

## *Chapter 4: Restructuring the Past: Remembering Genesis in the Book of Jubilees*

---

The work we now referred to as the book of Jubilees was believed to have been lost forever by European scholars prior to the mid 19th Century. The work was “rediscovered,” however, in 1844 when Heinrich Ewald published a description of an Ethiopian (Geʿez) manuscript which had under the title “the Book of the Division” መጽሐፈ ኩፋሌ [mashafa kufālē].<sup>1</sup> Because the name followed the common convention using a work’s first few (key) words as its title (in this case, ዝንቲ፡ነገረ፡ኩፋሌ [zentu nabara kufālē]), Ewald suggested that this manuscript may have been a copy of the work known from antiquity as both τὰ Ἰωβηλαῖα, “the Jubilee,” and Λεπτὴ Γένεσις, the “Little Genesis.”<sup>2</sup> Although the work had been in continuous use within Ethiopian Christianity since antiquity, European scholarship only knew of the work through secondary references in a few classical sources.<sup>3</sup>

---

1. All translations are my own. Geʿez citations are from VanderKam’s critical edition, *The Book of Jubilees*, 2 vols., CSCO 510-11; SA 87–88 (Leuven: Peeters, 1989).

2. Heinrich Ewald, “Ueber die Aethiopischen Handschriften zu Tübingen,” *ZKM* 5 (1844): 164–201.

3. VanderKam offers a concise summary of the various late-antique citations and allusions in his commentary, most notably in the works of Epiphanius (*Panarion*, *Measures and Weights*) and Syncellus (*Chronography*). James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees: A Commentary*,

The work was published and supplemented by an additional manuscript by August Dillmann in 1859<sup>4</sup> and R. H. Charles in 1895, who included two additional manuscripts in his edition (totaling four).<sup>5</sup> More recently, VanderKam's 1989 edition utilized twenty-seven copies

---

2 vols., *Hermeneia* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2018), 1:10–14. See also Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Retelling Biblical Retellings: Epiphanius, the Pseudo-Clementines, and the Reception-History of Jubilees," in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Menahem Kister et al., STDJ 113 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 304–21 and Anne Kreps, "From Jewish Apocrypha to Christian Tradition: Citations of Jubilees in Epiphanius's Panarion," *CH* 87.2 (2018): 345–70. It is also probable that more recently discovered text, such as the Damascus Document (CD) refer to the book of Jubilees as "the Book of the Divisions of the Times into their Jubilees and Weeks" Heb. ספר מחלקות העתים ליובליהם ובשבועותיהם. It seems almost unimaginable that CD was not referring to Jubilees, though, some have questioned the notion. See Devorah Dimant, "Two 'Scientific' Fictions: The So-Called Book of Noah and the Alleged Quotation of Jubilees in CD 16:3-4," in *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint Presented to Eugene Ulrich*, ed. Peter W. Flint James C. VanderKam and Emanuel Tov, VTSup 101 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 230–49.

4. August Dillmann, *Maṣḥafa Kufālē sive Liber Jubilaeorum* (Keil: C.G.L. van Maak; London: Williams & Norgate, 1859).

5. Robert Henry Charles, *Maṣḥafa Kufālē or the Ethiopic Version of the Hebrew Book of Jubilees* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1895).

of the text<sup>6</sup> and since its publication over twenty more copies have been cataloged and imaged.<sup>7</sup>

With the exception of the “rediscovery” of the text for European scholarship, the most significant find for the study of Jubilees was the discovery of several Hebrew fragments among the Dead Sea Scrolls. These fragments attest to the work’s antiquity and confirmed that the original language of Jubilees was Hebrew and not Aramaic, as Dillmann had supposed.<sup>8</sup>

Ethiopic text is to be a granddaughter translation of the Hebrew through Greek, though Greek manuscripts of the text have been found.<sup>9</sup> This fact was convincingly demonstrated by

Dillmann who observed several Greek forms preserved as transliterations in the Ethiopic text.<sup>10</sup>

---

6. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 1:xiv–xvi.

7. Ted Erho, “New Ethiopic Witnesses to Some Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,” *BSOAS* 76 (2013): 75–97. VanderKam helpfully lists the twenty-seven manuscripts he used for his critical edition in the introduction of his commentary where he also notes the additional manuscripts photographed since its publication. See VanderKam, *Jubilees*, 1:14–16.

8. August Dillmann, “Das Buch der Jubiläen oder die kleine Genesis,” *JBW* 3 (1850–1851): 1–96. Though, as VanderKam notes, he seems to have changed his mind later and supposed a Hebrew original. idem, “Beiträge aus dem Buch der Jubiläen zur Kritik des Pentateuch-Textes,” *SPAW* 15 (1883): 323–40; VanderKam, *Jubilees*, 1:1 n. 1.

9. See especially VanderKam’s treatment of the textual history of Jubilees in *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, HSM 14 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 1–18.

10. Specifically: δρῦς, βάλανος, λίψ, σχῖνος, and φάραγξ. Dillmann, “Das Buch der Jubiläen oder die kleine Genesis,” 88. Charles later added ἡλίου to the list. Robert Henry Charles, *The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1902), xxx.

By the end of the 19th century, however, partial copies of Jubilees had also been uncovered in Latin, which similarly appear to have come through the Greek. Finally, although no direct manuscript evidence has been found, Jubilees scholars posit that a Syriac translation of the Hebrew was made in antiquity. This suggestion tenuous, but is based on a number of Syriac citations of Jubilees which do not show any linguistic influence (loan words, etc.) from Greek.<sup>11</sup> Despite all of these finds, however, the Ethiopic text remains the only tradition to preserve Jubilees in its entirety. Thus, in my treatment of Jubilees I will be relying primarily on the Ethiopic text and will be supplementing from the Hebrew where available.

The book of Jubilees offers a rewriting of the book of Genesis and the first part of Exodus (Gen 1–Exod 12).<sup>12</sup> The prologue gives a short description of the work as an account concerned with the division of time into units of years, weeks, and jubilees given to Moses when he ascended Mt. Sinai to receive the “stone tablets”:

(Prologue) ዝንቱ ፡ ነገረ ፡ ኩፋሌ ፡ መዋዕላት ፡ ሕግ ፡ ወለስምዕ ፡ ለግብረ  
 ፡ ዓመታት ፡ ለተሳብዖቶም ፡ ለኢየሴልውሳቲሆም ፡ ውስተ ፡ ኩሉ  
 ፡ ዓመታት ፡ ዓለም ፡ በከመ ፡ ተናገሮ ፡ ለሙሴ ፡ በደብረ ፡ ሲና ፡  
 አመ ፡ ዐርገ ፡ ይንሣእ ፡ ጽላተ ፡ እብን ፡ ሕግ ፡ ወትእዛዝ ፡ በቃለ ፡  
 አግዚአብሔር ፡ በከመ ፡ ይቤሎ ፡ ይዕርግ ውስተ ፡ ርእሰ ፡ ደብር ።

---

11. See especially E. Tisserant, “Fragments syriaques du Livre des Jubilés,” *RB* 30 (1921): 55–86, 206–32 and Charles, *Book of Jubilees*, xxix but also A. M. Ceriani, *Monumenta Sacra et Profana*, 2 vols. (Milan: Bibliotheca Ambrosiana, 1861–1863), 2:ix–x and Charles, *Maṣḥafa Kufālē*, x.

12. VanderKam, *Jubilees*, 1:17.

(Prologue) *zəntu nagara kufālē mawāṣəlāta [la-]ḥegg wa-la-səmṣ la-gəbra ṣāmatāt la-tasābəṣotomu la-ṯiyyobēləwəsātihomu wəsta kʷəllu ṣāmatāta ṣālam ba-kama tanāgaro la-Musē ba-dabra Sinā ṯama ṣarga yenšā? ṣəllāta ṯəbn—ḥəgg wa-təṯzāz—ba-qāla ṯagziṯabḥēr ba-kama yəbēlo yəṣrəg wəsta rəṯsa dabr.*

(Prologue) These are the words<sup>13</sup> of the division of the days for the law and for the testimony for the event[s] of the years; for their weeks, for their Jubilees in all the years of the world just as he spoke (them) to Moses on Mount Sinai when he went up to receive the tablets of stone—the law and the commandment—at the command of God, as he had said to him that he should ascend to the top of the mountain.

As an important aside, it is noteworthy that this prologue as well as the first chapter of the book of Jubilees are preserved among the Qumran fragments (4Q216), and, indeed are the oldest among the Jubilees fragments. Thus, this early prologue was almost certainly a part of the work in its earliest form. Although superscriptions were often added much later, in this case, we have no reason to doubt that the prologue/superscription and framing narrative of the work were not a part of the most ancient versions of the work.<sup>14</sup>

The bulk of the book (Jubilees 2:1–50:13) is dedicated to the recounting of the events of Gen 1–Exod 12 with special concern for halakhic matters and the division of time according to

---

13. Lit. “This is the word.” I’ve chosen to follow VanderKam and others by rendering this construction in the plural based on the probable underlying Hebrew **אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים**. See VanderKam, *Jubilees*, 125

14. See *ibid.*, 1:125; *idem*, “Moses Trumping Moses: Making The Book Of Jubilees,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts*, ed. Sarianna Metso, Hindy Najman, and Eileen Schuller, STDJ 92 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 25–44.

