Adam first must receive the fruits of his penitential labor — the food or "seeds" he had so earnestly appealed for. Having received this boon, Adam hastens off to assist Eve, who then gives birth to Cain.

The Latin, Georgian, and Armenian versions are in basic agreement through most of this narrative until the very end. At this point we find a significant variation. In the Georgian and Armenian versions the response of Adam to Eve and the reception of seeds are closely coordinated events; not so for the Latin:

20. M. Johnson, trans., in *OTP* 2.260.

21. The number of days can vary in the different versions. In general, Adam remains six or seven days longer than Eve.

## Latin

20:1 In that very hour  
Adam said: "The lament of  
Eve has come to me.

## Armenian

20:1a Then Adam, in the  
river Jordan, heard Eve's  
cry and her weeping.

## Georgian

20:1a Then Adam, in  
the river Jordan, heard  
her tearful crying and  
misfortunes.

20:1b When God  
hearkened to the sound  
of Adam's penitence, he  
taught him sowing and  
reaping and that which was  
to come upon him and his  
seed.

20:1b Then God hearkened  
to Adam's prayer and sent  
him the angel Michael,  
who brought him seeds,  
sealed with the divine seal,  
destined to be brought to  
Adam. Then he taught  
him sowing and the work  
related to it, so that thus  
they might be saved, (they)  
and all their descendants.

Perhaps the serpent has  
to fight with her again."

20:1c Then Adam heard  
the sound of Eve's entreaty  
in the west, and Adam said  
to himself, "That voice and  
weeping are of my flesh.  
Let me arise and go to her  
and see why she is crying  
out. Perhaps the beast is  
fighting with her once  
more!"

20:1c And when Adam  
(had) heard the prayer of  
Eve and the wailing of her  
tears from the west, Adam  
recognized her voice and  
said in his heart, "This is  
the voice of my rib, the  
voice of my lamb; I will  
arise and I will see why she  
cries. Perhaps the serpent is  
attacking her once more?"

In the Latin version there is no mention of any seeds. This scene was moved to a different place in the narrative altogether. Only after Eve has delivered Cain, and Adam and Eve have ventured further to the east, does the Latin tale tell us of the delivery of seeds.

## Latin

21:1 Adam took Eve and  
the boy and led them to the  
east.

## Armenian

22(1):2 Thenceforth Adam  
took Eve and the child and  
he brought them to the eastern  
region, and he was there  
with her, and then eighteen  
years and two months were  
completed.

## Georgian

22(1):2 As for Adam, he  
took Eve and the child and  
he brought them into the  
eastern parts and he stayed  
there. And when the eighth  
year and the second month  
were completed [...]

22:2 The Lord God sent  
various seeds by Michael  
the angel, who gave them  
to Adam and showed them  
how to work and tend the  
ground, in order to have  
fruit, from which they and  
all their generations might  
live.

## Latin

22:3 Afterwards, Eve conceived and bore a son, whose name was Abel, and Cain and Abel remained together as one.

## Armenian

22(1):3 She became pregnant and bore a son, Ap'at', whom the midwife named and called Abel; and they dwelt together.

## Georgian

22(1):3 Eve became pregnant and bore another son whom the power of God called by the name Abel, and they remained there together.

It is important to note that not only has the Latin moved the delivery of the seeds to this new location, but by doing so it has effected a major change in the way the entire penitence cycle is to be viewed. For in the Latin version the delivery of the seeds is now completely divorced from the original penitential appeal of Adam. Adam, in this view, finishes his cycle of penance in the Jordan unsuccessfully. Indeed the entire penitence cycle now hangs in the air, as the Latin gives us no explicit information about its termination. To be sure, Adam does in the end get the seeds, but this gift appears to be completely unconditioned by anything Adam or Eve have done. Its appearance in the narrative is unmotivated and random.

