

An Illustration from the Apocrypha in an Eighteenth Century Passover Haggadah

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This essay calls attention to an unusual manuscript illustration included in two eighteenth-century Passover *haggadot* produced by Nathan ben Abraham Speyer of Breslau. The illustration apparently portrays the legendary visit of the prophet Habakkuk to Babylon, a journey whose purpose was to provide sustenance for Daniel during his sojourn in the den of lions. This legend forms part of the apocryphal 'Bel and the Dragon' narrative, an addition to the book of Daniel which achieved canonical status in Christian tradition. While it is puzzling that Speyer would have included a scene based upon Christian scripture, it must be remembered that traces of the 'Bel and the Dragon' story are present in rabbinic and medieval Jewish literature, including the Habakkuk episode which Speyer's drawing portrays. It seems likely that Speyer was recalling one of these Jewish sources when he produced his illustration.*

Ms. HUC 447 is an eighteenth-century illustrated German rite Passover *haggadah* belonging to the collection of the Klau Library of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio. The manuscript consists of 26 folios which contain both the ceremonial text written with large, square Ashkenazic lettering¹ and seventeen remarkable, nearly full or half-page, brightly colored illustrations. It is bound with parchment that features an incised, painted floral design in green and ochre. The textual illustrations are executed by means of pen-and-ink and watercolor. The scribe, and presumably the artist as well, iden-

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(1) Interspersed throughout the text are directions and instructions in early modern Yiddish written with *vayber-taytsh* script.

tifies himself in an appended colophon as Nathan ben Abraham Speyer of Breslau. The title page bears the date 516 *lifrat qatan*, or 1755/56.²

Another *haggadah* produced by Speyer is presently in the collection of the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. Recently a facsimile of this manuscript was published under the editorship of C. Benjamin.³ The Jerusalem manuscript also originates from Breslau, but was produced twelve to thirteen years later, in the year 1768. The editor was aware of the HUC text, but was apparently unable to make use of it for comparative purposes in her own study. Most of the illustrations, in both form and execution, are duplicated in the younger manuscript with only minor variations. The subjects chosen for illustration in both manuscripts are also typical of the cycle of illustrations most often employed in both manuscript and early printed versions of Passover *haggadot*, being drawn primarily from the biblical books of Genesis and Exodus.

Characteristic of the Ashkenazic *haggadah* tradition is the appending of several *piyyuṭim*, or liturgical poems, to the conclusion of the Seder service proper.⁴ These include a *piyyuṭ* composed by the Palestinian poet Yannai whose incipit *ויהי בחצי הלילה*, 'And thus it transpired at midnight', initiates an acrostic rehearsal of various miracles wrought by God on behalf of Israel or pious Israelites during the night.⁵ Both of the Speyer manuscripts contain several pictorial representations keyed to certain lines of this *piyyuṭ*, but there is one illustration which is particularly interesting. Accompanying the line *נושע מבור אריות פותר בעתותי לילה* 'the interpreter of the frightful things of the night was delivered from the pit of lions', is a half-page illustration portraying a human figure surrounded by a number of lions (see figure 1). The man and the lions are set within a natural depression ringed with boulders and sparse vegetation. The figure is kneeling in prayer, and his eyes are directed

(2) The title page reads: [הגדה של פסח עם אותיות וציוורים נעים לפרט יבנה ביחו בקרוב = תקט"ז].

(3) C. Benjamin (ed.), *Passover Haggadah: Breslau, Germany, 1768*. Published by W. Turnowsky Ltd. in cooperation with Shva Publishers Ltd. (Tel Aviv, 1984). A four-page introduction in both Hebrew and English is published separately.

(4) E.D. Goldschmidt, *Haggadah shel Pesah* (Jerusalem, 1960), 96. According to Goldschmidt, these *piyyuṭim* were probably not recited as part of the Passover service until the twelfth century.

(5) This *piyyuṭ*, also referred to by its first line (*או רוב נסים הפלאה בלילה*), is extracted from a benediction hymn (*qerobah*) beginning *אני פטרי רחמים*; for the entire composition see M. Zulay, *Piyyute Yannai* (Berlin, 1938), 88-94. The *piyyuṭ* is apparently a poetic expansion of miraculous incidents already mentioned in Bereshit Rabba 70:15 and Pesiqta de Rav Kahana, *pisqa* 17 [ed. Buber 129,2; cf. B. Mandelbaum, *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana* (New York, 1962), I 281]; and cf. Z.M. Rabinowitz, *Halakhah we-aggadah bepiyyute Yannai* (Tel Aviv, 1965), 29 and 176.



Figure 1 reproduced by permission of the Klau Library, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio.

heavenwards where he gazes upon the arrival of a winged figure dangling another human figure by the hair of its head over the depression. This second human form clasps two loaves of bread under its left arm, and bears a pot or kettle in its right hand. In the foreground to the right stands a large tree with a bird perched upon its topmost branch. The Jerusalem manuscript reproduces the scene but substitutes a man carrying a tool or weapon following behind an ass or horse instead of the tree and the bird.