“weeks” of years (7-year units) and “jubilees” (49-year units). The particulars of the revelation are mediated by the “Angel of the Presence” (Eth. **መልአክ ገጽ** [*mal’aka gaṣṣ*]) who dictates the content of the “heavenly tablets” (1:27; Eth. **ጽላተ ሰማይ** [*ṣəllāta samāy*]) to Moses to record what they revealed about the structure and terminus of the cosmos.<sup>15</sup> The treatment of Moses as a scribe places him within a chain of tradition—along with Enoch and Noah—which emphasizes writing and written works as essential sources of tradition and revelation.<sup>16</sup> Finally, the work closes with a terse statement declaring “Here the account of the division of time is ended” (Jubilees 50:13; Eth. **ተፈጸመ ፡ በዝየ ፡ ነገር ፡ ዘኩፋሌ ፡ መዋዕል ።** [*tafaṣṣama ba-zeyya nagar za-kufālē mawāṣel*]). Thus the main body of the work is presented as a revelation from Yahweh given to Moses atop Mt. Sinai, framed by a brief prologue and epilogue which situates the story during Moses’s first 40-days atop the mountain when Moses first receives the Tablets of Stone (Exod 24:12).<sup>17</sup>

---

15. Florentino Garcia Martinez, “The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees,” in *Between Philology and Theology: Contributions to the Study of Ancient Jewish Interpretation*, by Florentino Garcia Martinez, ed. Hindy Najman and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, STDJ 162 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 51–69; trans. of Florentino García Martínez, “Las Tablas Celestes en el Libro de los Jubileos,” in *Palabra y Vida: Homenaje a José Alonzo Díaz en su 70 Cumpleaños*, ed. A. Vargas–Machuca and Gregorio Ruiz, PUPCM 58 (Madrid: Ediciones Universidad de Comillas, 1984), 333–49.

16. See especially Hindy Najman, “Interpretation as Primordial Writing: Jubilees and Its Authority,” *JSJ* 30.4 (1999): 379–410.

17. VanderKam, *Jubilees*, 1:129.

Like the Genesis Apocryphon, the book of Jubilees engages in a form of rewriting which participates in the construction of (biblical) memory through pseudepigraphical discourse. Jubilees builds clearly from the biblical material (Gen–Exod 12; with the kinds of adaptations, harmonizations, and emendations we expect of Rewritten Bible) and bears clear influences from other Second Temple traditions such as the Astronomical Book of Enoch (1 Enoch 72–82). In this respect, Jubilees bears many of the same kinds of qualities that I worked with the previous chapter such as the sources of tradition, generic features, and narrative framing.<sup>18</sup> Although not framed as a first-person account, Jubilees also portrays itself as the product of first-hand experience: the author presents his work as the result of God’s repeated command to Moses to “write down all that you hear” (1:5, 7, 26) and to record the content of the Heavenly Tablets dictated to him by the chief angelic being (2:1). Thus the author takes on the persona of Moses and proffers his work as a faithful record of Moses’s experience atop Mt. Sinai and is therefore

---

18. One might argue, for example, that the genre of Jubilees is that of Apocalypse. In at least the most formal sense, this is the case, although, notably Todd Hanneken has recently advanced a thesis which argues that Jubilees is a *subversion* of Apocalypse. See Todd R. Hanneken, *The Subversion of the Apocalypses in the Book of Jubilees*, EJL 34 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012). Regarding the formal characteristics of Apocalypse, see John Collins’s work on the topic, esp. John J. Collins, “The Genre of the Book of Jubilees,” in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*, *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*, ed. Eric F. Mason et al., 2 vols., STDJ 153 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 737–55 and idem, “Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre” 14 (1979): 1–20.

also counted among the pseudepigrapha. The rewritten account of “biblical history” from Gen 1–Exod 12 is, like Genesis Apocryphon, *drawn from* biblical memory and *speaks back into* biblical memory through the process of rewriting.

Taking the book of Jubilees as my point of departure, in this chapter I will attempt to differentiate the *manner* that Rewritten Bible texts may have engaged with the cultural memory. In the previous chapter, I suggested that the pseudepigraphical quality of Genesis Apocryphon engaged with the cultural memory differently than other non-pseudepigraphical texts, but left open the question of how, specifically, readers were intended to understand the “authority” or “authenticity” of the account. In this chapter I will focus on the ways that Jubilees portrayed itself as an authoritative revelation affected concrete *practice*. I will argue that the book of Jubilees engages with cultural memory in a distinct fashion from other texts, such as the Genesis Apocryphon in part through rhetorical means (so-called “authority conferring strategies”). I will further argue that the significance of this distinction is significant because it illustrates the way that memory not only affects the intellectual conceptions of the past, but also carries with it *concrete practical effects which can be concretely observed*. To accomplish this, I will draw on Hindy Najman’s work on Mosaic Discourse and will discuss the ways that Jubilees portrays itself as authoritative literature, how this portrayal may have been understood in antiquity and how it could, in some sense, both authorize and rewrite the Torah with halakhic implications. Then, to illustrate the point, I will discuss the calendrical and chronological system of the book of Jubilees as an example of the concrete ways that constructing memory can impact one’s understanding of the past and present and ultimately



affect one's praxis.

## 4.1 CONSTRUCTING AUTHORITY IN JUBILEES

### 4.1.1 Authority Conferring Strategies and Mosaic Discourse

The book of Jubilees, however, engages more directly in prescriptive discourses. Jubilees deals with legal and halakhic matters directly—it gives instructions about how and when to celebrate festivals and directly critiques the sinful behavior of Israel. It stands to reason, therefore, that the purpose of Jubilees was not simply religious entertainment or vaguely edifying storytelling; Jubilees does not mince words about what is right or wrong. While, the Genesis Apocryphon may have *implicitly* endorsed particular ideologies and halakhic practices through linking them with the foundational figures of Genesis (Lamech, Noah, and Abram), the book of Jubilees at times engages in direct imperative and presents itself as an authoritative text whose content comes directly from God, incised in the Heavenly Tablets, mediated by God's chief angelic being (the Angel of the Presence), and ultimately recorded by Israel's most authoritative legal figure, Moses. Yet, the book of Jubilees makes clear that the Torah, too, is from God. For example, God tells Moses in Jubilees 1:9–10 that the people will stray from the covenant in part by “forgetting” God's commandments and neglecting proper cultic activities. Furthermore, the persecution of those who study the law is included in a catena of evil deeds that Israel will perpetrate.:

(Jubilees 1:9) VanderKam: For they will forget all my commandments—everything that I command them—and will follow the nations, their impurities, and their shame. They will serve their gods and (this) will prove an obstacle

for them—an affliction, a pain, and a trap. <sup>(10)</sup> Many will be destroyed. They will be captured and will fall into the enemy's control because they abandoned my statutes, my commandments, my covenantal festivals, my sabbaths, my holy things which I have hallowed for myself among them, my tabernacle, and my temple which I sanctified for myself in the middle of the land so that I could set my name on it and that it could live (there) <sup>(11)</sup> They made for themselves high places, (sacred) groves, and carved images; each of them prostrated himself before his own in order to go astray. They will sacrifice children to demons and to every product (conceived by) their erring minds. <sup>(12)</sup> I will send witnesses to them so that I may testify to them, but they will not listen and will kill the witnesses. they will persecute those too who study the law diligently. They will abrogate everything and will begin to do evil in my presence.

Thus, Jubilees at once affirms the centrality of the Torah, while, in some sense, circumventing it by providing its own idiosyncratic account of Gen 1–Exod 12. The juxtaposition of deference toward Torah while simultaneously circumventing its claim to primacy yields a sort of “pseudepigraphical paradox.” It is not immediately clear how a pseudepigraphical author, knowingly writing under a false name, can simultaneously endorse one text, while offering novel embellishments and changes to its interpretation. At least to the modern reader, this practice seems foreign and disingenuous by the pseudepigraphical author. The question should be raised, therefore, whether Jubilees *was in fact* intending to supersede or circumvent the authority of the Torah (as some scholars suggest) or whether some other relationship existed between the texts.<sup>19</sup>

---

19. wacholder, for example, understands Jubilees and the Temple Scroll to be a single unit and a work which was meant to supersede the Pentateuch. See Ben Zion Wacholder, “Jubilees as the Super Canon: Torah-Admonition versus Torah-Commanment,” in *Legal Texts and Legal*

Although there is some question whether the book of Jubilees attained the status of “scripture” in antiquity, it is generally agreed that pseudepigraphical texts such as Jubilees were not intended as replacements for the more well-known scriptures (especially the Torah).<sup>20</sup> Of course, the reality is that we do not know for certain what kinds of categories ancient readers used to classify their literature; most likely, however, they were not static nor consistent across time and differed by social group. All the same, the special place that the Torah had for a number of Jewish sects—even in antiquity—seems to me to preclude the idea that pseudepigraphical texts such as Jubilees would be placed on-par with the Pentateuch, even if a work carried a potent practical authority (see below). What *can* be said about the book of Jubilees, however, is that *it presents itself* as a unique revelation that claims for itself the same kind of divine source as the Torah.<sup>21</sup>

---

*Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge 1995. Published in Honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten*, ed. John Kampen, Moshe Bernstein, and Florentino García Martínez, STDJ 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 195–211. His theory has not been widely accepted.

