

The Messianic Scapegoat in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*

. . . for there is no light except that which issues from darkness, for when that “Other Side” is subdued the Holy One is exalted in glory. In fact, there can be no true worship except that which comes from darkness, and there is no good except that which comes from evil.

—Zohar II.184a

Introduction

In the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29, the Deity reveals to the seer one of the most profound eschatological mysteries. The revelation deals with the appearance of a future messianic leader of humankind, an ambiguous character depicted in very obscure terms. *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29:4–13 reads:

<And I looked> and saw a man going out from the left side of the heathen. Men and women and children, great crowds, went out from the side of the heathen and they worshiped him. <And> while I was still looking, those on the right side went out, and some shamed this man, and some struck him, and some worshiped him. <And> I saw that as they worshiped him, Azazel ran and worshiped, and having kissed his face he turned and stood behind him. And I said, “Eternal Mighty One! Who is this shamed and struck man, worshiped by the heathen with Azazel?” And

he answered and said, "Hear, Abraham, the man whom you saw shamed and struck and again worshiped is the laxity of the heathen for the people who will come from you in the last days, in this twelfth hour of the age of impiety. And in the [same] twelfth period of the close of my age I shall set up the man from your seed which you saw. Everyone from my people will [finally] admit him, while the sayings of him who was as if called by me will be neglected in their minds. And that you saw going out from the left side of the picture and those worshiping him, this [means that] many of the heathen will hope in him. <And> those of your seed you saw on the right side, some shaming and striking him, and some worshiping him, many of them will be misled on his account. And he will tempt those of your seed who have worshiped him."¹

This depiction has been viewed by experts as the most puzzling passage of the entire apocalypse.² Numerous interpretations have been offered that discern in these passages either a later Christian interpolation³ or the original conceptual layer.⁴ The vague portrayal of the main characters has also provoked impassioned debates about whether they display features of Jewish or Christian messiahs. These traditional polemics, however, have not often adequately considered the overall conceptual universe of the text, especially its cultic framework. More specifically, such interpretations have overlooked several features of the passage, including references to Azazel and his worship of the messianic figure, that hint to sacerdotal traditions.

Recent studies on the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, however, point to the importance of cultic motifs in the text. Some scholars have even suggested that a sacerdotal vision permeates the whole fabric of the text; Daniel Harlow, for example, argues that priestly concerns affect the entire conceptual framework of the apocalypse.⁵ His research shows that all the main characters of the story appear to be endowed with priestly credentials, and this includes not only positive figures, such as Yahoel and Abraham, but also negative ones, including Azazel, Terah, and Nahor, who are depicted as corrupted sacerdotal servants causing pollution of heavenly and earthly sanctuaries.

Many scholars agree that the sacerdotal features of the text appear to be connected with the Yom Kippur ordinance, the central atoning

rite in the Jewish tradition, which culminated in two portentous cultic events: the procession of the high priestly figure into the Holy of Holies and the banishment of the scapegoat to the wilderness. Scholars have noted that the peculiar movements of the main characters of the Slavonic apocalypse resemble the aforementioned sacerdotal events. While Yahoel and Abraham ascend to the celestial Holy of Holies, the main antagonist of the story, the fallen angel Azazel, is banished into a supernal wilderness. In this sacerdotal depiction, the main angelic protagonist of the story, the angel Yahoel, appears to be understood as the heavenly high priest, while the main antagonist of the text, the fallen angel Azazel, as the eschatological scapegoat. Further, scholars have noted that in chapters 13 and 14 of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* Yahoel appears to be performing the climactic action of the Yom Kippur atoning ceremony—namely, the enigmatic scapegoat ritual through which impurity was transferred onto a goat named Azazel and then, through the medium of this animal, dispatched into the wilderness.

This connection with the main atoning rite of the Jewish tradition and its chief sacerdotal vehicle, the scapegoat Azazel, is important for our study of the messianic passage found in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29. In that text Azazel appears to be playing a distinctive role in the course of his interaction with the messianic character whom he kisses and even worships. The sudden appearance of Azazel, the chief cultic agent of the Yom Kippur ceremony, might not be coincidental in our passage, as the sacerdotal dynamics of the atoning rite appear to be profoundly affecting the messianic characters depicted in chapter 29 of the Slavonic apocalypse.

In view of these traditions it is necessary to explore the meaning of the messianic passage in chapter 29 in the broader sacerdotal framework of the entire text and, more specifically, in its relation to the Yom Kippur motifs. Some peculiar details in the depiction of the messianic character point to his connection with the scapegoat ritual in which he himself appears to be envisioned as a messianic scapegoat.

I. Messianic Reinterpretation of the Scapegoat Imagery in Second- and Third-Century Christian Authors

Many scholars note how the messianic figure in chapter 29 is depicted in terms reminiscent of Christian motifs, specifically the traditions

about the passion of Jesus and his betrayal by Judas.⁶ For instance, in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the messianic figure is described as being shamed and stricken and also as being kissed by Azazel. The abuses the messianic figure endures in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29 have often been construed as allusions to Jesus' suffering, and Azazel's kiss to the infamous kiss of Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane.⁷ While the allusions in the Gospels accounts of the betrayal and passion of Christ have been much discussed, insufficient attention has been given to certain connections between the messianic passage and later Christian interpretations. Yet, in the second century CE, when the *Apocalypse of Abraham* was likely composed, several Christian authors sought to interpret Jesus' passion and betrayal against the background of the scapegoat rite. In these Christian reappraisals, Jesus was viewed as the scapegoat of the atoning rite who, through his suffering and humiliation, took upon himself the sins of the world. Although scholars often note the similarities in the depictions of the messiah in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29 and some biblical Jesus traditions, they are often reluctant to address these second-century developments in which the Christian messiah's suffering and humiliation received a striking sacerdotal significance. Given the permeating influence of the Yom Kippur sacerdotal imagery on the Slavonic apocalypse, we need to explore more closely these postbiblical Christian elaborations.

One of the earliest remaining witnesses to the tradition of the Christian messiah as the scapegoat⁸ can be found in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, a text scholars usually date to the end of the first century or the beginning of the second century CE,⁹ which is the time when the *Apocalypse of Abraham* was likely composed. *Epistle of Barnabas* 7:6–11 reads:

Pay attention to what he commands: "Take two fine goats who alike and offer them as a sacrifice; and let the priest take one of them as a whole burnt offering for sins." But what will they do with the other? "The other," he says, "is cursed." Pay attention to how the type of Jesus is revealed. "And all of you shall spit on it and pierce it and wrap a piece of scarlet wool around its head, and so let it be cast into the wilderness." When this happens, the one who takes the goat leads it into the wilderness and removes the wool, and

places it on a blackberry bush, whose buds we are accustomed to eat when we find it in the countryside. (Thus the fruit of the blackberry bush alone is sweet.) And so, what does this mean? Pay attention: “The one they take to the altar, but the other is cursed,” and the one that is cursed is crowned. For then they will see him in that day wearing a long scarlet robe around his flesh, and they will say, “Is this not the one we once crucified, despising, piercing, and spitting on him? Truly this is the one who was saying at the time that he was himself the Son of God.” For how is he like that one? This is why “the goats are alike, fine, and equal,” that when they see him coming at that time, they may be amazed at how much he is like the goat. See then the type of Jesus who was about to suffer. But why do they place the wool in the midst of the thorns? This is a type of Jesus established for the church, because whoever wishes to remove the scarlet wool must suffer greatly, since the thorn is a fearful thing, and a person can retrieve the wool only by experiencing pain. And so he says: those who wish to see me and touch my kingdom must take hold of me through pain and suffering.¹⁰

In this passage the suffering of Christ is compared with the treatment of the scapegoat on Yom Kippur.¹¹ It is important for our study that the *Epistle of Barnabas* depicts the scapegoat alongside another important animal of the atoning rite: the sacrificial goat of YHWH.¹² *Barnabas* underlines the fact of similarity, or even twinship, of the goats who shall be “alike, fine, and equal.” As we will see later, this dual typology might be present in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29, which appears to describe not one but two messianic figures, one of whom proceeds from the left side of the Gentiles and the other from the right lot of Abraham.

Another important feature of the passage from the *Epistle of Barnabas* is its depiction of the scapegoat’s exaltation—that is to say, the depiction in which he is crowned and dressed in a long scarlet robe.¹³ This motif of the scapegoat’s exaltation is also present in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, in which the messianic scapegoat is repeatedly venerated by worshipers from both lots and by Azazel.