How are we to understand the delivery scene in the Latin? Is it primary or secondary? An answer to this question will take us to the heart of the literary function of the entire narrative. Let us begin by attending to the sequence of events that is presupposed in the Georgian and Armenian. According to these versions Adam hears Eve's cry for help and quickly begins to come to her aid, only to be stopped abruptly in his tracks by the archangel Michael, who deems it time to offer Adam some instruction in the ways of agriculture. Only when Adam has been so schooled is he free to go to Eve's assistance. This interruption is, needless to say, quite awkward. The brevity of the Latin is far better suited to the tenor of this immediate situation. Yet the brevity of the Latin version comes at some cost. For now the whole penitential cycle trails off into the shadows, the reader never informed how Adam's vow of penance comes to an end. But more significantly the absence of this seed-delivery scene has interrupted what we might call *a narrativization of a piece of biblical exegesis*. To appreciate this fact, though, we must first clarify what type of biblical exegesis we are speaking about.<sup>22</sup>

22. The following section is an abbreviated version of Anderson, "Penitence Narrative."

## Biblical Exegesis as Narrativization

The great medieval Jewish exegete Rashi, in commenting on Gen 3:18, was quite puzzled by one feature of the punishment of Adam: the declaration that Adam was to eat the "grass" (*'esev*) of the field.<sup>23</sup> This struck Rashi as odd, for just two chapters earlier in Gen 1:29 this "grass" had been given as a blessing.<sup>24</sup> How could a blessing in chapter 1 become a curse in chapter 3? This semantic problem had been noted nearly a thousand years earlier and "solved" rather ingeniously. Rabbinic exegetes of the Bible had noted that God makes a rather fine distinction between the type of *'esev* he is going to bestow on human beings (1:29) as opposed to the animals (1:30).<sup>25</sup> Humans are to receive *'esev* that propagates by seeds, whereas the animals simply receive (green) *'esev*. This distinction suggested to these ancient readers of the Bible that human *'esev* was a type of grain that could be *cultivated*, whereas the *'esev* distributed to the animals was an herbage that *grew wild*. This distinction from chapter 1 was then brought forward to chapter 3 and read into the punishment of Adam. When God first declares that Adam is to eat "the *'esev* of the field," this was understood to refer to that herbage which is normally the lot of the animals. In other words this is the food spoken of in Gen 1:30, not 1:29. Adam, on this view, is at first reduced to living the life of an animal ("you shall eat the herbage of the field"). Faced with this formidable punishment, Adam immediately breaks into tears and weeps over his fate. God, in response to this show of remorse, has pity on Adam and softens the blow by offering Adam a new form of *'esev*, that which grows by seed ("by the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread"). The process of solving the apparent contradiction between the punishment of chapter 3 and the blessing of chapter 1 has introduced a new narrative element into our story: Adam,

23. Gen 3:18–19a, "The earth shall produce thorns and thistles for you; *you shall eat of grass of the field*; by the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread." Emphasis added here and in subsequent citations.

24. Gen 1:29, "God said, 'I hereby give you [as a blessing] *every grass yielding seed* that is upon the face of all the earth . . . and you shall have them for food.'"

25. Gen 1:30, "And to every beast on the earth . . . I hereby give [as a blessing] *every green grass* as food."

having been reduced to the status of an animal, repents and is given a food source appropriate to his stature as a human being.

Turning to the *Vita* we can immediately see how this exegetical tradition has been “narrativized” in our tale. Here Adam, just as in the midrash, finds only animal food as he leaves the garden. Once he has repented sufficiently, God relents and provides him with seeds for grain. The Georgian is most explicit here, for it underscores the point that these seeds were set aside for Adam at the beginning of creation (Gen 1:29) but only now are disclosed. Why has the seed-delivery scene been placed so awkwardly, at the moment when Eve is to be assisted? Because the assistance Adam is going to give Eve is part of a divine plan in which the initial punishment meted out is about to be relaxed slightly. Adam’s return to Eve’s side and his prayerful intervention on her behalf saves Eve.<sup>26</sup> At the very same time, Michael’s intervention and delivery of seeds saves Adam. A clever exegetical ploy, but, at the same time, a very awkward narrative sequence.

In this light we could posit a plausibly Jewish background for the penitence cycle. But notice how different it is from the reconstruction of Ginzberg. He cites the tradition of *Pirqe R. El.* 20 as primary, but this tale, though it knows of Adam’s immersion in a river, has no connection with a search for food and ends with a word of general forgiveness for Adam, a theme that has no place in the *Vita*.<sup>27</sup> If the *Pirqe R. El.* text is related or relevant at all, it is at quite a distant remove. Indeed, one could reasonably conjecture that this tradition was a creative adaptation of the prior tradition found in the *Vita*.

But is a Jewish background for the tale absolutely necessary? We have suggested exactly this by way of the parallels we chose

26. Cf. Gen 3:16 LXX, “to your husband shall be your return/repentance.” Evidently the rejoining of Adam and Eve and Adam’s role in Eve’s own penance was constructed on the basis of this verse.