20. This position undoubtedly represents the majority opinion, though it is not unanimous. For the opposing opinion, see especially Wacholder, “Jubilees as the Super Canon,” 195–211.

21. As a matter of clarification, I am assuming a distinction between 1) the author’s intent, 2) the way the work presents itself, and 3) the way the work was understood by its readers. Thus the text may present itself as “on-par” with the Torah without either the author or audience treating it as such.

VanderKam has offered a concise summary and analysis of this “pseudepigraphical paradox” and comes to the conclusion that the book of Jubilees functions as a vehicle for its author to proffer his own interpretation of Gen 1–Exod 12. VanderKam addresses the problem of Jubilees’s author both acknowledging the existence and authority of the Torah while simultaneously offering his own original material, writing:

[W]e could say differences in interpreting the Pentateuch had arisen by his time and that the author wanted to defend his own reading as the correct one. But he wished to find a way to package his case more forcefully than that, presumably within the limits of what was acceptable in his society.<sup>22</sup>

According to VanderKam, therefore, the project of the author of Jubilees was primarily one of *exegesis*. The book of Jubilees is an expression of the author’s understanding of Gen 1–Exod 12; it offers explicit teachings about specific ambiguities and difficulties in the text of Genesis and Exodus. He had a particular understanding of how the Pentateuch should be understood, and he used the common rhetorical technique of pseudepigraphy to “more forcefully” get his point across.<sup>23</sup>

VanderKam argues that the author of Jubilees intentionally located the setting of his work in the Exod 24:12 ascent for a rhetorical advantage. He argues for three such advantages: first, by locating the story during Moses’s ascent, he is able to draw on the *character* of Moses. The author, therefore was able to imbue his work with the gravitas of Israel’s most famous lawgiver. Second, setting the work as a part of the first forty-day period that Moses was on Mt.

---

22. VanderKam, “Moses Trumping Moses,” 28.

23. *Ibid.*, 28.

Sinai grounds the author's interpretation of Torah in the original revelation of the Law (prior to even Deuteronomy). These events putatively took place at the same time that Moses received the first set of stone tablets from God. While the stone tablets were broken and had to be rewritten, the account provided in Jubilees is prior even to those "copies" of the decalogue. Any subsequent interpretation of the Torah is secondary by virtue of its relative lateness. Finally, because Moses himself is presented as the author of Jubilees, there is no question of the chain of transmission. God revealed the contents of Jubilees to Moses by having the Angel of the Presence dictate to him the contents of the Heavenly Tablets. God is supreme, the tablets are eternal, and Moses is reliable.

Moses, therefore, received more from God on Mt. Sinai than is recorded in the Torah. The claim made by Jubilees is that it contains the additional information given to Moses, and that the subject of this additional revelation is the sacred history of Israel schematized according to the absolute heavenly reckoning of time (364-day years, weeks of years, and jubilees).

The tradition that God told Moses more on Mt. Sinai than he recorded in the Torah is not unique to the book of Jubilees. VanderKam points toward the later rabbinic tradition that Moses received the Oral Torah during his time atop Mt. Sinai.<sup>24</sup> For example, VanderKam cites b. Berakot 5a, which references the specific time during which Jubilees is set (Exod 24:12):<sup>25</sup>

מאי דכתיב ואתנה לך את לחת האבן והתורה והמצוה אשר כתבתי להורותם  
לחת אלו עשרת הדברות תורה זה מקרא והמצוה זו משנה אשר כתבתי אלו

---

24. VanderKam, "Moses Trumping Moses," 28–31.

25. Translations of all rabbinic texts are my own.

נביאים וכתובים להרתם זה תלמוד מלמד שכולם נתנו למשה מסיני:

What is [the meaning where] it is written, *I will give you the tablets of stone and the Torah and the commandments which I have written so that you might teach them* (Exod 24:12)?

‘the tablets’ — these are the ten commandments

‘the Torah’ — this is scripture

‘the commandments’ — this is Mishnah

‘that which I have written’ — these are the Prophets and the Writings

‘that you might teach them’ — this is Talmud

[This] teaches that all of them were given to Moses on at Sinai.

The tradition here, therefore, asserts that the decalogue, the full Torah, its interpretation, the rest of the Tanakh, and the Talmud were all revealed to Moses on Sinai. Similarly, Sifra Beḥuqqotay 8, citing Lev 26:46:

אלה החקים והמשפטים והתורות: החוקים אלו המדרשות והמשפטים אלו  
הדינים והתורות מלמד ששתי תורות ניתנו להם לישראל אחד בכתב ואחד  
בעל פה

*These are the statutes and ordinances and Torahs* (Lev 26:46):

‘the statutes’ — this is midrash.

‘and the judgments’ — this is the legal rulings.

‘and the Torahs’ — [this] teaches that two Torahs were given to Israel:  
one in writing, the other by mouth.

The rhetorical function of asserting that later interpretive material was revealed to Moses is essentially the same as it is for Jubilees.

Thus, for VanderKam, the book of Jubilees upholds the authority of the Torah by offering its own interpretation of its contents in a similar fashion to the way that the oral Torah, too, rooted its authenticity in the Sinai revelation. Jubilees, therefore asserts itself as a

correct and authoritative interpretation of the Torah by claiming that it is the interpretation that Moses himself received from God; as VanderKam puts it, according to the book of Jubilees, “[t]he message of Jubilees is verbally inerrant.”<sup>26</sup>

While VanderKam makes a number of useful observations, his characterization of Jubilees as exegesis, I think, leaves the question of how readers would have understood the work. This is where the analogy to the Oral Torah breaks down. While rabbinic claims that the Oral Torah was revealed to Moses, rabbinic discourse self-consciously acknowledges its work as exegetical—the rabbis offer explanations and instruction on how to understand the texts that they are commenting on. Although the rabbis may claim that an interpretation goes back to Moses, it is not the same as claiming to speak *for* Moses or *as* Moses. Thus VanderKam’s assertion that the purpose of writing pseudonymously and claiming that a work is the result of direct divine revelation goes beyond simply advocating for one’s own interpretation “more forcefully.” The fact that VanderKam leaves the particulars of this phrase ambiguous, I think, indicates ambiguity in his own thinking about *how specifically* ancient readers may have

---

26. VanderKam, “Moses Trumping Moses,” 33. Although the book of Jubilees is not generally thought to be the product of the Qumran community (it likely predates the settlement), it is worth noting that within the community, it was accepted that the community not only possessed the correct interpretation of its scriptures, but also that the community received a special revelation which the rest of Israel did not receive. As Fraade notes, this idea is quite different than supposing that additional material had been revealed *to Moses*. See Steven Fraade, “Interpretive Authority in the Studying Community at Qumran,” *JJS* 44 (1993): 46–69.

understood Jubilees vis-à-vis other so-called authoritative works, in particular, the Torah.

A more nuanced approach to this topic has been offered by Hindy Najman who, similarly has argued that the author of Jubilees utilized several “modes of self-authorization” in order to bolster its audience’s perception of the work’s authority.<sup>27</sup> Building on the work of Florentino García Martínez,<sup>28</sup> Najman argues that the book of Jubilees utilized (at least) four such “authority conferring strategies,” which I have reproduced in full:

1. Jubilees repeatedly claims that it reproduces material that had been written long before the “heavenly tablets,” a great corpus of divine teachings kept in heaven.
2. The entire content of the book of Jubilees was dictated by the angel of the presence at God’s own command. Hence, it is itself the product of divine revelation.
3. Jubilees was dictated to Moses, the same Moses to whom the Torah had been given on Mount Sinai. Thus the book of Jubilees is the co-equal accompaniment of the Torah; both were transmitted by the same true prophet.
4. Jubilees claims that its teachings are the true interpretation of the Torah. thus, its teachings also derive their authority from that of the Torah; that its interpretations match the Torah’s words resolve all interpretive problems further substantiates its veracity.<sup>29</sup>

Her ultimate conclusion is that texts such as Jubilees which interpret and rewrite portions of the Bible do so to “[respond] to both the demand for interpretation and the demand for

---

27. Najman, “Interpretation as Primordial Writing,” 380.

28. García Martínez, “The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees,” 51–69.

29. Najman, “Interpretation as Primordial Writing,” 380.



demonstration of authority.”<sup>30</sup> Thus the purpose of the book of Jubilees, according to Najman, is to provide an “interpretive context” for reading the Torah—to make explicit a particular tradition of interpretation that guides the Torah-reader away from spurious or otherwise heterodox readings.