The unusual form and content of this illustration have been noted by scholars who have studied Speyer's work. All agree that the human figure portrayed among the lions is Daniel. Some uncertainty arises over the usual rendering of the scene, especially with regard to the winged messenger bearing the second male form. H. Peled-Carmeli⁶ connects the angel transporting the man by his hair with a vision of Daniel reported in Daniel 10:2-11. There however the setting of Daniel's vision is not within a pit of lions but on the bank of the Tigris river (Dan 10:4). The messenger who appears in that text does not fly nor does he lift Daniel by the hair of his head. He is instead described as 'standing' before Daniel (Dan 10:16). The foodstuffs borne by the second human figure in Speyer's illustration ill accord with the rigorous fast that Daniel

(6) H. Peled-Carmeli, *Illustrated Haggadot of the Eighteenth Century* (Jerusalem, 1983), 27-28 and fig. 100.

is observing at the outset of the vision (Dan 10:2-3). Indeed, a close inspection of the two human figures in Speyer's illumination shows that two separate individuals are interacting within the same scene. It must be admitted that Daniel 10:2-11 does not supply the inspiration for this singular scene. Nevertheless, C. Benjamin follows Peled-Carmeli's identification in her introduction to the facsimile of the Jerusalem manuscript.⁷

A more satisfactory setting however lies close to hand. The scene drawn by Speyer is a portrayal of an episode from the apocryphal 'Bel and the Dragon' story which was appended to the book of Daniel in the Septuagint and awarded canonical status by early Christian tradition. The relevant lines of the story are as follows:

Now the prophet Habakkuk was in Judaea, and he was boiling food and crumbling bread into a bowl, and was on his way to the field to carry (the meal) to those harvesting there. And an angel of the Lord said to Habakkuk, "Deliver the meal which you have to Daniel who is in the pit of lions in Babylon." Habakkuk replied, "Lord, I have not seen Babylon, nor do I know this pit." And taking hold of his head and lifting (him by) the hair of his head, the angel of the Lord set him above the pit in Babylon, with a rush of wind (?). Then Habakkuk cried out, saying, "Daniel! Daniel! Receive the meal which God has sent to you." And Daniel said, "You have remembered me, O God; you do not abandon those who love you!" And so rising, Daniel ate, and then the angel of God immediately returned Habakkuk to his place (i.e., Judaea). (Bel and the Dragon, 33-39).⁸

Hence the second human figure borne by the angel in Speyer's illustration is none other than the prophet Habakkuk, portrayed in the act of delivering food to the incarcerated Daniel. What is surprising about this illustration is its appearance in a Jewish liturgical text. The story of 'Bel and the Dragon', while familiar to Christian readers of the Vulgate and its vernacular renditions, engenders only a few echoes in Jewish tradition through the centuries. Indeed the illustration of subjects or events taken from the Apocrypha is extremely rare in Jewish art,⁹ and is often grounds for suspicion that either a Christian artist or

(7) Benjamin, *Haggadah*, [ii-iii].

(8) All translations, unless otherwise noted, are those of the authors.

(9) J. Leveen, *The Hebrew Bible in Art* (London, 1944), 76. One might note that an event from the story of Judith is depicted upon an ornamental page of the Prague Haggadah; cf. *The Haggadah of Passover: A Facsimile of the Prague Haggadah 1526* (New York,



Figure 2 reproduced by permission of the British Library, London, England

a Christian archetype is responsible for the depiction of the piece. In our case a Christian artist can be ruled out, given the close connection of the subjects chosen for illustration to the accompanying Hebrew text and the essential identity of the illustrations in the HUC and the Jerusalem manuscripts. Speyer served as both scribe and artist. What remains then is the hypothesis of a Christian pictorial archetype which Speyer “borrowed” for use in his *haggadot*. Peled-Carmeli has argued cogently that such an archetype can be located in a woodcut executed by Hans Holbein the Younger (see figure 2) which portrays Daniel among the lions in a remarkably similar fashion.¹⁰

What remains to be determined however is why Speyer utilized such an illustration in a Jewish ceremonial text. Why did he not delete the angel and the prophet Habakkuk, who after all play no explicit part in the *pyyyut*? Apparently Speyer felt that he could comfortably include this apocryphal picture in order to illustrate this portion of the *pyyyut*, and that the meaning of the illustration would not be lost upon the family that would employ his *haggadah* in their evening service. It may not have even occurred to him that the scene was based upon Christian

1964), [48] This page is reproduced in Goldschmidt, *Haggadah*, xxvii, and in D H Muller and J v Schlosser, *Die Haggadah von Sarajevo* (Wien, 1898) Textband, 223

(10) Peled-Carmeli, 28 For further discussion of the relationship between the renderings of Holbein and Speyer, see below

scripture. In other words, it seems that Speyer assumed this particular apocryphal event to be an authentic piece of Jewish tradition.