In light of the sacerdotal dimension of the messianic passage from chapter 29, where the cultic veneration of the messianic figure is couched in Yom Kippur symbolism, we should also note that the *Epistle of Barnabas* gives sacerdotal significance to the scarlet wool placed on the scapegoat by portraying it as the high priestly robe of Christ at his second coming.¹⁴ In this regard, the *Epistle of Barnabas* is not a unique extrabiblical testimony to early Christian understanding of Jesus as the scapegoat. A close analysis of the Christian literature of the second and third centuries CE shows that this interpretation was quite popular among principal Christian sources of the period. For example, in chapter 40 of his *Dialogue with Trypho*, a text written in the middle of the second century CE, Justin Martyr compares Jesus with the scapegoat. In this text, he conveys the following tradition:

Likewise, the two identical goats which had to be offered during the fast (one of which was to be the scapegoat, and the other the sacrificial goat) were an announcement of the two comings of Christ: Of the first coming, in which your priests and elders send him away as a scapegoat, seizing him and putting him to death; of the second coming, because in that same place of Jerusalem you shall recognize him whom you had subjected to shame, and who was a sacrificial offering for all sinners who are willing to repent and to comply with that fast which Isaiah prescribed when he said, *loosing the strangle of violent contracts*, (διασπώντες στραγγαλιὰς βιαίων συναλλαγμάτων)¹⁵ and to observe likewise all the other precepts laid down by him (precepts which I have already mentioned and which all believers in Christ fulfill). You also know very well that the offering of the two goats, which had to take place during the fast, could not take place anywhere else except in Jerusalem.¹⁶

Although Justin's text seems to be written later than the *Epistle of Barnabas*, it is not a reworking of *Barnabas's* traditions but instead represents independent attestation to a traditional typology.¹⁷ John Dominic Crossan observes:

[T]here are significant differences between the application in *Barnabas* 7 and *Dialogue* 40 that indicate that Justin is

not dependent on Barnabas. The main one is the divergent ways in which each explains how two goats can represent the (two comings of) the one Christ. For *Barnabas* 7 the two goats must be alike. For *Dialogue* 40 the two goats and the two comings are both connected to Jerusalem. They represent, therefore, two independent versions of a traditional typology foretelling a dual advent of Jesus, one for Passion and death, the other for *parousia* and judgment.¹⁸

Further, in his understanding of the scapegoat ritual, Justin reveals striking similarities with the interpretation of the Yom Kippur imagery in extrabiblical Jewish materials.¹⁹ It points to a possibility that early Christian interpretations were developed in dialogue with contemporaneous Jewish traditions. Examining this dialogue can be important for understanding not only early Christian accounts of the messianic scapegoat but also Jewish messianic reinterpretations, similar to those found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* where messianic speculations were conflated with the scapegoat symbolism.

Justin also makes several interesting appropriations of the biblical traditions that the *Epistle of Barnabas* does not make. One of them is his usage of the tradition from Isaiah 58:6 to elaborate the symbolism of the messianic scapegoat. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra notes that this appropriation represents the first instance when this passage from Isaiah is viewed in the context of the Yom Kippur imagery.²⁰ The Septuagint version of this passage from Isaiah uses the language of “loosing,”²¹ which is similar to some formulae from the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, to which we will return later in our study.

In Tertullian’s *Against Marcion* 3:7 and *Against the Jews* 14:9, both works written in the beginning of the third century CE, one can again see a messianic reinterpretation of the scapegoat imagery.²² *Against Marcion* 3:7 reads:

If also I am to submit an interpretation of the two goats which were offered at the Fast, are not these also figures of Christ’s two activities? They are indeed of the same age and appearance because the Lord’s is one and the same aspect: because he will return in no other form, seeing he has to be recognized by those of whom he has suffered injury. One of them however, surrounded with scarlet, cursed

and spit upon and pulled about and pierced, was by the people driven out of the city into perdition, marked with manifest tokens of our Lord's passion: while the other, made an offering for sins, and given as food to the priests of the temple, marked the tokens of his second manifestation, at which, when all sins have been done away, the priests of the spiritual temple, which is the Church, were to enjoy as it were a feast of our Lord's grace, while the rest remain without a taste of salvation.²³

In his testimonies to the messianic scapegoat, Tertullian appears to rely on the traditions conveyed by *Barnabas* and Justin.²⁴ His knowledge of the original typology remains uncertain.

As we conclude this section, let us again underline the similarities in the aforementioned Christian reinterpretations of the scapegoat ritual and the messianic passage in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29. First, all the Christian testimonies considered here combine the imagery of the two goats chosen during the Yom Kippur ceremony, sometimes even emphasizing their equality. This fact might be a curious parallel to the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29 in which one can possibly detect the depiction of not one but two intertwining messianic figures—one positive and the other negative.

Second, it is intriguing that in *Barnabas*, as in the Slavonic apocalypse, the Messiah's humiliation is paradoxically linked with his exaltation. The curses coincide with the crown. Such exaltation, both in Christian interpretations and in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, is laced with significant cultic features, including the motifs of the worship and transference to the messianic character of attributes of the various characters involved in the Yom Kippur ceremony. In these peculiar reinterpretations, which take place both in the Christian texts and in the Jewish apocalypse, one can see elaborate cultic dynamics that attempt to bring corresponding messianic characters into the complex world of the Yom Kippur rite. One of the most important nexuses of this sacerdotal process is without doubt the identification of this messianic character with the scapegoat figure.

Another important similarity is that the aforementioned Christian authors depict the two emblematic animals of the Yom Kippur ceremony as two manifestations of Christ—one in suffering and another in victory. Justin effectively summarizes this idea when he suggests,

in the beginning of his passage, that “likewise, the two identical goats which had to be offered during the fast (one of which was to be the scapegoat, and the other the sacrificial goat) were an announcement of the two comings of Christ.”²⁵ This is a striking parallel to the traditions in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29 in which the messianic figure appears to proceed initially from the left lot, associated with Azazel, and later from the right lot, tied to Abraham.²⁶

Having examined these Christian interpretations of the messianic scapegoat, let us now proceed to a closer investigation of similar developments in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.

II. Messianic Reinterpretation of the Yom Kippur Imagery in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*

Initial Procession of the Messianic Figure from the Left Side

The enigmatic revelation given to the seer in chapter 29 of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* begins with the appearance of a human figure emerging from the left side: “And I looked and saw a man going out from the left side of the heathen.”²⁷ This tradition of the messianic figure’s procession from the left side, the side associated in the text with the lot of Gentiles, was often taken to be puzzling, since the well-known Jewish and Christian candidates for the messianic office, including Jesus himself, were, at least historically, closely linked with the lot of Israel. This tradition, however, may have more than a merely historical significance but rather a cultic and eschatological significance as well. Moreover, this tradition cannot be fully understood unless we examine the meaning and the role of the two eschatological lots in the overall conceptual framework of the Slavonic apocalypse.

Graphic depictions of the two lots, one associated with the nation of Israel and the other with the heathen, are widely dispersed throughout the second, apocalyptic, part of the pseudepigraphon. It was noted that these portrayals are reminiscent not only of the eschatological portions of humanity found in the Qumran materials²⁸ that associate these entities with the heathen and Israel but also of the imagery of sacrificial lots prominent in the Yom Kippur ritual. Indeed, the word “lot” (Slav. часть) in the Slavonic text appears to be connected to the Hebrew גורל, a term prominent in cultic descriptions of the atoning rite

found in biblical and rabbinic accounts,²⁹ as well as the eschatological developments in the Qumran materials.³⁰ Yet, in the Slavonic pseudepigraphon, these cultic entities, known from classic depictions of the Yom Kippur ordinance, receive a new apocalyptic and eschatological significance. In this respect, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* shares much with the Qumran materials. For instance, as in Qumran materials, in which the lots are often linked to fallen angelic figures or translated heroes (like Belial or Melchizedek), in the Slavonic apocalypse, the portions of humanity are now tied to the main characters of the story, namely, the fallen angel Azazel³¹ and the translated patriarch Abraham.³² The association of the left lot with the infamous fallen angel bearing the name of the scapegoat solidifies the close link of the cultic and eschatological dimensions of the Slavonic apocalypse. In this context, the procession of the messianic figure from the left side, which is unambiguously associated in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* with Azazel, emphasizes the close connections of the messianic figure with the portion of the scapegoat.