27. *Pirqe R. El.* 20 reads, “On the first day of the week, Adam entered the waters of the Upper Gihon until the waters reached his neck. He did penance there for seven weeks until his body was transformed into a sieve. Adam said to the Holy One, Blessed be He: ‘O Lord of the worlds, make my sin pass from me and accept my repentance. Then all generations shall learn that repentance does exist and that you accept the repentance of those who repent.’ What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do? He extended his right hand and made his sin pass from him and accepted his repentance. For it is said: ‘I made known my sins and my iniquity I did not cover up. [To which God said: “Selah”]’ (Psalm 32). [The meaning of *Selah*] is forgiveness in this world and in the world to come.”

to highlight above. Yet before one rushes forward too boldly with this idea, it may be worth consulting a Christian commentator and contemporary of many a rabbi, St. Ephrem (d. 373 C.E.). St. Ephrem, like the rabbis, also considered that Adam was forced to consume the “grass of the field” like an animal when he was expelled from the garden. In his *Hymns on Paradise*, St. Ephrem compares Adam’s state to that of King Nebuchadnezzar, who, having been expelled from his royal kingdom, was transformed into a grass-eating animal. This comparison is all the more fitting when one realizes that in all of the Bible, only Adam and King Nebuchadnezzar are described as having eaten the grass of the field.

5. David wept for Adam (Ps 49:13)

at how he fell  
from that royal abode  
to that abode of wild animals.  
Because he went astray through a beast  
he became like the beasts:  
He ate, together with them  
as a result of the curse,  
grass and roots,  
and he died, becoming their peer.  
Blessed is He who set him apart  
from the wild animals again.

6. In that king

did God depict Adam:  
since he provoked God by his exercise of kingship,  
God stripped him of that kingship.  
The Just One was angry and cast him out  
into the region of wild beasts;  
he dwelt there with them  
in the wilderness  
and only when he repented did he return  
to his former abode and kingship.  
Blessed is He who has thus taught us to repent  
so that we too may return to Paradise.

(*Hymns on Paradise* 13)

St. Ephrem’s poetic comparison of Adam to King Nebuchadnezzar presumes a prior exegetical decision to treat the curse of Gen 3:18–19a as one which transforms Adam into an animal. But what of the bestowal of the grain that Adam will eat? How does St. Ephrem understand this act of divine beneficence? We saw that

the rabbis presumed that this divine blessing, though spoken of in chapter 1, is not actualized until chapter 3. St. Ephrem, in his prose commentary on Genesis, also associated the gift of seeds in Gen 1:29 as a promise to be fulfilled only after the expulsion from the garden.<sup>28</sup>

St. Ephrem and the rabbis are in complete agreement in both their narrative portrait of Adam's expulsion and the biblical verses they use to depict it.<sup>29</sup> Yet one piece of the puzzle is missing in St. Ephrem's portrait — there is no explicit linking of Adam's penance with a subsequent gift of seeds. St. Ephrem does not coordinate the end of Gen 3:18, "you shall eat the *grass* of the field," with the beginning of 3:19a, "by the sweat of your brow you shall eat *bread*." Only in Jewish sources do we see these verses understood in terms of a movement away from the food of animals toward that of humans. In fact, the specific moment in time when the animals' food is replaced by human food is never addressed by St. Ephrem. And this is probably no chance event, for St. Ephrem is very concerned to underscore the fact that Adam's penance remains unfulfilled until the day he dies. King Nebuchadnezzar is an important symbolic figure for Ephrem not because his transformation to an animal mirrors Adam's, but because Nebuchadnezzar repents, *is forgiven, and is restored* to his former royal kingdom. The narrative about Nebuchadnezzar provides an important — and hitherto missing — "type" of the salvation Adam had hoped for.<sup>30</sup> In Ephrem's view, Nebuchadnezzar's transformation to an animal and back to an exalted royal state was a theological foreshadowing in the Old Testament of what would become a reality in the New. For in Ephrem's view, as indeed for nearly all early Christian commentators, *Adam's pen-*

28. See the recent translation by E. Mathews (and J. Amar), *St. Ephrem the Syrian*. The interpretation comes in the commentary on Gen 1:13–14: "The grass that would be required as food for the animals who were to be created two days later was [thus] made ready. And the new corn that would be food for Adam and his descendants, who would be thrown out of Paradise four days later, was [thus] prepared."