This idea is similar to, but importantly distinct from VanderKam’s understanding of Jubilees. Whereas VanderKam envisioned Jubilees as an exegetical *product* of Gen 1–Exod 12, Najman understands Jubilees as a kind of “background” text which is meant as an aid *for reading* Torah. The difference is subtle, but significant, especially for our understanding of Jubilees within the framework of cultural memory. VanderKam’s characterization of Jubilees as a sort of “official” interpretation of the Torah is problematic because it does not leave room for Torah going forward. If Jubilees portrays itself as *the* meaning of Gen 1–Exod 12—the inerrant interpretation of this portion of Torah—what need is there for the Torah? Najman’s model, on the other hand, assumes that readers are cued into the genre. Rather than offering characterizing Jubilees as an authoritative, but idiosyncratic, interpretation of Torah, Najman’s approach understands Jubilees as something that could be read *before* the Torah in order to quash potentially errant readings of Torah when the reader finally reaches them.<sup>31</sup>

In her subsequent book, Najman builds on this thesis by introducing the idea of “Mosaic Discourse” into the discussion of Early Jewish and Christian literary production. She traces the practice of pseudonymous engagement with the Mosaic legal tradition through literary

---

30. Najman, “Interpretation as Primordial Writing,” 408.

31. Ibid., 408.

production back to the book of Deuteronomy.<sup>32</sup> She identifies four features of Mosaic discourse, which she extrapolates from the way that Deuteronomy draws from, augments, and affirms earlier legal traditions (such as the Covenant Code). The way that the author of Deuteronomy was able to both modify/reinterpret the legal tradition of the Covenant Code while retaining the traditions of the Covenant Code served as a model for later tradants (such as the author of Jubilees, but also the Temple Scroll and others) to repeat the process by engaging with and developing both the message of Moses and the idea of Moses as an author. This is what she refers to as “Mosaic Discourse.” With this term, Najman builds on a Foucauldian understanding of the Author which is neither static, nor bound by any historical or literary factors. She writes:

As Foucault reminds us, it is not only *texts* that develop over time. The connected *concepts* of the authority and authorship of texts *also* have long and complex histories. Both models of anonymity and of pseudonymity can be found in the Hebrew Bible and in the extra-biblical texts of the Second Temple period. But even when an author is identified in a biblical text, it is unclear if that identification is to be considered *the same* as what moderns would characterize as *the author function*.<sup>33</sup>

Najman suggests that when ancient writers participated in pseudonymous writing the purpose was not to deceive their readers so much as to honor the tradition of the Author under whose

---

32. Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, JSJSup 77 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 48.

33. *ibid.*, 9–10. Here she is referencing Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” In *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, vol. 2 of *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, 3 vols. (New York: The New Press, 1999), 205–22.

name they wrote.<sup>34</sup> Historically speaking, of course, unless one posits that a real figure named Moses established the legal tradition of Israel, *all* Mosaic attribution is, in effect, pseudepigraphical and an expansion of Moses the Author. The tradition of Moses the Author grew in step with the “writings” of Moses.

The book of Jubilees, therefore, can be understood as participating within this tradition of Mosaic attribution which serves to faithfully augment the body of Mosaic teaching through the use of pseudepigraphy. The interpretation of the Torah by the writer of Jubilees is not meant to be understood as the “actual words” of Moses, but as a representation of “authentic teaching” which aligns with the function of Moses as an Author as an aide to reading the Torah.<sup>35</sup>

---

34. Najman notes a number of classical authors who seem to have practiced a form of pseudonymity where a student writes in the name of their master. In particular, she cites Iamblichus the Pythagorean who claims that it was “more honorable and praiseworthy” to use Pythagorus’ name, rather than one’s own name when publishing (De Vita Pythagorica 98). She also quotes Tertullian who suggests that certain New Testament work sought to be ascribed to Paul and Peter because the works in question were written by their disciples (Marc. 6.5). Likewise, she notes that Plato wrote under the name of his master, Socrates. See Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 13.

35. Ibid., 13.

#### 4.1.2 Memory, Mosaic Discourse, and Practice

Unsurprisingly, Najman's approach to Jubilees and Mosaic Discourse dovetails quite well with the idea of social and cultural memory theory. The way that Najman describes the growth and development of the Author extending beyond the historical and literary bounds of the "real" author is evocative of the process of memory construction. In fact, from my perspective, what Najman describes as Mosaic Discourse *is* a process of memory construction, though she does not use the terminology. What she describes as Mosaic Discourse is the same set of processes which enabled the author(s) of the Enochic works to expand on and speculate about the Watchers and the Flood, and which enabled the Genesis Apocryphon to draw from those traditions in its rewriting.<sup>36</sup> Given the fascination with the figure of Enoch in the Second Temple period (as evidenced by the plethora of texts which evoke the character), we could just as easily talk about "Enochic Discourse" when we discuss the various and sundry texts which draw from, expand, and reframe the enigmatic antediluvian figure. Furthermore, we can easily identify additional Discourses about the figures of Abram, Daniel, and David, all of whom are the subjects of expanding bodies of literary production in the Second Temple period, albeit not all as pseudepigrapha, and not all with the same foundational significance as that of Moses.

The ability to also talk about these other discourses, I think, signals to the broader applicability of Najman's ideas. From my perspective, the discussion can be further augmented by including language of cultural and social memory which brings with it a taxonomy for

---

36. The Genesis Apocryphon, of course, may have also drawn from the book of Jubilees, which only goes to further this point.

discussing the processes in sociological terms. Najman's terminology is able to describe *that* these various texts are participating in a particular discourse, but it does not *describe* the discourse nor the *social influences* or *social effects* of the discourses.

Although the Genesis Apocryphon and Jubilees generally participate in different sets of discourses (with notable exceptions, such as the division of the world sections), they engage with them in qualitatively different ways, despite the fact that both can be characterized as pseudepigrapha. The Genesis Apocryphon, although written largely in the first-person, takes a broadly *descriptive* approach to its memory construction through rewriting. Although there are parts of the text which portray its characters in ways that betray the author's own social frameworks (See chapter 3), the Genesis Apocryphon resists readings which could be characterized as didactic or halakhic. Jubilees, on the other hand, includes a framing narrative which encourages the reader to not only reshape the way that they think about the characters within their rewriting, but also encourage particular kinds of *practices*. In this sense Jubilees can be thought of as engaging with memory in more *prescriptive* discourses.

This shift from more *descriptive* rewriting (like the Genesis Apocryphon) to rewritings which incorporate *prescriptive* discourses (like Jubilees) illustrates the social dimensions of talking about these texts as *memory*. Even if the procedural, technical processes of interpretation and rewriting are identical, the social outcomes and concrete purposes of texts effect memory differently. For example, although the Genesis Apocryphon utilizes the literary form of a *wasf*, this does not bear meaningfully on the concrete social effects of the Genesis Apocryphon on memory. Even supposing the readers of Genesis Apocryphon believed Genesis

Apocryphon to be the authentic “historical”<sup>37</sup> accounts of Lamech, Noah, and Abram, the Genesis Apocryphon simply *does not ask* the reader to accept its account over and against any others. Its authenticity may be implied by its first-person rhetoric, but Genesis Apocryphon does not exhibit the same kinds of authority conferring strategies that we see in Jubilees.

On the other hand, the claim made by the book of Jubilees—that Moses received more information atop Mt. Sinai than is recorded in the books of the Pentateuch—is characterized as a kind of authoritative, revelatory literature which invites the reader to incorporate this new knowledge into their conception of the past in an act of cultural memory construction. The effect of this change on the remembered past does not remain in the abstract, however, but rather alters the way that the reader perceives the past with real-life, concrete, practical outcomes.

## 4.2 RESTRUCTURING THE PAST

### 4.2.1 The Structure of Time in Jubilees

One of the most notable features of the Book of Jubilees is its preoccupation with the correct division of time—both with respect to a 364 day year as well as longer units encompassing multiple years. Although neither the 364-day year nor the larger 7 and 49 year units (“weeks” of years and “jubilees,” respectively) are unique to the book of Jubilees, the proper division of time is into these units provides the central organizing principle for the book’s rewriting of

---

37. Here again, I am referring to the fact that, for the ancient readers of Jubilees, the character of Lamech/Noah/Abram was likely perceived as a real person from the distant past.