The story of 'Bel and the Dragon' is not contained in the Hebrew Bible. It forms instead part of the Septuagintal additions to the book of Daniel which were later canonized and accepted as integral parts of that book by the early church. Although most scholars agree that this legend stems from a Semitic archetype,¹¹ there remain only a few intriguing external traces of such a *Vorlage* for the present work.¹² The oldest extant version of 'Bel and the Dragon' is preserved in Greek,¹³ of which there are two distinct recensions, normally printed side-by-side in modern editions of the Septuagint. The most important is the version attributed to Theodotion: it was his edition of the book of Daniel that was accepted and promulgated by the church and which was most often quoted by the Church Fathers.¹⁴ The version of Theodotion was also the basis for the subsequent translations of the additions to the book of Daniel into Syriac, Coptic, Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic. The other Greek rendition of Daniel, the so-called "Septuagint" version, was apparently eclipsed by the authority of Theodotion's edition, and apart from its use in the Syro-Hexaplar (the Syriac translation of the Hexapla of Origen) and in several early citations subsequently disappeared, becoming accessible again only in the eighteenth century.¹⁵

(11) Arguments for a Semitic original (either Hebrew or Aramaic) of the 'Bel and the Dragon' story are based upon internal criteria which suggest translation from a Semitic archetype. For lists of suggested Semiticisms, see T. Witton Davies, "Bel and the Dragon" in R.H. Charles (ed.), *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1913), 1.655-656; W.H. Daubney, *The Three Additions to Daniel* (Cambridge, 1906), 204-209; M. Delcor, *Le livre de Daniel* (Paris, 1971), 280-292; and C.A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah: The Additions* (Garden City, 1977), 119-120 and 131-147.

(12) Actual Semitic versions of all or part of the 'Bel and the Dragon' story are discussed below. For a recent survey of several of these sources, see E. Loewenthal, "Tradizioni deutero-canoniche nel mondo ebraico medievale: Daniele, il Dragone e Abacuc (Dan. 14, 22-42)," *Henoah* 8(1986)185-222.

(13) The study of the Greek text(s) of 'Bel and the Dragon' is necessarily bound with the textual history of the book of Daniel as a whole. The definitive discussions are: J.A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (New York, 1927), 24-57, and J. Ziegler (ed.), *Susanna, Daniel, Bel et Draco* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Societatis Litterarum Göttingensis Editum, 16.2) (Göttingen, 1954), 7-68. See also O. Plöger, "Zusätze zu Daniel," in *Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* I, 1: *Historische und legendarische Erzählungen* (Gütersloh, 1973), 65-66.

(14) For Theodotion see the references in the two preceding notes. Some quotations of the apocryphal additions to Daniel by the Church Fathers are assembled by E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, 4. Auflage (Leipzig, 1909), III 454-457. A comprehensive collection of citations can be found in C. Julius, *Die griechischen Danielzusätze und ihre kanonische Geltung* (Biblische Studien von Bardenhewer VI, 3-4) (Freiburg, 1901).

(15) Jerome, *Commentariorum in Danielem*, on Daniel 4:5 (=v.6 of Vulgate): Unde

There also exist several Semitic versions of the 'Bel and the Dragon' story in medieval Jewish literature. A complete version of the story in Aramaic was published by M. Gaster,¹⁶ who had discovered this edition while working upon the manuscript containing the so-called *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*.¹⁷ Gaster believed that he had recovered the Aramaic *Vorlage* from which Theodotion had produced his Greek text, but other scholars argue more cogently against the antiquity of this Aramaic text, viewing it instead as a later retroversion of the Greek Theodotion or even of the Latin Vulgate.¹⁸ Gaster's text differs significantly however from another complete Aramaic rendition of the 'Bel and the Dragon' narrative extant in a Bodleian manuscript published by A. Neubauer (which also contains a complete Aramaic version of the book of Tobit).¹⁹ This manuscript itself states that the 'Bel and the Dragon' story was rendered from a work entitled *Midrash Rabba de-Rabba*, a collection associated with the exegetical activity of R. Moshe ha-Darshan.²⁰ An extract from this same collection appears in the thirteenth-century polemical treatise of Raymund Martini entitled *Pugio Fidei*,²¹ but is there attributed to *Bereshit Rabba*. A close examination of the text published by Neubauer reveals that it is largely a transcription into Hebrew characters of the Peshitta version of the 'Bel and the Dragon' story²² with only a few significant

judicio magistrorum Ecclesiae, editio eorum in hoc volumine repudiata est; et Theodotionis vulgo legitur, quae et Hebraeo, et caeteris translatoribus congruit (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 25, col. 514). The "Septuagint" version was made available again by Simon de Magistris, *Daniel secundum Septuaginta ex tetraphis Origenis* (Rome, 1772).

(16) M. Gaster, "The Unknown Aramaic Original of Theodotion's Additions to the Book of Daniel," *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 16(1894) 280-290; 312-317; 17(1895) 75-94. This is reprinted in his *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha and Samaritan Archaeology* (London, 1928; repr. New York, 1971), I. 39-68; III. 16-21 (text).

(17) M. Gaster, *The Chronicles of Jerahmeel* (London, 1899; repr. New York, 1971), civ.

(18) G. Dalman, *Grammatik des jüdisch-palästinischen Aramäisch* (repr. Darmstadt, 1960), 38; Daubney, 204; Schurer (cf. n.14), 454; Delcor, 279; Moore, 119 n.2.

(19) A. Neubauer, *The Book of Tobit* (Oxford, 1878), 39-43 (text).