29. The points of agreement are the reduction of Adam to the state of a beast eating roots and tubers; the subsequent discovery/gift of seeds that serves to distinguish Adam from the animals; and the notion that the gift of these very seeds was prophesied in Gen 1:29. For St. Ephrem's view of Gen 1:29 as a prophecy of the type of food Adam would receive only when he left the garden, see n. 28.

30. On the figure of Nebuchadnezzar in early Christian sources in general see Satran, *Biblical Prophets*, 82–91.

*one cannot come to a fruitful conclusion until the arrival of the Second Adam*. To have Adam achieve forgiveness and restoration could diminish if not obviate the work to be done by the Second Adam.<sup>31</sup>

We are now on the horns of a dilemma. Was the exegetical source of our penitence narrative Jewish or Christian? The themes we have traced are attested in both. No definitive answer can be given here, though the tendency to attribute a tale to Jewish origins simply because Jewish sources exist must be resisted.<sup>32</sup> The grounds for Christian composition are equally compelling, and a final arbitration of the matter would require more evidence than can be discussed here. In any event, from a Christian perspective, it must be conceded that the penitence of Adam, when construed as a rather narrow act of seeking better food, would not be an altogether laudable feature of the tale in subsequent retellings. In-

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The perpetual mourning of Adam is well illustrated elsewhere in St. Ephrem's writing when he addresses the question of how Adam responded to Enoch's assumption to heaven. Note the contrast of Adam's unrelieved mourning and lamentation to that of Christ, who also happened to be, in the thinking of St. Ephrem, a type of Christ.

Come my brothers and let us weep here  
so that we do not weep there;  
Come let us bear mourning and sorrow  
that we not multiply our mourning there.  
All the just and righteous  
by their mourning are pleasing to God;  
By weeping do they appease Him  
and by tears they please Him.  
For nine hundred and thirty years  
Adam wept over his fall;  
Because he was far from the glory  
of God in Paradise.  
The beauty of his cheeks was marred  
from the tears which had poured from his eyes,  
From the fervent heat of tears  
arose bitter sores. . . .  
Enoch, being pleasing, not tasting death  
when he saw the bones of Abel,  
he bore sorrow and grief  
for 320 years.  
When he saw the first dead man,  
who stunk, became foul and putrefied,  
He wept and cried incessantly  
and so was removed and did not taste death.  
(St. Ephrem, *Sermones I*, VI, 63–85)

My own position on this point has evolved from my earlier arguments in "Penitence and Eve." In that article I argued much more strongly for a Jewish origin.



deed it quickly gave way, in the Latin tradition, to an entirely different set of interests.

### Christian Transmission and Transformation of the Penitence Cycle

Hitherto our discussion has been mainly “excavative” in nature.<sup>33</sup> We have sought exegetical parallels to a significant narrative element in the *Vita*. As in many pseudepigraphical works, a learned piece of biblical exegesis has been given narrative exposition. In general, narrativizations such as the *Vita* do not highlight in any explicit fashion the biblical text from which they derive. Rather the scholar must carefully sift the exegetical sources to see if the narrative development of the story depends, in some essential way, on a certain train of exegetical reasoning. Yet this mode of inquiry, as enlightening as it can be, can also pose problems. Because the exegetical narrativizations often have no explicit tie to the biblical text, they tend to go unrecognized by redactors and often are reworked or redeployed in rather substantial ways.<sup>34</sup>

A good illustration of this activity is present in the Latin recension of the *Vita*. This version, it will be recalled, does not include mention of Adam receiving seeds when he left the Jordan River to go to Eve’s assistance. The immediate effect of this change is to produce a tighter and more pleasing picture of Adam’s response to Eve’s urgent plea for help. But other changes in the narrative also result. We mentioned one — that in the Latin, Adam’s penitence in the Jordan is brought to no conclusive end. He leaves the Jordan no different than he entered; indeed his departure itself is cloaked in mystery. One may be inclined to say this change on the part of the editor is rather passive and unintentional, seeing that the elimination of the delivery of the seeds at this point of the story would necessarily leave the penitence cycle without a conclusion. But there are hints that the open-ended nature of the story that resulted was altogether intentional.