Gen 1–Exod 12.

The author of Jubilees makes it very clear that the proper division of time through a 364 day year is an essential practice for the correct observation of religious feasts and other holidays throughout the year. The pattern and significance of this 364 day cycle is explained to Moses after the Angel of the Presence retells the events of the Flood. The Angel of the Presence explains the division of the year into four seasons, each beginning with a memorial day (Jubilees 6:23) and consisting of thirteen-weeks. The system as a whole yields a fifty-two week year (Jubilees. 6:29) and is presented as “inscribed and ordained on the tablets of heaven” (6:31; Eth. ተቋርፀ : ወተሠርዐ : ውስተ : ጽላተ : ሰማይ [taq<sup>w</sup>arḁa wa-tašarḁa wəsta šəllāta samāy]).

The 364 day year is considered “complete” (Eth. ፍጹመ [fəṣṣuma]) by the Angel of the Presence such that proper observance maintains synchrony year-over-year. In other words, adding or subtracting days from this calendar renders a “revolving” calendar vis-à-vis the absolute reference of the heavenly tablets.<sup>38</sup> By comparison, the Angel of the Presence warns against the use of a lunar calendar because the lunar year is too short. Jubilees 6:36–37 reads:

(6:36) ወይከውኑ : እለ : ያስተሐይዱ : ወርኅ : በሐያጼ : ወርን ። ዕስመ  
: ትማስን : ይእቲ : ጊዜያተ : ወትቀድም : እምዓመታት : ለዓመት :  
ዐሠረ : ዕለተ ። (37) በእንተዝ : ይመጽእ : ዓመታተ : ሎሙ : እንዘ :  
ያማስኑ : ወይገብሩ : ዕለተ : ስምዕ : ምንንተ ። ወዕለተ : ርኩስተ :  
በዓለ : ወኩሉ : ይደምር : ወማዋዕላ : ቅዱሳተ : ርኩስ : ወዕለተ :

---

38. For an overview of calendar systems in the ancient world, including a discussion of “revolving calendars,” see Uwe Glessmer, “Calendars in the Qumran Scrolls,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*, ed. Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 213–78.

**ርድከት : ለዕለት : ቅድስት ። ዕስመ : ይስሕቱ : አውራጎ : ወስንበታተ  
ወብዓላተ : ወኢዩቤለ ።**

<sup>(6:36)</sup> *wa-yekawwenu ʔella yāstaḥayyeṣu warḥa ba-ḥuyāṣē warḥ ʔesma temās(s)en  
yeʔeti gizēyāta wa-teqaddem ʔem-ʔāmatāt la-ʔāmat ʔašur ʔelata <sup>(37)</sup> ba-ʔenta-ze  
yemaṣeʔ ʔāmatāta lomu ʔenza yāmāsenu wa-yegabru ʔelata semʔ menent wa-ʔelata  
rek<sup>w</sup>esta ba-ʔāla wa-k<sup>w</sup>ellu yedēmer wa-māwāʔelā qedusāta rekusā wa-ʔelata rek<sup>w</sup>esta  
laʔlat qedust ʔesma yeseḥetu ʔawrāḥa wa-sanbatāta wa-beʔālāta wa-ʔiyobēla*

<sup>(6:36)</sup> [36] VanderKam: There will be people who carefully observe the moon with lunar observations because it is corrupt (with respect to) the seasons and is early from year to year by ten days. <sup>(37)</sup> [37] Therefore years will come about for them when they will disturb (the year) and make a day of testimony something worthless and a profane day a festival. Everyone will join together the holy days with the profane and the profane day with the holy day, for they will err regarding the months, the sabbaths; the festivals, and the jubilee.

The contrast drawn to the lunar calendar combined with the fact that a 364 day calendar more closely approximates the actual period of Earth’s orbit around the sun (approx. 365.24 days) led most early interpreters of Jubilees to call the 364 day calendar a “solar” calendar.<sup>39</sup> Because some of the early Israelite festivals were tied to the agricultural year (for example, *Shavuot* was celebrated after the wheat harvest, see Exod 34:22), a solar calendar would indeed keep the calendar from drifting backward every year. Because the lunar (synodic) month<sup>40</sup> averages

---

39. Some recent contributions retain this designation such as Sacha Stern, *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar, 2nd Century BCE to 10th Century CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10.

40. The synodic month is derived from the length of time it takes the moon to process through its full cycle and is distinct from the period of the moon’s *orbit*.



approximately 29.5 days, a lunar year (twelve synodic months) lasts approximately 354 days. Without any intercalation the calendar would drift back 11.24 days per year (a so-called “revolving year”). Within a matter of only two-or-three years, the correlation between agricultural activity and cultic practice would break down.<sup>41</sup>

Recent treatments of the 364-day calendar, however, have eschewed the “solar” label in most cases.<sup>42</sup> The rationale for doing so is two-fold: first, although a 364-day year is *close* to the actual period of Earth’s orbit around the sun, the 1.24 day discrepancy is large enough that after fifty years, the calendar would have floated backward a full two-months.<sup>43</sup> In other words,

---

41. The major advantage of the lunar system is the ability for anybody to make reasonably accurate observations about when months begin and end. By contrast, the solar year requires a more subtle and long-term set of measurements. Most cultures which utilize a lunar calendar account for the discrepancy through the intercalation of an additional month every few years to bring the solar and lunar calendars into alignment. Most “lunar” calendars, therefore, are really lunisolar calendars, though exceptions (such as the Islamic calendar) do exist. See Glessmer, “Calendars in the Qumran Scrolls,” 214, 238; Wayne Horowitz, “The 360 and 364 Day Year in Ancient Mesopotamia,” *JANES* 24 (1996): 35–44.

42. Glessmer, “Calendars in the Qumran Scrolls,” 231; Jonathan Ben-Dov, “The 364-day Year at Qumran and in the Pseudepigrapha,” in *Calendars and Years II: Astronomy and Time in the Ancient and Medieval World*, ed. John Steele (Oxford: Oxbow, 2011), 69–105; Helen R. Jacobus, “Calendars,” in *T & T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. George J. Brooke and Charlotte Hempel (London: T & T Clark, 2018), 435–48.

43. Specifically, 62 days. This would be the equivalent of celebrating the new year near Hal-

although a 1.24 day drift may not be noticeable from one year to the next, the difference is significant *enough* to be noticeable within the average lifespan of an individual and would certainly conflict with agriculturally contingent festivals.<sup>44</sup> Second, while the Angel of the Presence expresses concern with the “corruption” of the yearly cycle, the rationale for the 364-day year is not explicitly connected to the solar year. In other words, when the Angel of the Presence decries the deficiencies of the lunar year, it does so with respect to the 364-day year and *not* with respect to the solar year. Instead, the problem with a 354-day (lunar) year, according to the Angel of the Presence is that the holidays, months, sabbaths, festivals, and jubilees will fall on the wrong days *according to the 364-day calendar*. This rationale is, essentially, circular. The 364-day year is an absolute measure of a “year” according to the book of Jubilees—it is inscribed on the “heavenly tablets” as such—and is not contingent or defined with reference to the sun or the moon. Instead, the author of Jubilees seems more concerned with the proper and even division of *seasons* (defined as three months) and *weeks* (a so-called heptadic structure) without the need for intercalation.<sup>45</sup>

---

loween.

44. Ben Zion Wacholder and Sholom Wacholder, “Patterns of Biblical Dates and Qumran ’s Calendar: The Fallacy of Jaubert’s Hypothesis,” *HUCA* 66 (1995): 1–40. This assumes, of course, that the various festivals continued to be connected to the agricultural cycle and not a purely utopian construct as Wacholder and Wacholder suggest.

45. Jonathan Ben-Dov and Stéphane Saulnier, “Qumran Calendars: A Survey of Scholarship 1980–2007,” *CurBR* 7.1 (2008): 124–68.

According to most reconstructions of Jubilees's 364-day calendar, the year was divided into four seasons consisting of exactly thirteen weeks (91 days). Each season was also divided into three months, though, because 91 does not divide evenly by 30, the third month in each season was counted as 31 days. Thus, each season was composed of two months of 30 days and one month of 31 days. Because these seasons' lengths divide evenly by seven, every season began on the same day of the week and followed an identical structure.<sup>46</sup> The advantage of such a system is its consistency year-over-year. Because the whole year divides evenly by seven, every day of the year (in every year) implicitly referred to a particular day of the week. Thus any scheduled event would fall on the same day of the week the following year, preventing the undesirable situation where a holiday would accidentally fall on a Sabbath (such as the memorial feasts prescribed in Jubilees 6:23).<sup>47</sup>

Although the mechanics of this calendar are reasonably well understood, its purpose and antiquity remain matters of debate. The seminal work of Annie Jaubert (building on Barthélemy) during the mid-20th century, despite numerous criticisms, remains the

---

46. In other words, every season began on the same day of the week, and the "nth" day of any given season was the same day of the week as the nth day of any other season.