(20) L. Zunz-Ch. Albeck, *Haderashot beyisrael* (Jerusalem, 1946), 144-145; A. Epstein, "Rabbi Moshe ha-Darshan mi-Narbona," in A.M. Habermann (ed.), *Kutvei R. Abraham Epstein* (Jerusalem, 1950), I. 215-244.

(21) Raymund Martini, *Pugio Fidei adversus Mauros et Judaeos* (Lipsiae, 1687), 956-957. This treatise was first compiled during the late thirteenth century in Spain to supply Christian disputants with rabbinic texts to use against Jewish apologists. For further information, see J. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca and London, 1982), 129-169 and S. Ballaban, *Lost Midrashic Passages on Genesis From the Pugio Fidei* (Rabbinic Thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1986). This particular extract from Martini is reproduced in F. Delitzsch, *De Habacuci Prophetiae ante aetate* (Lipsiae, 1842), 32-33.

(22) Differences between the texts of the Peshitta and of Neubauer are largely orthographic in nature. For the text of the Peshitta we have employed *The Old Testament in*

variations. A comparison of the Neubauer text with the extract transmitted in the *Pugio Fidei* shows the latter to be a later copy of a text essentially identical with the Neubauer version. Certain Syriac features which were retained in the Neubauer text have been "Hebraicized",²³ and approximately two and one-half lines of the Neubauer text were omitted from the *Pugio Fidei* by homoioteleuton.²⁴ Interestingly, the Neubauer manuscript also transcribes a fuller text at this point than even the Peshitta or the Greek versions when it states that the accusers of Daniel covered the opening of the pit with a stone and affixed to it their own seals as well as the seal of the king. This feature plays no further part in the story, and must be due to an attempt to conform the narrative action here to that described in Daniel 6 (cf. 6:18), a tendency exhibited for instance in *Sefer Josippon* (to be discussed below).

Another instance of an Aramaic fragment of the 'Bel and the Dragon' story preserved in medieval Jewish literature is found in the midrashic collection *Bereshit Rabbati*.²⁵ A. Epstein, followed by Ch. Albeck, believed *Bereshit Rabbati* to be a condensation of the aforementioned *Midrash Rabba de-Rabba* of R. Moshe ha-Darshan²⁶ from which the Neubauer text was derived, and indeed a comparison of these two renditions supports this analysis of their relationship. Both the Neubauer text and the *Bereshit Rabbati* version²⁷ introduce the story as a midrashic interpretation of Genesis 37:24: "And they threw him (Joseph) into the pit (*haborah*)." Both versions are also aware that the events described in the 'Bel and the Dragon' story represent a historical setting different from the Daniel in the Lion's Den narrative related in Daniel 6. A notice found in the introduction to the Neubauer text and reproduced ver-

Syriac According to the Peshitta Version: Part III, fascicle 4: Dodekapropheton — Daniel — Bel-Draco (Leiden, 1980).

(23) For example the transmutation of the third person masculine plural pronominal suffix *-ohi* to Hebrew *-aw*, the change in one instance of the Eastern Aramaic third person masculine verbal preformative *n-* to Hebrew *y-*, and the change of the Aramaic form of the geographical designation *Judaea* (*yehud*) to the Hebrew *yehudah*. Delitzsch (cf. n. 21), 34 n. 85 lists a series of Palestinian features which he has noted in Martini's text.

(24) בגובא דאריזאתא [והוה תמן אשתא ימין וחפוני באבנא וחמנוני בעוקחא דמלכא ובגושפנהון . . . (Neubauer, 42 11.5-8). The words within the brackets are omitted in Martini's version due to the scribe's eye skipping from דאריזאתא of line 5 to אריזאתא of line 8.

(25) Ch. Albeck (ed.), *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati* (Jerusalem, 1940; repr. Jerusalem, 1967).

(26) A. Epstein, "Bereschit Rabbati. (Handschrift der Prager jüd. Gemeinde.) Dessen Verhältnis zu Rabba-rabbati, Moses ha-Darschan und Pugio Fidei," *Magazin für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 15(1888)66; Albeck, *ibid.*, 19.

(27) Albeck, *ibid.*, 175, 11.3-21, and see his notes at the bottom of this page where relevant portions of Neubauer's text are cited.

batim in *Bereshit Rabbati* reads as follows: "Behold, we know that Daniel was delivered from the pit (*habor*) from Scripture, and our teachers say that we possess a tradition that Daniel was delivered from the pit (*habor*) of lions another time in the days of Cyrus the Persian . . ." A further notice of this distinction appears at the conclusion of the Neubauer version: "We find that Daniel was thrown into the pit twice: once in the days of Darius the Mede, and once in the days of his son-in-law [sic] Cyrus the Persian. In the first episode he remained in the pit one night and was delivered, and in the second he remained in the pit seven days and was delivered. This second story is not recorded in Holy Scripture." The story as it appears in *Bereshit Rabbati* however is drastically curtailed. Only the climax of the story relating the king's return to the pit to discover Daniel alive is found in *Bereshit Rabbati*, but this snippet is a verbatim reproduction of the corresponding Aramaic text of the Neubauer manuscript, corresponding to verses 40-42 of the Greek versions.