Another feature that strengthens the messianic character's association with the left lot is that immediately after his emergence from the left side, in the beginning of the passage, the crowds who worshipped this leader also came from the left side: "Men and women and children, great crowds, went out from the side of the heathen and they worshiped him."³³ In this description, the left lot is again viewed as an abode of the Gentiles. The left side is thus associated not only with the provenance and procession of the messianic figure but also with his initial cultic veneration and exaltation.

The Maltreatment of the Messiah

The second important conceptual nexus concerns details about the treatment of the messianic figure in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29, who is portrayed as being shamed and stricken. Often this humiliation and abuse has been interpreted as allusions to the suffering that Jesus endured before his crucifixion. Yet other important symbolic markers in the text, such as the association with the left lot and the messiah's interaction with the celestial scapegoat of the story of the fallen angel Azazel, suggest that the messianic figure is also connected with the Yom Kippur cultic settings. If there is such a connection, then abuses

endured by the messianic character may reflect the Yom Kippur ceremony in which the infamous cultic animal was maltreated and shamed in a ritual fashion by his handlers and by the people.³⁴ *M. Yoma* 6:4 recounts the ritual humiliation and abuse visited upon the scapegoat:

. . . And they made a causeway for it because of the Babylonians who used to pull its hair, crying to it, “Bear [our sins] and be gone! Bear [our sins] and be gone!” Certain of the eminent folk of Jerusalem used to go with him to the first booth. There were ten booths from Jerusalem to the ravine [which was at a distance of] ninety ris (which measure seven and a half to the mile).³⁵

Further, *m. Yoma* 6:6 notes that the scapegoat was pushed from behind by his handlers into the ravine and its body was broken in pieces; it reads:

What did he do? He divided the thread of crimson wool and tied one half to the rock and the other half between its horns, and he pushed it from behind; and it went rolling down, and before it reaches half the way down the hill it was broken in pieces.³⁶

It is clear that the aforementioned Christian interpreters of the second and third centuries CE, who tried to link Jesus’ suffering with the Yom Kippur imagery, were aware of the Jewish cultic traditions of the scapegoat’s mistreatment. For instance, *Epistle of Barnabas* mentions the abuses endured by the scapegoat, including prodding and spitting; it reads: “And all of you shall spit on it and pierce it and wrap a piece of scarlet wool around its head, and so let it be cast into the wilderness.”³⁷

Similarly, in passages dealing with the scapegoat traditions, Tertullian describes the maltreatment of the cultic animal as follows:

One of them however, surrounded with scarlet, cursed and spit upon and pulled about and pierced, was by the people driven out of the city into perdition, marked with manifest tokens of our Lord’s passion. . . .³⁸

One of them, however, which was surrounded with scarlet, cursed and spat upon and perforated and punctured, was driven outside the city by the people to ruin. . . .³⁹

Some scholars have also suggested that the crimson thread attached to the head of the scapegoat might symbolize the suffering and torture of the scapegoat.⁴⁰ In Christian interpretations, the crimson band was often connected with Jesus' crown of thorns.

Some passages in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* also seem cognizant of traditions concerning ritual humiliation in their portrayals of the celestial scapegoat, namely, the fallen angel Azazel. Chapters 13 and 14 offer an eschatological version of the scapegoat ritual in which the heavenly priest Yahoel and his apprentice patriarch Abraham appear as sacerdotal servants who impose ritual curses on the fallen angel bearing the name of the scapegoat. This motif is found, for example, in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 13:7–14 in which an enigmatic interaction occurs between the high priest Yahoel and the scapegoat Azazel:

Reproach is on you, Azazel! Since Abraham's portion is in heaven, and yours is on earth. Since you have chosen it and desired it to be the dwelling place of your impurity. Therefore the Eternal Lord, the Mighty One, has made you a dweller on earth. And because of you [there is] the wholly-evil spirit of the lie, and because of you [there are] wrath and trials on the generations of impious men. Since the Eternal Mighty God did not *send* the righteous, in their bodies, to be in your hand, in order to affirm through them the righteous life and the destruction of impiety. . . . Hear, adviser! Be shamed by me, since you have been appointed to tempt not to all the righteous! Depart from this man! You cannot deceive him, because he is the enemy of you and of those who follow you and who love what you desire. For behold, the garment which in heaven was formerly yours has been set aside for him, and the corruption which was on him has gone over to you.⁴¹

It has been previously observed that Yahoel's address to the scapegoat here has a ritual significance, as it bears resemblance to several actions of the high priest and handlers of the scapegoat on Yom

Kippur. Reproaching and shaming of Azazel in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 13:7 and 13:11 are reminiscent of such ritual curses pronounced upon the scapegoat.⁴²

If the depiction of the humiliated messiah in chapter 29 is seen in the light of the aforementioned traditions, it is possible that the authors of the text may have tried to establish there a subtle connection between the humiliation of Azazel and the messianic figure, so as to reinforce the link between the two ambiguous characters and posit the messianic figure as an earthly envoy of Azazel and maybe even an earthly version of the heavenly scapegoat.

The Messiah and Azazel

The messianic narrative in chapter 29 reaches an important conceptual crux in the messiah's reception by Azazel. Here we observe one of the most puzzling encounters in the Slavonic apocalypse, an enigmatic interaction between the celestial scapegoat and its human counterpart. The providential ties between the two eschatological characters are then sealed through the mysterious kiss of the arch-demon: "And I saw that as they worshiped him, Azazel ran and worshiped, and having kissed his face he turned and stood behind him."⁴³

This perplexing scene appears to further solidify the connections between the messianic imagery and the cultic scapegoat traditions. While portrayals of the eschatological characters' mistreatment and even death are common in Jewish and Christian accounts, Azazel's sudden appearance in the eschatological narrative in chapter 29 is distinctive and may indicate that the messianic tradition in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is closely connected with the Yom Kippur rite. Further, certain details of the messianic character's reception by Azazel seem to have here a pronounced cultic meaning.⁴⁴ That Azazel embraces him is especially significant. The scapegoat offering on the Day of Atonement was often understood in the Jewish tradition as a gift to Azazel, with the demon envisioned as a recipient of the ominous sacrificial portion. This notion is already imbedded in the earliest form of the atoning rite, finding its confirmation first in the conspicuous designations of the goats, one designated as the goat for the Lord and the other for Azazel,⁴⁵ and second in the peculiar spatial dynamics of the Yom Kippur ceremony, according to which the sacerdotal animal's expulsion into the wilderness coincided with the human celebrant's

entrance into the Holy of Holies. In this inverse cultic symmetry, the demonic and divine realms are depicted as mirroring one another, as both characters enter into their respective domains, each ruled by an antagonistic power.

The celebrants' entrance into their respective realms also had a striking theophanic significance. Although this dimension was conspicuous in the symbolism of the high priest's entrance into the Holy of Holies, by which he was breaching the threshold of the divine Presence, it was also reflected negatively, in a deconstructed form, in the portrayals of the scapegoat as he was breaching the boundaries of the netherworld. Their respective entrances into the new realms affected the ontological condition of the characters, which was manifested in their wardrobes. Similar to the garment of the high priest, which was depicted as a copy of the macrocosm and decorated with the divine Name⁴⁶ and attributes, the scapegoat's attire was decorated with curses and sins, symbolized by the red color of its crimson band. And like the high priest's cultic garments, which went through notable changes on his path toward the divine presence, the crimson "garment" of the scapegoat was also miraculously transformed into color on its way to Azazel's realm.⁴⁷

In view of these cultic developments, the figure of the scapegoat appears overlaid with theophanic features in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. Indeed, scholars have noted that the fallen angel Azazel, conceived in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* as a celestial scapegoat, is portrayed as an imitator of the most exalted theophanic attributes, including the attribute of the divine Glory, *Kavod*.⁴⁸ Considering this unusual adaptation of traditional theophanic imagery in the portrayals of demonic characters, one might wonder whether the interaction between Azazel and the messianic character in chapter 29 contains similar traditions, and thus might too represent one of the epiphanies of the arch-demon, whose manifestations are widely dispersed in the Slavonic apocalypse.