33. On the significance of this term in biblical exegesis, see Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 13.

34. On the tendency of later tradents of this material to “legendize” an earlier form of exegesis, see the examples given in Kugel, “Two Introductions,” 131–55.

To appreciate this fact we must take into consideration the larger literary frame of the penitence cycle in the Georgian and Armenian versions. Both of these versions follow a Jewish exegetical tradition in presuming that the animals were given their “herbage” on the sixth day of creation (Gen 1:30), whereas Adam and Eve do not receive the seeds for their grain (Gen 1:29) until they have been expelled from the garden. Adam and Eve do not lament their “general sin” upon leaving the garden — indeed according to these versions Adam is not sure he has transgressed at all. Rather they rue the difficult and highly particular circumstances into which they have been cast. They have been forced to eat the food allotted to the animals. So when Adam commands the animals to join his lamentation in the Jordan he exclaims: “Let them surround me and bewail me not for their own sakes, but for me. Because God did not withhold their food from them which God appointed from the beginning, but I have been withheld from my food and from life.”<sup>35</sup> The Latin version, on the other hand, takes great care to mute the specificity and particularity of this appeal. Instead of focusing on the food source as the point of great consequence, the Latin shifts the focus to Adam’s sin considered in a most *general* fashion. Adam laments: “Let them surround me and mourn with me. Let them not lament for themselves, but for me, for they have not sinned, but I.” Adam’s plea concerns much more than what type of food he shall consume. His lament takes on the more general theme of his own transgression.

In certain manuscripts of the Latin version we see one more significant change that serves to tie together the several themes we have been considering. According to the Latin version there are two points in the narrative at which Adam receives seeds. The first is during Adam and Eve’s journey to the East after Cain has been born. At this point Adam is given the seeds which will allow him to cultivate food (*Vita* 22:2). Though this scene originally was linked to the penitence cycle earlier in the narrative, it has been effectively cut off from that sequence in the Latin tale. The

<sup>35</sup> Following the Armenian version of the *Vita*, 8:2.

second is when Adam is about to die and he sends Seth back to the garden (*Vita* 43:2).

In order to appreciate this second scene, let us review the plot structure of this part of the narrative:

At the end of Adam's life he is overtaken by the severe bodily pains which portend death. In reaction to this Adam, calls for Seth and sends him and Eve back to the Garden to make an impassioned appeal for the oil of mercy. With this oil Adam hopes to anoint himself and relieve his pains. When Seth arrives at the Garden and makes the request, the archangel Michael appears and tells Seth that the oil cannot be given until the era of the Messiah.

At this point our texts read:

Latin	Armenian	Georgian
43:1 "But you, Seth, go to your father, Adam, for the time of his life is complete. Six days hence, his soul will go forth from his body, and, when it does, you will see great wonders in heaven and on earth, and in the lights of heaven."	43(13):6 "But you, go to Adam your father, for his times will be full in three days and you have to see many wonders in heavens and upon earth and in all luminaries which are in the heavens."	43(13):6 "But now, go to your father Adam, because the days of his times are completed. [In] three days his soul will go out of his body and numerous wonders will be seen in the heavens."
43:2 Saying this, Michael at once withdrew from Seth.	43(14):1a When the angel had spoken this, he disappeared behind a tree of the Garden.	43(14):1a When the angel had told that to him, [immediately] he was hidden underneath the plant of the Garden.

43:3 *Seth and Eve went home, carrying with them spices — nard, crocus, calaminth, and cinnamon.*

Up to this point the Latin, Georgian, and Armenian versions are in basic agreement. Afterward the Latin version adds a crucial new piece of information. We are told that Seth and Eve leave with a set of aromatic spices, whose purpose is most likely cultic or sacrificial (cf. *Jub.* 3:27).

It is very difficult to dissociate this statement from the former scene about the agricultural seeds. Both scenes come at the end of penitential activity, and Michael is the agent in both cases. The seeds that Michael provides, though important, are somewhat pedestrian in nature in that they provide for mortal life. The

gift of the aromatic spices, on the other hand, points to a larger horizon: the beginning of cultic activity and the saving of human souls. The transition to a larger plane of salvation becomes subject to another dramatic development in numerous manuscripts of the Latin *Vita*, which is the addition to the story of the Holy Rood material.