One of the more interesting Semitic versions of the 'Bel and the Dragon' story is the Hebrew translation of this narrative found in *Sefer Josippon*.²⁸ Here the narrative sequence of the legend as we know it from the Greek versions and from the dependent Aramaic renditions published by Neubauer and Gaster has been altered due to a harmonizing assimilation with the narrative of Daniel 6. What was once two distinct imprisonments of Daniel has become one. The events which occasioned Daniel's death sentence in 'Bel and the Dragon' — namely, his destruction of the idol Bel and his slaying of the serpent — have been dissociated from this penalty and appear later in the narrative of *Josippon*. The lion's den episode however with its manifestation of Habakkuk²⁹ has been joined to *Josippon's* recountal of the story of Daniel 6, wherein Daniel's crime is his refusal to refrain from addressing prayers to the True God, the God of Israel.³⁰ The narrator's editorial dismemberment of the apocryphal narrative perhaps illustrates his discomfort with the

(28) For citations from *Josippon* we have employed the edition of D. Flusser, *Sefer Josippon* (Jerusalem, 1978). In this edition the story of Daniel in the pit of lions is found on pages 25-31; the stories of Daniel, Bel, and the serpent (*sans* the lions' den punishment) on pages 32-35. This portion of *Josippon* was copied by Jerahmeel into his "chronicle"; cf. Gaster, *Jerahmeel*, cvi-cvii, and 214-218 for an English translation. On *Josippon* in general and on *Josippon's* relationship to the text of Jerahmeel in particular, see J. Reiner, "The Original Hebrew Yosippon in the Chronicle of Jerahmeel," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 60(1969-70)128-146.

(29) The independent use of the Habakkuk episode may lend some credence to the idea that this particular story was originally unattached to the 'Bel and the Dragon' narrative and was only later joined to the two "idol-baiting" accounts (see for example Davies, 657). Perhaps *Josippon* still knew the Habakkuk episode as an independent unit.

(30) Dan 6:7-17; *Sefer Josippon*, 26-28; and compare Josephus, *Antiquities* X, 250-262.

existence of two "Daniel in the Lion's Den" stories (a discomfort paralleled to a certain extent by the rabbinic tradition mentioned above), and represents an attempt to resolve this historical enigma by implying that the two episodes were merely variant versions of a single circumstance.³¹

Traces of the 'Bel and the Dragon' story, or at least knowledge of events described only in the Apocryphal narrative, are occasionally found in rabbinic literature. Some texts of *Bereshit Rabba* recount the episode of Daniel's slaying of the "dragon" (*tanin*) by feeding it a lethal dose of "poison" disguised as food, here described as "straw in whose midst he concealed nails".³² A variant version of this particular dragon or serpent-slaying motif is found in the Palestinian Talmud.³³ The reptile (*hawwaya*³) in this case belongs to the Sasanian emperor Shapur, and we are not told who was responsible for preparing its final "meal".³⁴

(31) Yet it is clear that *Jostppon* was aware of *two* distinct lions' den episodes, for in Daniel's final words to the king prior to his death he refers to the "two times" that his enemies had forced him to enter the lion pit. See *Sefer Jostppon*, 35.

(32) *Bereshit Rabba* 68:13; see J. Theodor-Ch. Albeck, *Midrash Bereshit Rabba*, 2nd printing (Jerusalem, 1965), 790. Note that this midrash places Daniel's slaying of the "dragon" during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar as opposed to Theodotion's (and all dependent renditions) setting of Cyrus and *Jostppon's* of Darius the Mede. This particular setting in *Bereshit Rabba* results from the exegetical employment in the midrash of Jeremiah 51:44 part of a prophetic oracle whose intended target was Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Jeremiah 51:44 may well be the biblical core from which the entire 'Bel and the Dragon' story developed, given the linkage of the verse and the Dragon episode in this *derash*.

(33) JT Nedarim 35b. The aggadic fragment is also found in JT Shebuot 85b, and is transmitted in an embellished Hebrew version in the later homiletic collection *Tanḥuma* (*Beshallah* 18; cf. *Tanḥuma Buber*, *Beshallah* 13).

(34) The *Tanḥuma* account credits Shapur (identified by T. Nöldeke as Shapur II) with the destruction of this ravenous serpent (*nahash*) while crossing the region of the "wilderness of Shur" (Ex 15:22), in contradistinction to the Talmudic account which portrays Shapur as the possessor of the serpent. Many scholars believe that these accounts are ultimately derived from a legendary accretion to the Alexander Romance. This legend relates that Alexander slew "a god in the form of a dragon (*tanina*?)" by inducing it to swallow two oxen which he had filled with "gypsum, pitch, lead, and sulfur", followed by five red-hot brass balls as the *coup-de-grace*. This story is not extant in the Greek manuscripts of Pseudo-Callisthenes or in the Armenian version of the Romance, but does appear in the Syriac rendition of Pseudo-Callisthenes [see E.A.W. Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great, Being the Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Callisthenes* (Cambridge, 1889) 107-108; 190-193 (text)], a sixth or seventh century version which some feel was based upon a now lost Pahlavi edition. See T. Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans* (Wien, 1890), 14-16; B. Heller, "Ha-tosafot lesefer Daniel," in A. Kahana (ed.), *Ha-sefarin ha-ḥisonim* (repr. Jerusalem, 1970), 1.560; A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), 125; J.-B. Chabot, *Littérature syriaque* (Paris, 1934), 78; J. Cejpek, "Iranian Folk-Literature," in J. Rypka, et al., *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, 1968), 622 and 628-630; S.P. Brock, "Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek," *Journal of the Syriac Academy, Baghdad* 3(1977)415; T. Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1983), 141.