This consideration draws our attention again to one of the most notable features of the interaction between the fallen angel and the ambiguous messiah in chapter 29, namely, the infamous kiss of the demon. This encounter might be viewed as a specimen of erotic imagery, a kind of symbolism that plays quite a prominent role in the Slavonic apocalypse.⁴⁹ Such symbolism can point to a theophanic dimension, as some Jewish apocalyptic and mystical accounts often

imbue eroticism with theophanic meaning.⁵⁰ This erotic theophanic facet is often present in apocalyptic and mystical *imaginaires* of Yom Kippur rite⁵¹ in which human seers enter into the celestial Holy of Holies, where they often are embraced and even kissed by the Deity. We see this, for instance, in *2 Enoch*, in which the seer reports that, after his ascent into the highest heaven, the Deity embraced him with his hand.⁵² The reference to the embracing or helping hand of God is found also in the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian.⁵³ The early roots of this tradition can be traced to the biblical Exodus account that has Moses appearing to be closely guarded and protected by the hand of the Deity.

Some later Jewish mystical accounts offer even more salient erotic interactions between the Deity and a seer, depicting human visionaries kissed by God.⁵⁴ One thinks of *Hekhalot Rabbati* (*Synopse* §163), which portrays God's kiss of the heavenly image of the patriarch Jacob; it reads:

And testify to them. What testimony? You see Me—what I do to the visage of the face of Jacob your father which is engraved for Me upon the throne of My glory. For in the hour that you say before Me “Holy,” I kneel on it and embrace it and kiss it and hug it and My hands are on its arms three times, corresponding to the three times that you say before Me, “Holy,” according to the word that is said, Holy, holy, holy (Isaiah 6:3).⁵⁵

In view of these accounts of the divine embrace and kiss, which constitute the theophanic apex of Jewish mystical lore, might we suggest that Azazel's kiss in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29 also has a theophanic meaning?⁵⁶ If so, this nicely interplays with other deconstructive “epiphanies” of the arch-demon in the Slavonic apocalypse that are laden with erotic overtones, including Azazel's appearance in the midst of the primordial pair of the protoplasts⁵⁷ in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 23:4–11.⁵⁸

The peculiar imagery of the “face” is another important detail that links the kiss of Azazel in the messianic passage with theophanic imagery in the aforementioned apocalyptic and mystical accounts in which seers are embraced or kissed by the Deity. Both *2 Enoch* and *Hekhalot Rabbati* make a connection between God's face and the

visionary's face. In these accounts, the visionary's identity is engraved on the Deity's face and serves as a kind of screen or *façade* for the divine countenance. In *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29 the countenance imagery plays a pivotal conceptual role in being applied not only to God and the righteous but also Azazel and his elect: "Azazel ran and worshiped, and having kissed his face he turned and stood behind him."⁵⁹ Here, as in the aforementioned visionary accounts in which seers often become servants or even representations of the divine Face, the messianic character kissed by Azazel becomes the earthly *façade* of his demonic presence. It is then no surprise that in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29:7 the messianic man "was worshiped by the heathen with Azazel." The phrase "worshiped with Azazel" might indicate that the eschatological character has become a kind of "icon" of Azazel through which one can worship the demon.⁶⁰

The Messianic Idol

Azazel's kiss appears also to be closely linked with the Slavonic apocalypse's distinctive stance against idolatry. Before we explore more closely this important aspect of the text, we should underline the unique nature of Azazel's embrace and kiss of the messianic scapegoat, as Jewish lore does not provide us with any other clear textual testimonies in which the scapegoat was embraced or kissed. Yet, another embrace or kiss is attested to several times, with respect to another animal sacrificial symbol of Jewish tradition, namely, the Golden Calf. Several rabbinic passages, including *b. Yoma* 66b, include the theme of kissing and embracing the Golden Calf:

One said: Whosoever sacrificed and burned incense died by the sword; whosoever embraced and kissed [the calf] died the death [at the hands of Heaven]; whosoever rejoiced in his heart died of dropsy. The other said: He who had sinned before witnesses and after receiving warning, died by the sword; he who sinned before witnesses but without previous warning, by death; and he who sinned without witnesses and without previous warning, died of dropsy.⁶¹

The motif of embracing and kissing the Golden Calf is also attested in the Hekhalot literature,⁶² and its roots can be traced to certain

biblical accounts.⁶³ Its presence in these traditions is instructive for our study because they frame the motif in a cultic setting in which the kiss is understood as an act of worship. This cultic connection is an important parallel to Azazel's kiss in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29 in which the celestial scapegoat's kiss has a sacerdotal significance communicated through conspicuous use of the formulae of "worship" in connection with the erotic event.⁶⁴ The language of "worship" is very strong in the immediate context of the messianic passage, stronger than anywhere else in the text. In the very beginning of the passage, in verse 4, readers learn that the great crowds will worship the messianic man. Verse 5 says that the man will go through humiliation and abuses, but he will still be worshipped. In verse 6, Azazel is worshipping him. In verse 7, Abraham asks the Deity about worship offered to the eschatological man and God's answer confirms the terminology. Finally, verses 11 through 13 also mention worship offered to this eschatological character.

References to worshipping objects other than God are closely tied, in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, with the theme of idolatry.⁶⁵ In chapter 3, Terah worships his idols.⁶⁶ In chapter 25, Abraham sees the idol of jealousy in the Temple, and a man worshipping it.⁶⁷ The pervasive symbolism of worship in the messianic passage indicates that the eschatological character in chapter 29 is envisioned as an idol. Along such lines, Robert Hall has argued that in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29 "Azazel sets up another idol, a human being."⁶⁸ He further remarks that "in *Apoc. Abr.* [the] vision of the man who is worshiped continues the theme of idolatry connected with Azazel. Not only does the figure encourage the heathen to worship him, but it deceives many Jews as well."⁶⁹

In view of these intense polemics against idols in various parts of the Slavonic apocalypse, we should return to the paradigmatic case of idolatry in Jewish lore, namely, the Golden Calf episode, and clarify its connection with the scapegoat tradition. Moreover, in order to better grasp the conceptual links between these two sacrificial animals of the Jewish tradition, which in later Jewish lore were often connected with the revelation received by Moses on Mount Sinai, we must now explore more closely the mold of the Mosaic traditions in the Slavonic apocalypse.

As in later rabbinic materials, Yom Kippur imagery in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* appears to be connected with Mosaic lore.⁷⁰ Later

Jewish traditions closely link the etiology of the Yom Kippur ordinance with Moses' fight against the idolatry of the Golden Calf. In these later rabbinic interpretations, Moses' struggle with the infamous idol, his forty-day fast, his vision of the Deity, and his reception of the portentous revelation on Sinai were understood as a chain of formative events linked to the establishment of the Yom Kippur festival. Some of these traditions viewed Moses' visionary ordeals as a cosmic prototype of the symbolic actions that, while the Temple still stood, were to be reenacted annually by the high priest in the Holy of Holies. In this new sacerdotal context of the atoning rite, the fight against the Golden Calf has a new cultic meaning.

It is intriguing that in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, as in the Exodus account, the forty-day fast follows the hero's fight against idolatry. The stories of the two visionaries parallel each other. Moses burns the Golden Calf in Exodus 32 and fasts in chapter 34. Abraham, too, burns the idol of his father, which bears the name Bar-Eshath, and then enters a ritual fast. This parallelism might indicate the authors' intention to refashion the story of Abraham along the lines of the Mosaic typology. As in later rabbinic and mystical accounts, the atoning rite may have been given a new Mosaic reinterpretation, which now closely connects the Yom Kippur ordinance with the Golden Calf story.

In later rabbinic texts, the Golden Calf idolatry is linked with the assignment of a sacrificial portion to the left side, which was often identified with the offering of the scapegoat to Azazel on Yom Kippur.⁷¹ The scapegoat ritual may also be seen as a symbolic reenactment of the Golden Calf episode. For example, Tamara Prosic argues that

. . . the ritual for Azazel repeats the golden calf episode in that it reinforces Yahweh as the only cultic figure through ceremonial expulsion of the other god. The whole ritual actually resembles a performance of a banishing act. . . . Azazel's goat is left alive and driven into the wilderness. In symbolic language, the old god begins as an equal to Yahweh and is acknowledged at the beginning of the ritual as one who is also partaking in the sacrificial cult, but after the lottery, only one god is honored between the two who are waiting for their respective sacrifice. Only Yahweh's goat is ritually killed and presented on the altar thus becoming a proper sacrifice. The same cultic status and the inherent honour of being a

god's offering is denied to Azazel's animal; it is left alive and banished into the wilderness, the symbol of non-habitable spaces, where there are no altars and no worshippers and where it can never become a sacrifice. Azazel, although admitted initially by bringing his would-be sacrifice within the sacred space, is denied proper worship, the allegiance to him is abjured, and he is step by step removed from the cult and pushed into a symbolic void.⁷²

This reflection on the scapegoat as an idol that must be banished through ceremonial expulsion helps us to better grasp the link between the tradition of the scapegoat in the Slavonic apocalypse and the theme of idolatry found in the text. It also elucidates the function of the messianic scapegoat in the apocalyptic version of the atoning rite taking place in the Slavonic apocalypse, as this eschatological character appears to be understood as a sort of gatherer of the impurity who is predestined to attract the idolaters, not only from the portion of the Gentiles but also from the lot of Abraham, leading both into the hands of Azazel.⁷³

The Messianic Dyad

As noted earlier, second- and third-century Christian interpretations include messianic depictions that often encompass the imagery of both goats used during the Yom Kippur festival: the scapegoat and the goat for YHWH. Such interpretations often combine the functions and attributes of the two goats and apply the conceptual amalgam to Jesus. It is possible that the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is employing a similar interpretive strategy in which the scapegoat imagery is enhanced with features of the immolated goat. Moreover, given our hypothesis that the scapegoat's symbolism takes on distinctive messianic overtones, the two emblematic animals of the atoning rite might receive there the form of the messianic dyad.