47. John Sietze Bergsma, *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran: A History of Interpretation*, VTSup 115 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 233. So, if a person were born on a Tuesday, every subsequent birthday would also fall on a Tuesday. Likewise, there would be no need to buy a new calendar every year, since every year is the same "shape." See esp. Annie Jaubert, "Le calendrier des Jubilés et de la secte de Qumrân: Ses origines bibliques," *VT* 3.3 (1953): 250–64.

*Ausgangspunkt* for most discussions of the topic.<sup>48</sup> Her thesis took as its point of departure Barthélemy's theory that the Jewish 364-day year began on Wednesday, the day that the sun and moon were created, according to the Priestly creation account in Genesis 1:14–19.<sup>49</sup> To prove this idea, she began by noting that the book of Jubilees specifically prohibits beginning a journey on the sabbath (50:8, 12) and infers that, therefore, the various travel narratives in Jubilees ought to obey this rule, e.g. when Abram travelled, he would not have done so on the Sabbath according to Jubilees. She worked backwards through the descriptions of such journeys in Jubilees to confirm that, indeed, the only possible situation where the patriarchs would not have traveled on the sabbath, as described in Jubilees demands that the first day of the year be a Wednesday.<sup>50</sup> Jaubert further hypothesized that the 364-day calendar utilized by the author of Jubilees was, in fact, quite ancient and reflected the same views of the latest Priestly strata of the Hexateuch by applying the same method to the Hexateuch and yielding an

---

48. See especially Jaubert, “Le calendrier des Jubilés,” 250–64; idem, “Le calendrier des Jubilés et les jour liturgiques de la semaine,” *VT* 7.1 (1957): 35–61; idem, *La date de la Cène: Calendrier biblique et liturgie chrétienne* (Paris: Gabalda, 1957). The final work was translated into English as *The Date of the Last Supper*, trans. Isaac Rafferty (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1965); trans. of *La date de la Cène: Calendrier biblique et liturgie chrétienne* (Paris: Gabalda, 1957).

49. Dominique Barthélemy, “Notes en marge de publications récentes sur les manuscrits de Qumrân,” *RB* 59.2 (1952): 187–218; Jaubert, “Le calendrier des Jubilés,” 250; idem, *Date of the Last Supper*, 24–25.

50. idem, “Le calendrier des Jubilés,” 252–54; idem, *Date of the Last Supper*, 25–27.

identical result.<sup>51</sup> Thus, according to Jaubert, the 364-day calendar was the calendar of Second Temple Judaism and it was not until later—at the time of Ben Sira—that the lunar modifications known from the Rabbinic period were instituted.<sup>52</sup>

Jaubert's thesis has been challenged and modified over the past several decades, but the publication of a number of important calendrical texts from Qumran have—at least partially—served to support the broad strokes of her thesis that the 364 day calendar was in broad use during the late Second Temple period (though the more specific claims remain

---

51. Jaubert, "Le calendrier des Jubilés," 258; idem, *Date of the Last Supper*, 33.

52. idem, "Le calendrier des Jubilés," 254–58, 262–64; idem, *Date of the Last Supper*, 47–51.

controversial).<sup>53</sup> What seems apparent from the more recently discovered evidence from Qumran is that the system of keeping time during the Second Temple period was not a monolith. As VanderKam notes, among the Qumran texts the festivals were generally dated based on the 364-day calendar but there still remain cases where 354-day “lunar” year was used for more general purposes.<sup>54</sup> And while the book of Jubilees clearly participates in a tradition which privileged the 364-day year, the particulars of the Jubilees calendar and its theological and ideological underpinnings do not necessarily align with other advocates for the 364-day year (such as the Astronomical Book and the other calendrical texts from Qumran).<sup>55</sup> In other

---

53. Early reactions to her thesis were mixed. In particular, she was critiqued by Baumgarten (“The Calendar of the Book of Jubilees and the Bible,” in *Studies In Qumran Law*, ed. Joseph M. Baumgarten, vol. 24, SJLA [Leiden: Brill, 1977], 101–14; trans. of “Hlwḥ šl spr hywblym wh-mqr?,” *Tarbiz* 32 [1962]: 317–28) and more recently by Wacholder & Wacholder (“Patterns of Biblical Dates,” 1–40) and Ravid (“The Book of Jubilees and Its Calendar: A Reexamination,” *DSD* 10.3 [2003]: 371–94). Her thesis was adopted and slightly modified by Morgenstern who suggested that the first month of the quarter was 31 days, rather than the last month; (“The Calendar of the Book of Jubilees, Its Origin and Its Character,” *VT* 5.1 [1955]: 34–76), at least partially supported by VanderKam (“The Origin, Character, and Early History of the 364-Day Calendar: A Reassessment of Jaubert’s Hypothesis,” *CBQ* 41 [1979]: 390–411) and still retains broad support generally, if at times (seemingly) by virtue of its ubiquity. See Ben-Dov and Saulnier, “Qumran Calendars,” 142.

54. VanderKam, *Jubilees*, 1:45.

55. See Ben-Dov and Saulnier, “Qumran Calendars,” 159. Although the calendar of Jubilees is

words, one of the major observations from the most recent scholarship on the 364-day calendar tradition is that their commonalities are complimented by significant variation. So, although the Astronomical Book (1 Enoch 72–82), the Aramaic Levi Document, the Temple Scroll, MMT, 4Q252 and other astronomical (e.g., 4Q317; 4Q318), liturgical (Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice; 11QPsalms<sup>a</sup>; 4Q503; 4Q334) and many formally calendrical texts<sup>56</sup> from Qumran tend to prefer a 364-day calendar, they do not all seem to agree on *why* they follow it.<sup>57</sup> This diversity leaves open the question of what the purpose and significance of the 364-day calendar was for the author of the book of Jubilees and raises new questions about its polemical underpinnings.

The larger super-annual chronological cycles which concern the author of Jubilees also follow a heptadic structure. Throughout the work, the author refers to “weeks” of years (a distinct from other 364 day calendars inferred from the Qumran texts, many of the more general observations about their function apply to all such calendars and are frequently discussed together. The early discussions of Barthélemy and Jaubert mostly focused on Jubilees, as most of the Qumran scrolls had either not been discovered or not published at the time of writing. See Barthélemy, “Notes en marge,” 187–218 and Jaubert, “Le calendrier des Jubilés,” 35–61.

56. Ben Dov and Saulnier lists several dozen texts and fragments of these calendrical texts in their recent summary. See Ben-Dov and Saulnier, “Qumran Calendars,” 132–33.

57. For a concise summary of the calendrical issues in these texts, see James C. VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time*, LDSS (London: Routledge, 1998); Glessmer, “Calendars in the Qumran Scrolls,” 233–68; Ben-Dov and Saulnier, “Qumran Calendars,” 127–35; and Jacobus, “Calendars,” 435–48.

seven-year interval) and the length of time known as a “Jubilee” (seven “weeks” of years, or 49 years) both of which are heptadic units which reflect the same concern with sabbath cycles as the intra-annual divisions.<sup>58</sup> In fact, as VanderKam has observed, while the calendar (364-day year) is only mentioned in Jubilees 6, the chronological system (7-year “weeks” and jubilees) is a pervasive and first-order literary device for the author’s adaptation of Israel’s past.<sup>59</sup>

The heptadic quality of the entire system of Jubilees’s calendar and chronological systems is rooted in the traditions surrounding the sabbath and slave laws, which themselves show considerable development within the Hebrew Bible itself. The Sabbath and Jubilee legislation of Leviticus 25 likely draws from and adapts the earlier slave and fallow laws from the Covenant Code (Exod 21:1–11 and 23:10–11, respectively) and bears similarities with other ancient Near Eastern practices such as the *mīšarum* and *andurārum* known from Mesopotamia.<sup>60</sup>

---

58. Indeed, as cited above in the prologue, the work is concerned with the “the testimony for the event[s] of the years; for their weeks, for their jubilees in all the years of the world.”

59. James C. VanderKam, “Studies in the Chronology of the Book of Jubilees,” in *Studies in the Chronology of the Book of Jubilees*, JSJSup 62 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 522–44. He credits Wiesen-berg with this observation as well who writes, “His chronology, not his calendar, is the object of primary interest to the writer of the Book of Jubilees.” See Ernest Wiesen-berg, “The Jubilee of Jubilees,” *RdQ* 3.1 (1961): 3–40.