In the critical text of the Latin which Meyer published, the text in question reads: "Seth and Eve went home, carrying with them spices — nard, crocus, calaminth, and cinnamon." Yet in the medieval manuscripts from family III (no earlier than 1170)<sup>36</sup> there is a very significant addition: "They took with them *the branch* and the spices: nard, crocus, calaminth, and cinnamon." Here we see a major innovation in the development of the tradition. For this (small) branch is no ordinary branch; it is nothing other than a piece from the tree of knowledge which will evolve into the very wood of the cross.

In E. Quinn's major study of the motif she makes a strong case that the story of the origins of this branch which grew into the wood of the cross did not include the figures of Adam or Seth.<sup>37</sup> The earliest exemplars trace the wood back to the rod of Moses. Yet the desire for an even more ancient protology led the tradents of this material eventually to tie the origins to the story of Adam and Eve. The most frequent point of correlation was that of Seth's quest. Yet as good as Quinn's study is, her interest in the way the motif functioned in a myriad of medieval texts has blinded her from attending to the specific way in which this branch tradition has been "grafted" into the *Vita*. For this innovative redactional addition, as pathbreaking as it may seem, was well prepared for in the evolution of the Latin manuscript tradition. The correlation of the initial penitential request of Adam with the later one has

36. See n. 6. This date is based on Meyer's assessment on the basis of the comparable Latin material that he knew at that time (1878). This problem should be reexamined in light of the Slavonic and Armenian evidence. For the Slavonic see, for now, the treatment of Jagic, "Slavische Beiträge"; much remains to be done in this field. For the Armenian, see "Adam Fragment 1" in Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to the Patriarchs*, and "Adam Fragment 1" in Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Adam and Eve*.

37. Quinn, *Quest of Seth*, 48–84. She argues that the earliest versions began with the story of Moses' rod, and then gradually over time this motif was pushed back further and further, at first to the branches brought to Noah (from paradise, according to the legend) and then to the branch Seth is given just before Adam's death.

prepared the reader to see a progression in the type of answers Adam will receive.

But there is more. We noted that Adam's first penitential vow ends on an unhappy note. Adam hears no answer to his pleas for general forgiveness; he leaves the Jordan in silence, his entreaties unattended to. This correlation (plea for forgiveness, denial of such) is, of course, altogether expected in a Christian text, as we noted earlier. The introduction of the wood of the cross alerts the reader that Adam's sin will, in the future, be forgiven. Though the reader is well-prepared to draw all the proper deductions about the nature and role of this branch, how could one expect that *Adam himself* could do such? A good writer will need to protect the innocence of Adam about the precise christological importance of this branch, but at the same time allow Adam, within the literary confines of the story, to perceive its potential redemptive significance. And this is exactly what our writer does. We witness such a literary move in what Meyer referred to as the family III set of Latin manuscripts. Let us consider its particular version of the story:

#### Latin

43:3 Seth and Eve went home, carrying with them spices — nard, crocus, calaminth, and cinnamon.

44:1 When Seth and his mother reached Adam, they said to him that the beast, the serpent, had bitten Seth.

44:2 Adam said to Eve: "What have you done? You have brought on us a great affliction, fault and sin unto all our generations. What you have done will be passed on to your children after my death,

44:3 for those who arise from us will not have all they need from their labors, but will be lacking. They will curse us, saying:

44:4 'Our parents, who were from the beginning, brought all these evils on us.'

#### Latin-family III

43:3a They took with them *the branch* and the spices: nard, crocus, calaminth, and cinnamon.

43:3b *When Eve and Seth crossed the Jordan, lo, the branch which the angel gave him fell into the middle of the river.*

44:1 When Seth and his mother reached Adam, they said to him all that had happened.

44:2 Adam said to Eve: "What have you done? You have brought on us a great affliction, fault and sin unto all our generations. What you have done will be passed on to your children after my death,

44:3 for those who arise from us will not have all they need from their labors, but will be lacking. They will curse us, saying:

44:4 'Our parents, who were from the beginning, brought all these evils on us.'

#### Latin

44:4 Hearing this, Eve began to weep and moan.

#### Latin-family III

44:5 Hearing this, Eve began to weep and moan. And Adam said to Seth his son, "Didn't the angel send me anything?" Seth, being very confused and frightened, because he could not find what the angel gave him, said to his father: "The angel gave me a branch from paradise which I dropped into the flowing waters of the Jordan." His father replied: "Go my son and in the very place where it fell find it and bring it to me so that I can see it before I die and bless you." Seth went back to the flowing river and found the branch in the middle of the flowing stream, it not having budged an inch. Seth brought it back with joy to his father. When Adam received it, he was glad and said with great joy: "Behold my death and resurrection." He asked his son to plant it at the head of his tomb.