A close reading of chapter 29 shows that its narrative is portraying not one but two messianic figures, the features of which represent a puzzling mix. In verses 4–8 we are told that the messiah will come from the side of the Gentiles, while verses 9 and 10 speak of the messiah as coming from the seed of Abraham.⁷⁴ In view of this apparent contradiction, scholars have suggested that the text may speak about

not one but two messianic characters—the first coming from the left lot, the portion associated with the Gentiles, and the second from the right, the portion of Abraham and God. Alexander Kulik proposes that “the eschatological scenario of *Apoc. Ab. 29* might have the well-known Jewish eschatological duo-messianic structure⁷⁵ (in this case: anti-Messiah vs. true Messiah).”⁷⁶ There is no textual contradiction if we assume that 29:4–8 speaks of an anti-Messiah who is “going out from the left side of the heathen” and “worshiped by the heathen with Azazel.”⁷⁷ This hypothesis is promising for resolving textual puzzles in chapter 29. The tradition of the messianic pair, in which each agent has distinctive eschatological roles and functions, is a recurrent motif in Jewish lore.⁷⁸ An early example is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls materials in which the messiahs of Aaron and Israel⁷⁹ fulfill unique eschatological functions, one cultic and the other royal.⁸⁰ Later Jewish materials are also cognizant of the concept of the two messiahs, one suffering and dying and the other victorious. For example, later Jewish sources often speak of the Messiah, the son of Joseph (or Ephraim),⁸¹ who will endure suffering to atone for the sins of the Israelites, as well as the Messiah, the son of David,⁸² who is predestined to be a glorious ruler.⁸³

It is significant that one member of the messianic duo, like the eschatological figure from *Apocalypse of Abraham 29*, will experience maltreatment and suffering.⁸⁴ What is also important for our study is that in the second century CE, when the *Apocalypse of Abraham* was composed, we find, under the influence of the political situation and Christian messianic developments, highly elaborate reflection on the concept of the true versus false messiah.⁸⁵ Scholars trace the development of the true/false messianic pair to the Bar Kokhba uprising. Harris Lenowitz suggests:

[T]he events of the Bar Kosiba uprising displayed the new doctrine of two messiahs—if they did not actually create the doctrine—in its most pernicious form. . . . In peculiar countermeasure to the two-messiah doctrine, the idea of the false messiah was soon developed as well; it also arose in close interaction with Christian views. During the Galilean rebellions, the term “false” was first applied to a prophet in a messianic context, paving the way for the explicit application of the term to messiahs. But it was the Christian texts

that coined the term *pseudochristoi* (Greek for “false messiahs”); Matthew 24:4, 6, 24; Mark 13:5, 21–22; and Luke 21:3 all use the term *pseudochristos* to refer to messianic pretenders. The Jewish tradition follows the Christian; the Greek term is borrowed and translated in the much later Hebrew term *mashiah sheker*, which reshapes and alters the previous Hebrew usage of the term “lying” (*sheker*), in connection with the witness and prophet, so that it means “false witness, false prophecy.”⁸⁶

It has been noted that these conceptual developments “have no need for two authentic messiahs, the first of whom is doomed to die. Instead the false messiah identifies the true one by contrast.”⁸⁷

If Kulik is right that the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 29 presumes two messiahs, the second messianic figure, like the first, can be associated with the Yom Kippur context. This view may be supported by the idea that the second messianic figure, also like the first, is identified with a distinctive eschatological allotment: the right portion, which is often identified in the text as the lot of Abraham and God. Such identification is important for discerning possible links with the Yom Kippur ceremony in which the right lot, associated with God, is also identified with the goat for YHWH.

Another important detail of the messianic passage is that the portrayals of two messianic figures are not clearly demarcated, but rather are confused. Such confusion has been taken by many students of the Slavonic apocalypse as proof that the entire messianic passage represents an interpolation. Yet, in the light of aforementioned Christian accounts, in which the characteristics of the two “messianic goats” were also often paradoxically mixed and not clearly distinguished,⁸⁸ it is possible that the mixing of the features of the positive and negative messianic characters represents a deliberate strategy of the authors of the Slavonic apocalypse.

Yet, while features of the two messianic figures often appear intertwined and sometimes confused, their respective eschatological functions are nevertheless clearly delineated in the program outlined by the authors. Thus, the first, mistreated messiah appears to be endowed with a rather misleading, yet purifying function, and, as the scapegoat of the atoning rite, can be understood as a gatherer and remover of the impurity associated with the Gentiles and idolatrous Hebrews. In

contrast, the second messianic character appears to be playing the more traditional messianic role, the role reiterated in *Apocalypse of Abraham* 31:1, which depicts the *parousia* of the victorious messiah who will come with the sound of the trumpet and power in order to gather the elect.⁸⁹

Distraction for the Heathen

The ambiguous, misleading role of the mistreated messiah, who comes at the apex of impiety, cannot be fully grasped without a proper understanding of the multifaceted nature of the scapegoat's place in the Yom Kippur ordinance.

Later Jewish interpreters often stress that one of the essential functions of the scapegoat was to distract or weaken the power of the Other Side during the most important atoning feast of the Jewish liturgical year. For example, in the *Book of Zohar*, the scapegoat "weakens" the power of the left side by serving as a distraction. *Zohar* I.113b–114b transmits the following tradition:

Come and see: Similarly, on the day that judgment appears in the world and the blessed Holy One sits on the Throne of Judgment, Satan appears, accusing and seducing above and below, to destroy the world and seize souls. . . . On Yom Kippur one must pacify and appease him with that goat offered to him, and then he turns into an advocate for Israel. . . .⁹⁰

Isaiah Tishby offers interesting remarks on the famous parable in the *Book of Zohar* in which a king makes special arrangements for a celebratory feast with his son and friends. He orders a separate meal for ill-wishers and quarrelers so their presence would not spoil the happy occasion.⁹¹ Tishby notes that "according to this parable the purpose of sending a goat to Azazel is to remove *sitra ahra* from the 'family circle' of Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He, on the Day of Atonement."⁹²

In view of these traditions, it is possible that in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* the scapegoat-messiah also serves as a distraction or decoy; he is sent to mislead and weaken the heathen of the left lot and to

prepare the safe arrival of the true (second) messiah who will arise from the right lot. One of the crucial pieces of evidence here is that he is openly labeled in the text as the “weakening” of the Gentiles⁹³ (Slav. *ослаба*).⁹⁴ As in the later Jewish reinterpretation of the atoning rite, the messianic scapegoat is depicted here as an eschatological instrument for weakening and distracting *sitra ahra*, represented by the heathen. The passage has several affirmations of this messianic role, noting “many of the heathen will have hope in him,” that some people from the right lot “will be misled on his account,” and that “he will tempt those of your [Abraham’s] seed who have worshiped him.”⁹⁵

Since, according to the text, the false messiah will mislead not only Gentiles but also sinful Hebrews, it is possible that the Slavonic term *oslaba* has an additional meaning of “liberation,” which would refer to the cathartic purifying release of Israel’s sins to the realm of the Other Side associated with Gentiles.⁹⁶ The messianic figure thus will take with him the idolatrous portion of Israel. In this respect, the text specifically mentions that the messianic figure will appear at the apex of the impiety, defined as the “twelfth hour of the age of impiety,” and that he will release it to the left side represented by Azazel.⁹⁷ This context underlines the principal “elimination” aspect of the scapegoat ritual whereby impurity must be removed from the human *oikoumene* into an uninhabitable realm.