Early awareness of the Habakkuk episode, with which this essay is primarily concerned, is more difficult to establish. Apart from a possible allusion by the liturgical poet Yannai, which will be discussed below, the remaining Jewish references to Habakkuk's visit to Daniel in the pit of lions are probably dependent upon *Josippon*.³⁵ These include the commentary of Pseudo-Saadia upon Daniel 6:23,³⁶ an exegetical note by R. Eleazar of Worms,³⁷ and the testimony of *Sefer Yuhasin*.³⁸

The relative scarcity of references to the Apocryphal expansion of the 'Daniel in the Lions' Den' story within Jewish literature is not diminished when one consults other forms of Jewish artistic representa-

(35) One might note that the pseudepigraphical *Lives of the Prophets* paraphrases 'Bel and the Dragon', verses 33ff. in its account of the life of Habakkuk; cf. C.C. Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets: Greek Text and Translation* (Philadelphia, 1946), 28. Most scholars agree that the *Lives* are an early Jewish composition of the first century (BCE or CE) later adapted to Christian apologetic. While some features of the *Lives* recur in later rabbinic and Muslim literature, the text of the *Lives*, like that of 'Bel and the Dragon', was preserved and transmitted only in Christian sources and should probably not be viewed as a source for medieval Jewish knowledge of the relationship between Habakkuk and Daniel.

(36) ". . . and also another marvel greater than this He performed for me, when He brought Habakkuk the prophet from the land of Judah and the meal for the laborers in his field together with him, and he brought it to me, and we ate and drank together and then gave praise together to the Creator. Then he departed upon his way by means of the angel who had brought him there . . ." (Rabbenu Saadia Gaon to Dan 6:23). This commentator is not Saadia al-Fayyumi as the *Miqra'ot Gedolot* would have us believe, but a later Saadia (so-called Pseudo-Saadia) who worked at the beginning of the twelfth century; cf. "Saadia," *Jewish Encyclopaedia* (New York and London, 1905), X.578-581. H. Maltzer, *Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works* (Philadelphia, 1921), 404, provides further references. Saadia al-Fayyumi's Arabic translation of and commentary to the book of Daniel contain no trace of the Habakkuk legend; see H. Spiegel, *Saadia al-Fayyumi's arabische Danielversion* (Berlin, 1906), and J. Qafeh (ed.), *Daniel 'im targum uferush Rabbenu Saadia ben Joseph Fayyumi* (Jerusalem, 1980). That Pseudo-Saadia derived his information about the story from *Josippon* seems assured by his commentary upon Daniel 11:18 wherein he explicitly cites "Joseph ben Gorion", the alleged author of *Josippon*, although it remains possible that here (i.e., Dan 11:18) he borrowed the reference from Rashi's commentary to the same verse.

(37) Eleazar ben Judah of Worms, *Perush 'al ha-haftarot* (Warsaw, 1875), 13a: חבוק בנ[מטריה] אריה שבא מיהודה גור אריה והלך לדיניאל בגוב אריות ואמר עמו אנדה של ספס כליל שמורים ואף דניאל מיהודה גור אריה היה ולא יכלו האריות להיזק לדיניאל ולחבוק. This text was first brought to the attention of scholars by N. Brull in "Die epistolarischen Apokryphen und die apokryphischen Zusätze zum Buche Daniel," *Jahrbucher für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur* 8(1887)29, n.1; cited also by B. Heller, "Ha-tosafot lesefer Daniel" (see n.34 above), 559-560. Further information on Eleazar of Worms can be found in I. Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature*, trans. by B. Martin (Cleveland and London, 1972), II. 70-76. One should note the connection made in this text between Passover and Habakkuk's visit. Could this be the inspiration for Speyer's illustration?

(38) Z.H. Filipowski (ed.), *Sefer Yuhasin Hashalem*, 2nd edition (Frankfurt a.M., 1924), 238. For more information on this work consult the article on Abraham ben Samuel Zacuto in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971), XVI. 906, and G. Stemberger, *Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur* (München, 1977), 141-142.

tradition of Passover *haggadah* illustration, in particular, and in Jewish pictorial rendering of this scene, in general.

It was noted above that Speyer apparently borrowed the format of his portrayal from a woodcut designed by Hans Holbein the Younger.⁴⁴ A comparison of the two pictures confirms this impression. Apart from Speyer's reversal of the entire scene, so as to conform apparently to the direction of Hebrew writing (i.e., right to left),⁴⁵ and some minor variations of costume and portraiture, the two representations are very similar. One should note that both artists portray the "den" or "pit" within which Daniel was placed as a natural cavity or depression in the landscape, as opposed to the roofless brick tower imagined by earlier Biblical illustrators.⁴⁶ The posture of Daniel (kneeling, eyes raised, with clasped hands in an attitude of prayer), the depiction of Habakkuk (legs spread to simulate motion, bearing two loaves of bread and pot or bottle), and the flight of the angel are expressed in almost identical terms. The question remains as to why Speyer chose this particular Holbein woodcut as a model for his own manuscript illustration.