There are two crucial insertions in the family III manuscripts. The first concerns the branch which Seth receives as he is about to depart from the garden. As Seth heads home with the branch he accidentally drops it in the Jordan. When he returns to Adam, evidently embarrassed over his foolish mistake and quite ignorant of the significance of the branch and the river into which it fell, he decides not to disclose this detail (43:3b). Later, however, when Adam is lying heartbroken on his deathbed, Seth is asked once more about his journey to the garden.

"Didn't the angel send me anything?" Adam inquires. Seth, confused and frightened because he could not find what the angel gave him, says to his father: "The angel gave me a branch from paradise which I dropped into the flowing waters of the *Jordan*." Evidently Adam, at this point ignorant of what the branch signifies, nevertheless knows that it is from the garden and that it has fallen into the Jordan River, the spot of his failed attempt to make atonement for his sins. "Go my son," Adam implores, "and in *the very place where it fell* find it and bring it to me so that I can see it before I die and bless you." Seth then returns to the flowing waters of the Jordan and finds the branch in the middle of the turbulent stream; quite miraculously, it had not budged an inch. Seth brings it back with joy to his father. When Adam re-

ceives it, he is glad and says with great joy: "Behold my death and resurrection." He then asks Seth to plant it at the head of his tomb.<sup>38</sup>

One could follow the lead of E. Quinn and suggest that Seth's dropping of the twig is a symbolic representation of his own fall.<sup>39</sup> Or one could say that it represents a common motif in folklore of delaying the deliverance of the hero by a last-minute calamity. This ratcheting up of the tension in the story makes the recounting of the deliverance all the more fabulous. Though both of these explanations carry with them an element of truth, there is more. Our redactor is quite conscious of the fact that not only is the branch itself significant, but also *the spot* where the branch will be found. By framing the story in this way our writer has made a brilliant connection to Adam's initial penitential appeal in the Jordan, an appeal that necessarily ended without success. We might add that the explanation that the waters of the Jordan were in full flow is certainly an allusion to Joshua 3, which includes the miracle of the Jordan's waters reversing their flow prior to the Israelites crossing into the promised land. It cannot be accidental that this very text was also used typologically in early Christian catechesis as an Old Testament illustration of the redemptive power of baptism.<sup>40</sup>

It is also no accident that the Jordan is at full force when Seth drops the branch into its waters. For as we have seen, our author has a real narratological problem here: how will Adam know what this branch signifies? One option would be to sacrifice the integrity of Adam as a literary character and simply announce the unvarnished truth about the branch — it portends the advent of

38. Latin, *Vita* 44:4

39. Quinn, *Quest of Seth*, 98.

40. In the NT the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea was the more favored text (cf. 1 Cor 10:1–5). But this text was problematic for catechetical usage, for though it used the passage through water as an illustration of salvation, it provided no linkage with the practice of penitence. Since most catechumens in the early church had just undergone the rigors of the forty-day Lenten fast, the association of crossing the Jordan (Joshua 3–5) after the forty-year period of wandering in the wilderness seemed a much closer match. One should also add that the very next event in the Book of Joshua is the entrance into Eretz Israel, the "land flowing with milk and honey," a type, Christians were wont to argue, of the return to paradise or entry into the church. Thus the Book of Joshua, in early Christian eyes, nicely juxtaposed the ritual cycle of penitence, baptism, and entry into the church.

Christ. The versions of the *Vita* found in England, published by Mozley, do exactly this.<sup>41</sup> But if the literary integrity of Adam is to be retained, then another strategy must be employed, a strategy that allows Adam to see the salvific significance of the branch without its specific christological trappings. And indeed this is exactly what has happened. For the branch falls into the turbulent waters of the Jordan, the very waters that Adam left in an unsuccessful attempt at penance many years earlier, and then is retrieved miraculously by Seth as Adam lies on his deathbed. The presence of his branch, maintaining its stationary position in the midst of a strong current, is a sufficient sign for Adam.<sup>42</sup> His penance has now come full circle. The river that many years before had provided no sign of forgiveness, now, at the end of his life, "reverses itself" and in so doing provides assurance for Adam of his (coming) redemption.