Conclusion

Although many scholars have suggested that the messianic passage in chapter 29 of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is a later Christian interpolation, this study revisited some details in this enigmatic eschatological account that may provide new evidence for its belonging to the original layer of the text. Our analysis suggests that the messianic narrative shares a number of crucial ideological tenets with the original conceptual core of the Slavonic apocalypse, including its peculiar polemic against idolatry and veneration of anthropomorphic images, which are repeatedly portrayed in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* as objects of worship. It also appears that the messianic passage might play an important, if not central, role in the sacerdotal framework of the text, which is thoroughly steeped in cultic traditions. As in Christian sacerdotal

reinterpretations of messianic imagery in *Barnabas* and Justin the Martyr, the Slavonic apocalypse authors are also refashioning their messianic traditions through the prism of the Yom Kippur ordinance.

In light of these Christian developments, the possibility that authors of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* had some knowledge of contemporaneous Christian messianic currents should not be completely excluded. Some scholars have suggested that the early Christian concepts of the false messiah(s) often exercised a formative influence on similar Jewish developments in the second century CE.⁹⁸ If the authors of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* tried to appropriate Jesus traditions in their depiction of the messiah in chapter 29, as has been suggested by several scholars, it is possible that their appropriation was not solely based on the Gospel accounts but also drew from more extended contemporaneous cultic reinterpretations of Jesus' passion in which the Christian Messiah was identified with the proverbial scapegoat of the Yom Kippur ritual.

some words to you.’” Anderson and Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 50E–52E. The tradition of Satan’s metamorphosis into the living form of the serpent is also present in the Georgian version; it reads: “And the serpent told him, ‘How can we have them excluded?’ The devil replied and told the serpent, ‘Be a sheath for me and I will speak to the woman through your mouth a word by which we will trick (them).’ And the two of them came together and they allowed their heads to hang on the wall of the paradise at the time where the angels had ascended to bow down to God. Then the devil changed himself into the image of an angel; he praised the praises of the angels. And I was gazing in the direction of the enclosure to hear the praises. I stared and I saw him like an angel and at once he became invisible for he had gone forth to bring the serpent. And he told him, ‘Arise and come and I will be with you and I will speak through your mouth that which it is proper for you to say.’ He took on the form of the serpent (to go) close to the wall of paradise and the devil slipped inside the serpent and he allowed his head to hang on the wall of paradise. He cried out and said, ‘Shame on you, woman, you who are in the paradise of Delight (and) who are blind! Come to me and I will tell you a certain secret word.’” Anderson and Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, 50E–52E.

110. Pseudepigraphical and rabbinic accounts depict this process of “possession” of a living form as Satan’s “riding” of the serpent.

111. In this respect it is intriguing that in later Jewish mysticism the descent of Asael and Shemihazah from heaven is compared with the descent of the manna. The *Book of Zohar* III.208a reads: “The fact is, however, that after God cast Uzza and Azael down from their holy place, they went astray after the womenfolk and seduced the world also. It may seem strange that being angels they were able to abide upon the earth. The truth is, however, that when they were cast down the celestial light which used to sustain them left them and they were changed to another grade through the influence of the air of this world. Similarly the manna which came down for the Israelites in the wilderness originated in the celestial dew from the most recondite spot, and at first its light would radiate to all worlds and the ‘field of apples,’ and the heavenly angels drew sustenance from it, but when it approached the earth it became materialized through the influence of the air of this world and lost its brightness, becoming only like ‘coriander seed.’” Simon and Sperling, *The Zohar*, 5.311–312.

The Messianic Scapegoat in the Apocalypse of Abraham

1. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 32–33.

2. Alexander Kulik conveys this consensus by affirming that “chapter 29, where a messianic (or anti-messianic) figure is introduced, is the most enigmatic in the entire writing.” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 51.

3. See M.J. Lagrange, “Notes sur le messianisme au temps de Jesus,” *RB* 14 (1905) 513; Box and Landsman, *The Apocalypse of Abraham*, 78; P. Riessler, *Altjüdisches Schrifttum außerhalb der Bibel* (Heidelberg: Kerle, 1927) 1267; Y. Kaufmann, “Abraham-Apokalypse,” in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica. Das Judentum in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (eds. J. Klatzkin and I. Elbogen; 10 vols.; Berlin: Eschkol Publikations Gesellschaft, 1928–1934) 1.552–53; J. Licht, “Abraham, Apocalypse of,” in: *Encyclopedia Judaica* (16 vols.; ed. C. Roth; Jerusalem: Keter, 1971) 2.127; R. Rubinkiewicz, “La vision de l’histoire dans l’Apocalypse d’Abraham,” *ANRW* 2.19.1 (1979) 137–151 at 143–144; idem, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham en vieux slave*, 66, 193; idem, “The Apocalypse of Abraham,” 1.684; G.S. Oegema, *The Anointed and His People: Messianic Expectations from the Maccabees to Bar Kochba* (JSPSS, 27; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 214.

4. R.G. Hall, “The ‘Christian Interpolation’ in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*,” *JBL* 107 (1988) 107–112; D. C. Harlow, “Anti-Christian Polemic in the Apocalypse of Abraham: Jesus as a Pseudo-Messiah in *Apoc. Ab. 29.3–14*,” *JSP* 22.3 (2013) 167–183.

5. Harlow, “Idolatry and Alterity: Israel and the Nations in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*,” 302–30.

6. Thus, for example, Rubinkiewicz observes that Azazel “who bows down and lowers his face, imitates Judas’s gesture in the scene of Jesus’ arrest (cf. Matt 26:47ff).” Rubinkiewicz, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham en vieux slave*, 66. With respect to Judas as the scapegoat, see B. Dieckmann, *Judas als Sündenbock: Eine verhängnisvolle Geschichte von Angst und Vergeltung* (Munich: Kösel, 1991). Daniel Harlow argues that “the man in the vision bears an uncanny resemblance to Jesus of Nazareth. He does so in three respects: first, his being shamed and struck recall Jesus’ passion, in particular his being flogged and humiliated by Roman soldiers and then being mocked at the foot of the cross; second, his being worshipped by the heathen and by some of Abraham’s seed evokes veneration of Jesus by both Jews and non-Jews in the decades after his death; third, his being kissed by Azazel echoes not only Judas Iscariot’s betrayal of Jesus with a kiss, known in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, but also the tradition known from the Gospels of Luke and John that Judas was possessed by Satan, who entered him and inspired him to hand Jesus over to the authorities.” Harlow, “Anti-Christian Polemic in the Apocalypse of Abraham: Jesus as a Pseudo-Messiah in *Apoc. Ab. 29.3–14*,” 175–176.

7. Some scholars also see in *Apoc. Ap. 29* an allusion to the tradition of the Suffering Servant in the Book of Isaiah. Gillis Byrns Coleman notes

that the messianic figure's "sufferings . . . are reminiscent of Isaiah 53." G.B. Coleman, *The Phenomenon of Christian Interpolations into Jewish Apocalyptic Texts: A Bibliographical Survey and Methodological Analysis* (Ph.D. diss.; Vanderbilt University, 1976) 323. Coleman also adds that "it could perhaps be asked whether one would find anything specifically Christian here (any more than in Isaiah 53) if he were not looking for it." Coleman, *The Phenomenon of Christian Interpolations*, 323. It should be noted that some scholars have suggested that Deutero-Isaiah's tradition of the Suffering Servant was possibly influenced by the scapegoat imagery. See J.D. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* (WBC, 25; Waco: Word Books, 1987) 231; J.N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah. Chapters 40–66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 377. For criticism of such parallels, see Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 117.

8. It is possible that the Yom Kippur settings are present in the New Testament materials, specifically in the story of Barabbas's release by Pilate, which appears in all four canonical gospels (Mark 15:6–15; Matthew 27:15–26; Luke 23:18–25; John 18:39–40). Yet, in these materials, Barabbas, not Jesus, assumes the functions of the scapegoat. Early Christian exegetes (cf. Origen, *Homily on Leviticus 10:2:2*) often emphasize this connection between Barabbas' episode and the Yom Kippur ritual of the two goats. Pseudo-Jerome's *Commentary on Mark 15:11* also follows this line of interpretation: "The High Priests stirred up the crowds so they would ask for Barabbas, and so that they might crucify Jesus (cf. Mark 15:11). Here we have the two goats. One is termed ἀποπομαίος meaning 'the scapegoat.' He is set free with the sin of the people and sent into the desert of hell. The other goat is slain like a lamb for the sins of those who have been set free. The Lord's portion is always slaughtered. The portion of the devil, who is their master, is cast out, without restriction, into the infernal regions." M. Cahill, *The First Commentary on Mark. An Annotated Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 116. Regarding the scapegoat traditions in the canonical gospels, see A.H. Wratislaw, "The Scapegoat-Barabbas," *Expository Times* 3 (1891/92) 400–403; J.D. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke: The Origins of the Passion Narrative* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 114–159; Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 165–171; Maclean, "Barabbas, the Scapegoat Ritual, and the Development of the Passion Narrative," 309–334.

9. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 121.

10. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2.37–41.

11. Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 154.

12. Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 152.

13. Concerning this motif, see J.C. Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas* (WUNT, 2.64; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1994) 138–140.

14. See Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 154.

15. *Iustini Martyris Dialogus Cum Tryphone* (ed. M. Marcovich; PTS, 47; Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1997) 137; *Justin Martyr: Dialogue avec Tryphon* (ed. and trans. P. Bobichon; Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2003) 284.

16. Falls, Halton, Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho*, 62.

17. Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 156.

18. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 129.

19. Thus Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra observes that “this is shown, for example, by the reference to the death of the scapegoat, a fact Justin could not have learnt from the Bible or from Barnabas, but only from Jewish tradition.” Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 156.

20. Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 156.

21. Cf. Isa 58:6 (LXX) “. . . λῦε πάντα σύνδεσμον ἀδικίας διάλυε στραγαλιάς βιαίων συναλλαγμάτων. . . .”

22. Another early influential Christian interpreter, Hippolytus of Rome, also shows his familiarity with the traditions that tie Jesus to the imagery of two goats of the Yom Kippur ceremony. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra argues that the passage from Hippolytus of Rome’s *Catena on Proverbs* (Proverbs 30:31b (LXX)) that mentions “scarlet wool” “makes very plausible that it is a variety of the Yom Kippur typology known to *Barnabas*, Justin and Tertullian. . . .” Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 158. He, however, cautions that “the poetic form and the brevity of the fragment render an exact comparison difficult.” Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 158.

23. Evans, *Tertullian. Adversus Marcionem*, 1.191. The nearly identical passage appears in *Against the Jews* 14:9, it reads: “In fact, thus also let me make an interpretation of the two goats that were offered at the fast. Do these not also show the two conditions of the Christ who is already come? They are indeed of the same age and appearance on account of the one and the same aspect of the Lord, because he will return in no other form, seeing that he has to be recognized by those from whom he has suffered injury. One of them, however, which was surrounded with scarlet, cursed and spat upon and perforated and punctured, was driven outside the city by the people to ruin, marked with obvious emblems of the suffering of Christ, who, having been surrounded with a scarlet garment, spat upon and knocked about with every physical violence, was crucified outside the city. The other, however, made an offering for offences, and given as food only to the priests of the temple, is marked with the proof of his second manifestation, because when all offences have been done away, the priests of the spiritual temple—that is, the church—were to enjoy as it were a feast of our Lord’s grace, while the rest remain without a taste of salvation.” Dunn, *Tertullian*, 103.

24. Crossan notes that “in the case of *Against Marcion* 3.7.7, however, we are not dealing with a third independent version of the two goats tradition

but rather with one which is dependent both on *Barnabas* 7 and on Justin, *Dialogue* 40.” Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 131.

25. Falls, Halton, Slusser, *St. Justin Martyr. Dialogue with Trypho*, 62.

26. “And in the same twelfth period of the close of my age I shall set up the man from your seed which you saw.” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 32.

27. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 32.

28. Thus, for example, Marc Philonenko notes that the word “lot” (Slav. *чaстb*) appears to be connected to the Hebrew גורל, a term attested to multiple times in the Qumran materials. Philonenko-Sayar and Philonenko, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham. Introduction, texte slave, traduction et notes*, 33. Regarding the two lots, see also B. Philonenko-Sayar and M. Philonenko, *Die Apokalypse Abrahams* (JSRZ, 5.5; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1982) 413–460 at 418; Rubinkiewicz, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham en vieux slave*, 54.

29. For the biblical גורל terminology, see Lev 16:8–10.

30. See for example, *IQS* גורל בליעל (the lot of Belial); גורל קדושים (the lot of the holy ones); *IQM* גורל בני חושך (the lot of the sons of darkness); גורל חושך (the lot of darkness); *11Q13* גורל אנש [י] מל [כי] צדק (the men of the lot of Melchizedek).

31. Arie Rubinstein observes that “in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* . . . all nations, with the exception of the seed of Abraham, are the lot of Azazel, while the descendants of Abraham are the exclusive lot and heritage of God. So radical is this dualism in our *Apocalypse* that Abraham’s descendants are shown to him spatially separated from Azazel and the nations which are with him.” A. Rubinstein, “A Problematic Passage in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*,” *JJS* 8 (1957) 45–50 at 47.

32. *Apoc. Ab.* 13:7: “And he said to him, ‘Reproach is on you, Azazel! Since *Abraham’s portion* (часть Аврамля) is in heaven, and *yours* is on earth. . . .’” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 20; Philonenko-Sayar and Philonenko, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham*, 66.

33. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 32.

34. Cf. Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 31.

35. Danby, *The Mishnah*, 169.

36. Danby, *The Mishnah*, 170.

37. Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2.39.

38. Evans, *Tertullian. Adversus Marcionem*, 1.191.

39. Dunn, *Tertullian*, 103.

40. Crossan, *The Cross that Spoke*, 143.

41. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 20.

42. A. Orlov, *Dark Mirrors: Azazel and Satanael in Early Jewish Demonology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2011) 44.

43. “и тече Азазиль и поклонися и облобызавый лице его и обратися и ста за нимъ.” Philonenko-Sayar and Philonenko, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham. Introduction, texte slave, traduction et notes*, 98–100.

44. Thus, the kiss of Azazel has often been considered by scholars (e.g. R. Hall, M. Philonenko) as an act of worship. Cf. Philonenko-Sayar and Philonenko, *Die Apocalypse Abrahams*, 450 n. xxix.

45. Thus, *m. Yoma* 4:1 reads: “He shook the casket and took up the two lots. On one was written ‘For the Lord,’ and on the other was written ‘For Azazel.’” Danby, *The Mishnah*, 166.

46. Cf. Josephus, *Jewish War*, 5.235: “His head was covered by a tiara of fine linen, wreathed with blue, encircling which was another crown, of gold, whereon were embossed the sacred letters, to wit, four vowels.” Thackeray and Markus, *Josephus*, 3.273.

47. Cf. *m. Yoma* 6:6: “What did he do? He divided the thread of crimson wool and tied one half to the rock and the other half between its horns, and he pushed it from behind; and it went rolling down, and before it had reached half the way down the hill it was broken in pieces. He returned and sat down beneath the last booth until nightfall. And from what time does it render his garments unclean? After he has gone outside the wall of Jerusalem. R. Simeon says: From the moment that he pushes it into the ravine.” Danby, *The Mishnah*, 170. *m. Yoma* 6:8: “R. Ishmael says: Had they not another sign also?—a thread of crimson wool was tied to the door of the Sanctuary and when the he-goat reached the wilderness the thread turned white; for it is written, Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow.” Danby, *The Mishnah*, 170.

48. With respect to Azazel’s mimesis of the divine *Kavod* in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, see A. Orlov, “‘The Likeness of Heaven’: *Kavod* of Azazel in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*,” in *With Letters of Light: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Early Jewish Apocalypticism, Magic and Mysticism* (Ekstasis, 2; eds. D. Arbel and A. Orlov; Berlin; N.Y.: De Gruyter, 2010) 232–253.

49. Regarding erotic imagery in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, see Harlow, “Idolatry and Alterity: Israel and the Nations in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*,” 320; also, Orlov, “‘The Likeness of Heaven,’” 247.

50. Moreover, the theophanic dimension is even present in the earthly version of the revelation given to the high priest on Yom Kippur, in which he was given a disclosure of the intertwined pair of the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies. Thus, *b. Yoma* 54a reads: “R. Kattina said: Whenever Israel came up to the Festival, the curtain would be removed for them and the Cherubim were shown to them, whose bodies were intertwined with one another, and they would be thus addressed: Look! You are beloved before God as the love between man and woman.” Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Yoma*, 54a. Cf. also *b. Yoma* 54b. Concerning this tradition, Rachel Elijor observes

that while the early traditions about the cherubim, found “both in the Bible and elsewhere, imply varying degrees of proximity and contact—later tradition was more explicit, clearly indicating the identity of the cherubim as a mythical symbolization of reproduction and fertility, expressed in the form of intertwined male and female.” R. Elijor, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004) 67.