However Speyer was not the only *haggadah* artist to employ the Biblical illustrations of Holbein as models for imitation. R. Wischnitzer-

(44) See n.10. Holbein's Old Testament illustrations were prepared during the mid-1520s for inclusion in Reformation translations of the Bible. 139 of these woodcuts appeared in the large folio edition of the entire Bible brought out by Christopher Froschauer of Zurich in 1531. 68 of these were republished, with some variation, by Trechsel in 1538 in a collection entitled *Historiarum Veteris Testamenti Icones ad vivum expressae*, reprinted often over the next decade. A facsimile of the 1543 reprint of this collection was issued by Paddington Press entitled *Images From the Old Testament: Historiarum Veteris Testamenti Icones* (New York and London, 1976) with an introduction by Michael Marqusee. Holbein's illustration of 'Daniel in the Lions' Den' appears under the heading of Daniel 14; i.e., 'Bel and the Dragon'. For further information on Holbein's biblical illustrations, see the aforementioned introduction of Marqusee, to which can be added J. Strachan, *Early Bible Illustrations* (Cambridge, 1957), 52-57, and A. Woltmann, *Holbein and His Time* (London, 1872), 231-241.

(45) D. Kaufmann, "Les cycles d'images du type allemand dans l'illustration ancienne de la haggada," *Revue des études juives* 38(1899)102; C. Roth, "The John Rylands Haggadah," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 43(1960-61)148-149; J. Gutmann, "The Illuminated Medieval Passover Haggadah: Investigations and Research Problems," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 7(1965)6; Metzger, *La haggada enluminée*, I. 332.

(46) See, for example, the woodcut illustration of this scene in the Cologne Bibles (1478-1480) reproduced by J. Strachan, *Pictures From a Mediaeval Bible* (London, 1959), 99 fig. 82. See also the illustration in the edition of Nicolo Malermi's Italian translation of the Vulgate printed by Lucantonis di Giunta of Venice (1490) reproduced in Strachan, *Early Bible Illustrations*, as figure 30. Note too that the representation of this scene in the Dyson Perrins Haggadah (cf. n.43) also features a tower constructed of bricks as the locale of the pit or den where Daniel is incarcerated. This particular motif may be related to the Jewish tradition that bricks were employed as building material in Babylon because there were no stones to be found in that land; cf. Rashi to Daniel 6:18.

Bernstein demonstrated in the course of a perceptive essay⁴⁷ that the illustrations decorating the Amsterdam *haggadot* of 1695 and 1712 drew heavily on Holbein's sequence of Biblical illustrations. The illustrator of those *haggadot*, one Abraham bar Jacob,⁴⁸ commonly believed to be a proselyte,⁴⁹ was probably familiar with the Holbein cycle via their adaptation by Matthäus Merian of Basel,⁵⁰ whose illustrated Bibles enjoyed great popularity in northern Europe throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁵¹ Similarly the illustrative cycle adorning the Amsterdam *haggadot*⁵² (and particularly the edition of 1712) was widely copied in both printed and manuscript editions of Ashkenazi *haggadot* during the eighteenth century.⁵³ Examples of Speyer's dependence upon the Amsterdam *haggadah* are readily identifiable.⁵⁴ However, a depiction of 'Daniel in the Lion's Den' is not contained in the Amsterdam *haggadah*, and so Speyer could not have received the Holbein rendering through this conduit. It seems likely that Speyer must have had direct acquaintance with the Holbein picture itself, or was indirectly cognizant of this unique depiction from having seen it in the version of Merian.

Why Speyer fails to alter the Apocryphal scene to bring it into con-

(47) R. Wischnitzer-Bernstein, "Von der Holbeinbibel zur Amsterdamer Haggadah," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 75(1931)269-286.

(48) On Abraham bar Jacob see *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971), II. 148 s.v. "Abraham ben Jacob". See further A. Wolf, "Etwas über jüdische Kunst und ältere jüdische Künstler," *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde* 9(1902)57-58; C. Roth, "The Illustrated Haggadah," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 7(1965)48-49; Peled-Carmeli, 15.

(49) Accepted by all the sources listed in n.48. Wischnitzer-Bernstein, 272 and 284 n.1 questions this assumption.

(50) On Matthäus Merian see Wischnitzer-Bernstein, 275ff. See further U. Thieme-F. Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Leipzig, 1908-1954), XXIV. 413; G.C. Williamson (ed.), *Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers* (repr. Port Washington, New York, 1964), III. 324-325.

(51) Wischnitzer-Bernstein, 276.

(52) For a list of the engravings adorning the Amsterdam *haggadot* see Wischnitzer-Bernstein, 271-272 (1695); 280-282 (1712). Many of the engravings from the 1712 edition were reproduced by K. Schwarz (ed.), *Die Amsterdamer Hagada: 18 Abbildungen aus dem Kupferstichdrucke der Passah-Hagada* (Berlin, 1920). A facsimile of the entire 1712 edition was recently issued by Kinneret & Nahar Publishers; cf. *Haggadah shel Pesah: Amsterdam 1712* (Ramat-Gan and Tel Aviv, 1986).