60. For the ostensible antecedents of the biblical Jubilee see Bergsma, *Jubilee*, 1–51. Other major publications on the idea of the biblical Jubilee include Robert G. North, *Sociology of the Biblical Jubilee*, AnBib 4 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1954); Jeffrey A. Fager, *Land Tenure and the Biblical Jubilee: Uncovering Hebrew Ethics through the Sociology of Knowledge*, JSOTSup



At the core of the Jubilee tradition in Leviticus 25 is an abstraction of the idea of sabbath “rest” on the seventh day of the week to longer seven-year units of time: the manumission of slaves, the forgiveness of debts, reallocation of ancestral lands, and letting the land lie fallow all occur in the seventh year, just as people were to rest on the sabbath day. Seven sets of these “weeks” completed a full cycle, which was then followed by a Jubilee year (year 50).<sup>61</sup>

Within the book of Jubilees, however, the term Jubilee is used to delineate a period of 49 years, rather than to specify the 50th year.<sup>62</sup> Thus, when the author of Jubilees describes an event occurring in the *nth* jubilee, he is referring to the event occurring within a particular 49-year span and not in the *nth* “jubilee year.” The term “week” or “week of years,” on the other hand, retains its traditional denotation.

#### 4.2.2 Time and the Social Frameworks of Memory

As I have alluded to, frameworks for ordering the past are not neutral and the use of particular systems bears on one’s interpretation of the past and understanding of the present. In other words, chronological systems can have a profound impact on processes of memory. Thus, the ordering of time with respect to the 364-day year, sabbath and jubilee traditions should be understood as not simply as the alignment of the past with an idiosyncratic numbering system, but as a reinterpretation and commemoration of Israel’s past within a discrete social and

---

155 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) and Jean-François Lefebvre, *Le jubilé biblique: Lv 25—exégèse et théologie*, OBO 194 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

61. Bergsma, *Jubilee*, 85–92.

62. VanderKam, “Chronology,” 524–25; Bergsma, *Jubilee*, 234.

ideological framework.

The insistence of the author of Jubilees that the 364-day year be maintained and his sharp rebuke of those who “closely observe the moon” (Jubilees 6:36) point toward the likelihood that calendar conflicts were a point of contention between the author of Jubilees and some of his contemporaries. This apparently polemical tone used by the author has prompted speculation about the possible causes of such polemic. VanderKam, for example has suggested that the impetus for the calendar dispute was Antiochus IV Epiphanes’ imposition of a Hellenistic luni-solar calendar in-or-around 167 BCE. According to VanderKam’s theory the 364-day calendar was the calendar in use by the Jerusalem temple in the late Persian and early Second Temple periods (generally following the argument of Jaubert). As evidence for Antiochus IV’s calendrical changes, VanderKam cites the numerous and infamous decrees made by Antiochus IV recounted in the books of Daniel and 1 & 2 Maccabees. Although he concedes that none of these texts demand a calendrical change (only that the decrees prohibited certain festivals) VanderKam reads Dan 7:25 to mean that the Seleucids did not only proscribe certain Jewish practices, but may have imposed a different calendar system.<sup>63</sup> Daniel 7:23–25 reads:

בְּן אָמַר חִיוֹתָא רַבִּיעִיתָא מְלָכוּ רַבִּיעִיא תְּהִיָּא בְּאַרְעָא דִּי תִשְׁנָא מִן־כָּל־מְלָכוֹתָא (Dan 7:23)  
וְתֵאכֹל כָּל־אַרְעָא וְתִדּוּשְׁנָהּ וְתִדְקַנָּה: (24) וְקִרְנֵיָּא עֲשֶׂר מִנָּה מְלָכוֹתָהּ עֲשֶׂרָה  
מְלָכִין יִקְמוּן וְאַחֲרֵין יָקוּם אַחֲרֵיהֶון וְהוּא יִשְׁנָא מִן־קִדְמָיָא וְתִלְתָּהּ מְלָכִין יִהְשָׁפֵל:  
(25) וּמִלִּין לְצַד עֲלִיָּא יִמְלֹל וּלְקַדִּישֵׁי עֲלִיוֹנִין יִבְלֹא וְיִסְבֵּר לְהִשְׁנָיָה זְמַנִּין וְדַת  
וְיִתְיַהֲבוּן בִּידָהּ עַד־עֶדְן וְעַד־גִּין וּפְלֵג עֶדְן:

---

63. C. VanderKam James, “2 Maccabees 6, 7a and Calendrical Change in Jerusalem,” *JSTJ* 12 (1981): 52–74

(Dan 7:23) Thus he said, “As for the fourth beast, there will be a fourth kingdom on the earth which will be different from all the other kingdoms and it will consume the whole earth and trample it and crush it. <sup>(24)</sup> As for the ten horns—from it [the kingdom] ten kings will rise up and another will rise up after them and that one will be different from the previous ones and will bring down three kings. <sup>(25)</sup> And he will speak words against the Most High and he will wear-out the Holy Ones of the Most High and he will try to change the times and the Law and they will be given into his hand for a time, two times, and half a time.”

VanderKam suggests that the Aramaic term זְמַנִּין in v. 25 may be equivalent to Hebrew מועדים or עתים and thus may be referring to particular appointed times and festivals.<sup>64</sup> VanderKam further argues that 1 Macc 1:59 and 2 Macc 6:7a allude to the practice of celebrating the king’s birthday with a sacrifice on a monthly basis (every *n*th day of the month) which would have demanded that the Jerusalem temple to adopt the Seleucid calendar. Thus, he reasons, this may be the time when the traditional 364-day calendar was replaced by the Hellenistic lunisolar calendar in the Jerusalem temple. When the Maccabees took power, however, they did not, apparently, revert back to the older calendar. The conservative “Essene” group which later formed the Qumran community opposed this innovation and separated themselves from the Jerusalem priesthood. Thus, VanderKam suggests that the calendar change/crisis may have been one of the major precipitating factors for the schism between the Qumran community and the Jerusalem temple authorities.<sup>65</sup> VanderKam’s theory, however, has been met with some resistance, particularly from scholars such as Philip Davies, among others.<sup>66</sup>

---

64. VanderKam, “2 Maccabees,” 59–60.

65. Ibid., 52.

66. Philip R. Davies, “Calendrical Change and Qumran Origins: An Assessment of Van-

For our purposes, the putative calendrical conflict to which Jubilees alludes points toward the *significance* of such traditions for everyday practice. For the author of Jubilees (and, perhaps for the Qumran community) the calendar was not simply a mundane system for bookkeeping, but was intimately tied to liturgical and cosmological order. Such a system aligns with God's created order which takes the seven-day week as its fundamental unit (as described in Gen 1). Such a system, one presumes, ought to respect the sanctity of the sabbath and prevent the overlap of holidays with the sabbath. The book of Jubilees does not appeal to observation or "science" but instead asserts the absolute fact of the 364-day year, as established by God and recorded on the heavenly tablets.

---

Although the book of Jubilees portrays the 364-day year as a principle *predicated on a* derKam's Theory," *CBQ* 45.1 (1983): 80–89; Wacholder and Wacholder, "Patterns of Biblical Dates," 1–40; Sacha Stern, "Qumran Calendars: Theory and Practice," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*, ed. Timothy Lim, with A. Graeme Auld, Larry W. Hurtado, and Alison Jack (London: T & T Clark, 2000), 179–86; idem, "The Babylonian Calendar at Elephantine," *ZPE* 130 (2000): 159–71; idem, *Calendar and Community*, 29 n. 136. The core of these criticisms boil down to the fact that VanderKam's theory is quite speculative and lacking in concrete *positive* evidence of his historical reconstruction. The theory provides a clean explanation for a pressing historical question, but is perhaps a bit over-simplified. Ben Dov and Saulnier observe that VanderKam's theory tends to be more popular among scholars who specifically study Essenes, while it is generally rejected by historians of the Second Temple period more generally. See Ben-Dov and Saulnier, "Qumran Calendars," 142.

seven-day week and related numerical properties, in fact, from the perspective of memory construction and reinforcement, the opposite is the case. By insisting on the utilization of a calendar whose distinguishing characteristic is its protection of sabbath laws (i.e., that no holidays will ever conflict with the sabbath), and the consistency of memorial days vis-à-vis the day of the week, the calendar reinforces the practices of observing the sabbath and the other holidays. It is a system which (though not, perhaps, designed for the purpose) reinforces some of the fundamental practices of early Judaism.

The larger cycles of weeks and jubilees likewise carry significance beyond their simple numerical values.

#### 4.3 BAD CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have attempted to differentiate the *manner* that Rewritten Bible texts may have engaged with the cultural memory. I will focus on the ways that Jubilees portrayed itself as an authoritative revelation and how that posture affected concrete *practice*. The book of Jubilees engages with cultural memory in a distinct fashion vis-à-vis Genesis Apocryphon by utilizing so-called “authority conferring strategies” which more directly engages the received tradition and calls on the reader to integrate her understanding of the past with the new information presented in the book. I have further argued that this distinction is significant because it illustrates the way that memory not only affects the intellectual conceptions of the past, but also carries with it *concrete practical effects which can be concretely observed*. Drawing on Hindy Najman’s work on Mosaic Discourse I discussed the ways that Jubilees portrays itself

as authoritative literature, how this portrayal may have been understood in antiquity and how it could, in some sense, both authorize and rewrite the Torah with halakhic implications. Finally, to illustrate the point, I discussed the calendrical and chronological system of the book of Jubilees as an example of the concrete ways that constructing memory can impact one's understanding of the past and present and ultimately affect the praxis of the reader.