This motif is sufficiently christological for any contemporary medieval reader to see the clear connections to the sacrament of baptism. Yet the enactment of this motif in its present literary setting is sufficiently subtle that we need not require of Adam the same type of "eschatological" knowledge. The branch's salvific role is made clear by its miraculous presence in the river; the specific details about its future function, though, are left deliberately unstated. Adam's literary integrity is preserved. He perceives the token of redemption offered to him, but not in the same manner as the medieval readers will understand it. This deft touch by our

41. See Mozley, "Vitae Adae." In certain manuscripts, Seth does not return with a branch but with a vision and/or seeds.

Seth said to his father Adam, "Lord father, I saw a wondrous sign in Paradise." Adam said, "Tell me, Seth, my son, what did you see there? Perhaps I will know how to interpret that wonder." Seth answered, saying to his father Adam, "My father, as I looked into Paradise I saw a virgin sitting at the top of a tree and a boy holding a cross in his hands."

This rather baroque vision of redemption serves as proof for Adam of his future redemption:

But Adam, looking to heaven on bent knees, raised up his hands to God and said, "Blessed are you, Lord, Father, for all things, most omnipotent and most merciful God, because now I truly know that a virgin will conceive a son who will die on a cross, and from this we will all be saved."

42. One should also note that the waters of the Jordan which the Israelites cross (Josh 3:15) were also at the peak of their seasonal turbulence, hence heightening the effect of the miracle.

author serves a much larger purpose than merely heightening the tension of the drama.

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The “Life of Adam and Eve” is a colorful story with a rich legacy in medieval literature and art. The work has been said to represent an ancient Jewish pseudepigraph, perhaps one that dates back to the Second Temple period. So confident of this approach was L. Ginzberg that he, with considerable ingenuity and genius—not to mention aplomb—reconstructed this prototype on the basis of parallel Jewish literature. Many themes of the *Vita* do indeed have Jewish parallels. We treated one such example, that of the bequest of seeds to Adam after his expulsion and penance. In so doing we showed that the Jewish exegetical tradition that lay behind that motif was far more complicated than Ginzberg had imagined. There are numerous other motifs within the work that would be amenable to this type of analysis, including the story of Satan’s fall, the imputation of all blame to Eve, Seth’s taming of the wild beast, and the slaying of Abel by Cain. A close examination of each of these themes would have to be attentive not only to possible sources within early Jewish exegetical traditions but also to the ways in which the motifs came into early Christian sources. The long and creative history of the transmission of this text allowed for considerable rewriting and reshaping, oftentimes demonstrating obvious signs of Christian influence. In our study we have seen how an uneasiness with the limited nature of Adam’s penance (for better food) and its success would have troubled Christian tradents. The transformations we observed in the later Latin versions allowed for Adam’s penance to encompass his general state of sin and estrangement from God and at the same time made his appeal for forgiveness unsuccessful. It is no accident that exactly this perspective emerged in classic Christian thinking regarding the legacy of original sin.

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## T W O

## THE GNOSTIC SETH

JOHN D. TURNER

## The Biblical Seth

The origins of the Gnostic Seth are to be found in the privileged position that Seth seems to have occupied in the theological collections and speculations of postexilic Jews living in both Palestine and the diaspora. Their reflections were directed toward the biblical source of information about Seth, the primeval history of the Book of Genesis. In particular, the Gnostic picture of Seth is founded upon two key passages in Genesis:

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said: "God has appointed for me another seed instead of Abel, for Cain slew him." (Gen 4:25 RSV)

When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. (Gen 5:1 RSV)

It is clear from many sources that ancient interpreters, Gnostic and otherwise, had noticed and explored solutions to a number of discrepancies and contrasts in the text of the Genesis protology and anthropogony.<sup>1</sup> As part of its own way of resolving apparent discrepancies in the Genesis accounts, modern biblical criticism has assigned these two passages to separate literary sources.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The sources on Seth have been collected by Klijn, *Seth*; Pearson, "Figure of Seth," 496–504; and Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 49–53, 73–80. For the biblical and postbiblical evidence, see especially Klijn, *Seth*, 4–32. Both Klijn (*Seth*, 112) and Pearson ("Figure of Seth," 496, 503) conclude that the Gnostics derived all their ideas about Seth from these sources.

<sup>2</sup> Klijn, *Seth*, 1–2.