(53) E.M. Namenyi, "The Illumination of Hebrew Manuscripts after the Invention of Printing," in C. Roth-B. Narkiss (eds.), *Jewish Art* (London, 1971), 157; Schwarz, 21; Benjamin, [i]; Peled-Carmeli, 15-17,30; Goldschmidt, xxxv; Roth, "Illustrated Haggadah", 49-52.

(54) Benjamin, [ii], referring particularly to Speyer's renderings of Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh, and the casting of the Hebrew infants into the Nile. Peled-Carmeli, 21-27 discusses ways in which Speyer altered the details of other illustrations traceable to the Amsterdam model.

formity with the canonical narrative of Daniel 6 remains enigmatic. The most plausible explanation is that Speyer considered the ‘Bel and the Dragon’ story as narrated in *Josippon* to be an authentic part of Jewish history and thus suitable for inclusion in his liturgical illuminations. Both *Josippon* and the *piyyut* verse which Speyer illustrates refer to the “pit of the lions” in identical terms as בור (ה) אריות, and perhaps Speyer’s familiarity with both texts led him to assimilate, whether consciously or unconsciously, the events related in *Josippon* to the reference in the *piyyut*.

One might however go further and speculate that Speyer merely brought to artistic fruition what was in fact present in the text of the *piyyut* of Yannai all along. The entire passage of the *piyyut* that alludes to the story of Daniel is as follows:⁵⁵

כרע בל ומציבו באישון לילה
לאיש חמדות נגלה רז חזות לילה
[מ]משתכר בכלי קודש נ[ה]ר[ג] בו בלילה
נושע מבור אריות פותר חלומות לילה

“Bel and his image bowed down in the midst of the night;

To the precious man was revealed the secret [in]

a vision of the night;

He who became drunk with the holy vessels was slain by

him at night,

The interpreter of nocturnal dreams⁵⁶ was

delivered from the pit of lions.”

The second line is an obvious allusion to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar described in Daniel 2, whose true interpretation was revealed to Daniel (the איש חמדות)⁵⁷ in a nocturnal vision (Dan 2:19). The third line refers to the impiety committed by Belshazzar in employing the captured Temple ritual vessels as common wine receptacles at a royal banquet, and the punishment resulting from this sacrilege (Dan 5). The fourth, as we have seen, forms the locus for Speyer’s illustration of Daniel in the pit of lions. It is to the first verse that we should direct our attention, inasmuch as this line at first sight exhibits no relationship to the story of Daniel. The phrasing of the line has been pieced together from Isaiah 46:1 and Proverbs 7:9, but the event described by Yannai has no connection with either of these two sources. There is only one story to which Yannai can be alluding. It is the story of the downfall of the idol Bel and his priests narrated as the initial episode of the Apocryphal ‘Bel

(55) Text reproduced from Zulay, *Piyyute Yannai*, 92.

(56) See *ibid.*, 92-93, for the justification of this reading.

(57) An epithet of Daniel based upon Dan 9:23; 10:11,19.

and the Dragon' (Bel 1-22). Therein Daniel cunningly contrives a nocturnal stratagem to convince the king that Bel is but a lifeless statue, offerings to whom only enrich and support a devious priesthood. Daniel's exposure of the fraud results in the downfall of Bel and the idol's retainers. This legendary background agrees nicely with the verse of Yannai, and suggests that Yannai himself was familiar with the Apocryphal 'Bel and the Dragon' narrative.⁵⁸ If this is true, then Yannai takes his place among the earliest Jewish testimonia to this apocryphon,⁵⁹ supplying important evidence for the vitality of the Daniel legends in Jewish tradition.

It seems plausible then that Speyer recognized these allusions in Yannai to refer to the 'Bel and the Dragon' cycle, whose presence in turn in *Josippon* connoted to him the Jewish character of the story. Hence Speyer perceived no need to alter the composition of the Holbein woodcut which served as his model for his own depiction of Daniel in the pit of lions.

(58) Zunz in the second edition of his *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden historisch entwickelt* (1892) directs attention to this possibility, cf. Zunz-Albeck, *Haderashot*, 298 n 17. Z.M. Rabinowitz (see n 5) does not refer to 'Bel and the Dragon' in his discussion of this *pryyut*.

(59) The date of Yannai is disputed. E. Fleischer, *Shirat haqodesh ha'ivrit beyemey ha-beynayim* (Jerusalem, 1975), 118, and *idem*, *Hayoserot behuthawutam we-hutpathutam* (Jerusalem, 1984), 18 n 11 and 28, places Yannai in the mid-sixth century. I. Davidson, *Mahzor Yannai* (New York, 1919), v and xii, dates him to the second half of the seventh century. I. Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Leipzig, 1913), 309, places Yannai at the latest around 700 CE. Z. Zylber, xvi-xvii, places Yannai in the Byzantine era prior to the Arab conquest of Palestine (636-640 CE). Rabinowitz, 23-26, after thorough discussion situates Yannai in the sixth century. Note however *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1972), XVI 714 s v "Yannai", which posits that a fourth to fifth century *floruit* could also be possible.



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