## Bibliography

---

- Barthélemy, Dominique. "Notes en marge de publications récentes sur les manuscrits de Qumrân." *RB* 59.2 (1952): 187–218.
- Baumgarten, Joseph M. "The Calendar of the Book of Jubilees and the Bible." Pages 101–14 in *Studies In Qumran Law*. Edited by Joseph M. Baumgarten. Vol. 24. SJLA. Leiden: Brill, 1977. Translation of "Hlwḥ šl spr hywblym whmqr?" *Tarbiz* 32 (1962): 317–28.
- Ben-Dov, Jonathan. "The 364-day Year at Qumran and in the Pseudepigrapha." Pages 69–105 in *Calendars and Years II: Astronomy and Time in the Ancient and Medieval World*. Edited by John Steele. Oxford: Oxbow, 2011.
- Ben-Dov, Jonathan, and Stéphane Saulnier. "Qumran Calendars: A Survey of Scholarship 1980–2007." *CurBR* 7.1 (2008): 124–68.
- Bergsma, John Sietze. *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran: A History of Interpretation*. VTSup 115. Leiden: Brill, 2007.
- Ceriani, A. M. *Monumenta Sacra et Profana*. 2 vols. Milan: Bibliotheca Ambrosiana, 1861–1863.
- Charles, Robert Henry. *Maṣḥafa Kufālē or the Ethiopic Version of the Hebrew Book of Jubilees*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1895.
- . *The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis*. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1902.
- Collins, John J. "Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre" 14 (1979): 1–20.
- . "The Genre of the Book of Jubilees." Pages 737–55 in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*. *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*. Edited by Eric F. Mason, Kelley Coblentz Bautch, Angela Kim Harkins, and Daniel K. Machiela. 2 vols. STDJ 153. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- Davies, Philip R. "Calendrical Change and Qumran Origins: An Assessment of VanderKam's Theory." *CBQ* 45.1 (1983): 80–89.
- Dillmann, August. "Beiträge aus dem Buch der Jubiläen zur Kritik des Pentateuch-Textes." *SPAW* 15 (1883): 323–40.
- . "Das Buch der Jubiläen oder die kleine Genesis." *JBW* 2 (1849): 230–56, 3 (1850–51): 1–96.
- . *Maṣḥafa Kufālē sive Liber Jubilaeorum*. Keil: C.G.L. van Maak; London: Williams & Norgate, 1859.

- Dimant, Devorah. "Two 'Scientific' Fictions: The So-Called Book of Noah and the Alleged Quotation of Jubilees in CD 16:3-4." Pages 230–49 in *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint Presented to Eugene Ulrich*. Edited by Peter W. Flint, James C. VanderKam and Emanuel Tov. VTSup 101. Leiden: Brill, 2006.
- Erho, Ted. "New Ethiopic Witnesses to Some Old Testament Pseudepigrapha." *BSOAS* 76 (2013): 75–97.
- Ewald, Heinrich. "Ueber die Aethiopischen Handschriften zu Tübingen." *ZKM* 5 (1844): 164–201.
- Fager, Jeffrey A. *Land Tenure and the Biblical Jubilee: Uncovering Hebrew Ethics through the Sociology of Knowledge*. JSOTSup 155. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993.
- Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?" Pages 205–22 in *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. Edited by James D. Faubion. Vol. 2 of *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*. 3 vols. New York: The New Press, 1999.
- Fraade, Steven. "Interpretive Authority in the Studying Community at Qumran." *JJS* 44 (1993): 46–69.
- Garcia Martinez, Florentino. "The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees." Pages 51–69 in *Between Philology and Theology: Contributions to the Study of Ancient Jewish Interpretation*, by Florentino Garcia Martinez. Edited by Hinidy Najman and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar. STDJ 162. Leiden: Brill, 2012. Translation of Florentino García Martínez. "Las Tablas Celestes en el Libro de los Jubileos." Pages 333–49 in *Palabra y Vida: Homenaje a José Alonzo Díaz en su 70 Cumpleaños*. Edited by A. Vargas-Machuca and Gregorio Ruiz. PUPCM 58. Madrid: Ediciones Universidad de Comillas, 1984.
- Glessmer, Uwe. "Calendars in the Qumran Scrolls." Pages 213–78 in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment*. Edited by Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Hanneken, Todd R. *The Subversion of the Apocalypses in the Book of Jubilees*. EJL 34. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.
- Horowitz, Wayne. "The 360 and 364 Day Year in Ancient Mesopotamia." *JANES* 24 (1996): 35–44.
- Jacobus, Helen R. "Calendars." Pages 435–48 in *T & T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Edited by George J. Brooke and Charlotte Hempel. London: T & T Clark, 2018.
- Jaubert, Annie. "Le calendrier des Jubilés et de la secte de Qumrân: Ses origines bibliques." *VT* 3.3 (1953): 250–64.
- . "Le calendrier des Jubilés et les jour liturgiques de la semaine." *VT* 7.1 (1957): 35–61.
- . *The Date of the Last Supper*. Translated by Isaac Rafferty. Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1965. Translation of *La date de la Cène: Calendrier biblique et liturgie chrétienne*. Paris: Gabalda, 1957.



- Kreps, Anne. "From Jewish Apocrypha to Christian Tradition: Citations of Jubilees in Epiphanius's Panarion." *CH* 87.2 (2018): 345–70.
- Lefebvre, Jean-François. *Le jubilé biblique: Lv 25—exégèse et théologie*. OBO 194. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003.
- Morgenstern, Julian. "The Calendar of the Book of Jubilees, Its Origin and Its Character." *VT* 5.1 (1955): 34–76.
- Najman, Hindy. "Interpretation as Primordial Writing: Jubilees and Its Authority." *JSJ* 30.4 (1999): 379–410.
- . *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*. JSJSup 77. Leiden: Brill, 2003.
- North, Robert G. *Sociology of the Biblical Jubilee*. AnBib 4. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1954.
- Ravid, Liora. "The Book of Jubilees and Its Calendar: A Reexamination." *DSD* 10.3 (2003): 371–94.
- Reed, Annette Yoshiko. "Retelling Biblical Retellings: Epiphanius, the Pseudo-Clementines, and the Reception-History of Jubilees." Pages 304–21 in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*. Edited by Menahem Kister, Hillel Newman, Michael Segal, and Ruth Clements. STDJ 113. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
- Stern, Sacha. *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar, 2nd Century BCE to 10th Century CE*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- . "Qumran Calendars: Theory and Practice." Pages 179–86 in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*. Edited by Timothy Lim, with A. Graeme Auld, Larry W. Hurtado, and Alison Jack. London: T & T Clark, 2000.
- . "The Babylonian Calendar at Elephantine." *ZPE* 130 (2000): 159–71.
- Tisserant, E. "Fragments syriaques du Livre des Jubilés." *RB* 30 (1921): 55–86, 206–32.
- VanderKam, C., James. "2 Maccabees 6, 7a and Calendrical Change in Jerusalem." *JSJ* 12 (1981): 52–74.
- VanderKam, James C. *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time*. LDSS. London: Routledge, 1998.
- . *Jubilees: A Commentary*. 2 vols. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2018.
- . "Moses Trumping Moses: Making The Book Of Jubilees." Pages 25–44 in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts*. Edited by Sarianna Metso, Hindy Najman, and Eileen Schuller. STDJ 92. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- . "Studies in the Chronology of the Book of Jubilees." Pages 522–44 in *Studies in the Chronology of the Book of Jubilees*. JSJSup 62. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- . *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees*. HSM 14. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977.

- VanderKam, James C., ed. *The Book of Jubilees*. 2 vols. CSCO 510-11; SA 87-88. Leuven: Peeters, 1989.
- . “The Origin, Character, and Early History of the 364-Day Calendar: A Reassessment of Jaubert’s Hypothesis.” *CBQ* 41 (1979): 390-411.
- Wacholder, Ben Zion. “Jubilees as the Super Canon: Torah-Admonition versus Torah-Commanment.” Pages 195-211 in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge 1995. Published in Honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten*. Edited by John Kampen, Moshe Bernstein, and Florentino García Martínez. STDJ 23. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Wacholder, Ben Zion, and Sholom Wacholder. “Patterns of Biblical Dates and Qumran ’s Calendar: The Fallacy of Jaubert’s Hypothesis.” *HUCA* 66 (1995): 1-40.
- Wiesenberg, Ernest. “The Jubilee of Jubilees.” *RdQ* 3.1 (1961): 3-40.