51. With respect to apocalyptic *imaginaires* of Yom Kippur, see Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 79–85.

52. *2 Enoch* 39:5: “But you, my children, see the right hand of one who helps you, a human being created identical to yourself, but I have seen the right hand of the Lord, helping me and filling heaven.” Andersen, “2 Enoch,” 1.162; M.I. Sokolov, “Материалы и заметки по старинной славянской литературе. Выпуск третий. VII. Славянская Книга Еноха Праведного. Тексты, латинский перевод и исследование. Посмертный труд автора приготовил к изданию М. Сперанский,” *Чтения в Обществе Истории и Древностей Российских* 4 (1910) 1–167 at 38.

53. H. Jacobson, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 54.

54. Regarding this tradition, see R. Neis, “Embracing Icons: The Face of Jacob on the Throne of God,” *Journal of Jewish Art & Visual Culture* 1 (2007) 36–54.

55. J.R. Davila, *Hekhalot Literature in Translation: Major Texts of Merkahavah Mysticism* (SJTP, 20; Leiden: Brill, 2013) 86; *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (eds. P. Schäfer et al.; TSAJ, 2; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1981) §163. See also *Hekhalot Rabbati* (*Synopse* §189): “Every single day, when the afternoon prayer arrives, the adorned King sits enthroned and exalts the living creatures. The word does not finish coming from His mouth before the holy living creatures go forth from under the throne of glory. From their mouth is fullness of chanting, with their wings is fullness of rejoicing, their hands make music, and their feet dance. They go around and surround their King; one from His right and one from His left, one from in front of Him and one from behind Him. They embrace and kiss Him and uncover their faces. They uncover and the King of glory covers His face, and the Aravot firmament is split like a sieve before the King, before the adornment of the splendor of the attractiveness of the form of the loveliness of the compassion of the craving of the radiance of the light of the praise of the appearance of their faces, according to the word that is written, Holy, holy, holy (Isa 6:3).” Davila, *Hekhalot Literature in Translation*, 93–94.

56. It is noteworthy that the authors of the Slavonic apocalypse used erotic imagery in the depiction of another “theophany” of Azazel in chapter 23, in which he is depicted in conjugal union with Adam and Eve.

57. Concerning this tradition, see Orlov, “*Kavod of Azazel*,” 245–252.

58. Moreover, Azazel’s kiss might represent here, as in other portions of the book, an example of negative transformational mysticism, paralleling the eschatological reunification with God in the Holy of Holies.

59. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 32.

60. Rubinkiewicz observes that the phrase “with Azazel” can be interpreted in two ways: “In one, the phrase ‘with Azazel’ is construed with ‘by the heathen’ to mean that the heathen are being aided by Azazel in insulting, beating, and, presumably, also worshipping the man. In the other, ‘with Azazel’ is construed with the following participle to mean that both Azazel and the man are being worshiped.” Rubinkiewicz and Lunt, “The Apocalypse of Abraham,” 1.703.

61. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Yoma*, 66b.

62. *Hekhalot Rabbati* (Synopsis §259).

63. Kissing the calves in the context of idolatrous practices is mentioned in the Book of Hosea 13:2: “Ephraim spake horror, and became guilty in Baal and now they sin more and more and have made them a molten image of their silver, even idols in their own intelligence, all of them the work of the craftsmen they say to them, Let the sacrificers of men kiss the calves.”

64. *Apoc. Ab.* 29:6: “Azazel ran and worshiped, and having kissed his face he turned. . . .” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 32.

65. K. Jones, *Jewish Reactions to the Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70: Apocalypses and Related Pseudepigrapha* (JSJSS, 151; Leiden: Brill, 2011) 265.

66. Cf. *Apoc. Ab.* 3:4; 3:8.

67. *Apoc. Ab.* 25:1: “I saw there the likeness of the idol of jealousy, as a likeness of a craftsman’s [work] such as my father made, and its statue was of shining copper, and a man before it, and he was worshipping it. . . .” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 29.

68. R.G. Hall, *Revealed Histories. Techniques for Ancient Jewish and Christian Historiography* (JSPSS, 6; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 78.

69. Hall, “The ‘Christian Interpolation’ in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*,” 108.

70. See Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 62; N.L. Calvert, *Abraham Traditions in Middle Jewish Literature: Implications for the Interpretation of Galatians and Romans* (Ph.D. diss.; Sheffield University, 1993) 274.

71. Some midrashic materials try to connect the establishment of the Yom Kippur rites with the repentance of the Israelites after the idolatry of the Golden Calf. Later Jewish mysticism deepens this connection even further when it interprets the scapegoat ritual in light of the Golden Calf traditions. Thus some Jewish texts connect the Golden Calf episode with the beginning of the enigmatic practice of assigning a share to the Other Side in sacrificial

ritual. Isaiah Tishby, for instance, refers to the tradition found in the *Book of Zohar*, according to which “one of the consequences of Israel’s sin with the Golden Calf was that ‘the Other Side’ was assigned a share in the sacrificial ritual.” Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 891. The *Book of Zohar* II.242b tells that “from that day the only thing they could do was to give a portion of everything to ‘the Other Side’ through the mystery of the sacrifices, the libation, and the whole-offerings.” Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 891. In the dualistic framework of the Zoharic tradition, the goat that is dispatched to Azazel comes to be understood as “the principal offering that is destined in its entirety for ‘the Other Side.’” Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 821.

72. T. Prosic, “Kol Nidre: Speaking of the Unspoken (of),” *Bible and Critical Theory* 3.1 (2007) 1–14 at 8.

73. *Apoc. Ab.* 29:11–13: “And that you saw going out from the left side of the picture and those worshiping him, this means that many of the heathen will hope in him. And those of your seed you saw on the right side, some shaming and striking him, and some worshiping him, many of them will be misled on his account. And he will tempt those of your seed who have worshiped him.” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 33.

74. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 51–52.

75. Kulik’s strong belief in the messianic duo is also reflected in the title of the messianic section (*Apoc. Ab.* 29:4–13) of his English translation of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, namely, “False and True Messiahs.” Cf. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 32.

76. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 51.

77. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 51.

78. Concerning the concept of the two messiahs in Jewish lore, see C.C. Torrey, “The Messiah Son of Ephraim,” *JBL* 66.3 (1947) 253–277; R.E. Brown, “The Messianism of Qumran,” *CBQ* 19 (1957) 53–82; P.J. Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchireša^c* (CBQMS, 10; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981) 70–71; J.J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (N.Y.: Doubleday, 1995) 74–95; H. Lenowitz, *The Jewish Messiahs: From the Galilee to Crown Heights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 31ff.

79. Cf. *IQS* 9:9–11: “They should not depart from any counsel of the law in order to walk in complete stubbornness of their heart, but instead shall be ruled by the first directives which the men of the Community began to be taught until the prophet comes, and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel.” García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 91–93. *CD* 12:22–13:1: “And this is the rule of the assembly of the cam[ps]. Those who walk in them, in the time of wickedness until there arises the ‘messiah’ of Aaron and Israel. . . .” García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 571. *CD* 14:19: “. . . [until there arises the messia]h of

Aaron and Israel. And their iniquity will be atoned [through meal and sin-offerings]. . . .” García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 575. CD 19:10: “These shall escape in the age of the visitation; but those that remain shall be delivered up to the sword when there comes the messiah of Aaron and Israel.” García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 577. CD 20:1: “. . . until there arises the messiah out of Aaron and Israel. . . .” García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 579.

80. Scholars point out that this concept of the priestly and the princely Messiahs is present also in *Testament of Simeon* 7:2. Regarding this tradition, see J. Charlesworth, “From Jewish Messianology to Christian Christology,” in *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (eds. J. Neusner et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 231.

81. There are several opinions about the provenance of this messianic figure. John Collins suggests that “while the origin of this figure (Messiah the son of Joseph) is obscure, he most probably reflects in some way the defeat and death of Bar Kokhba, whom Rabbi Akiba had hailed as messiah.” Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 126. Yet Israel Yuval argues that the Messiah b. Joseph is best understood as a reflection of Jesus. I.J. Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (trans. B. Harshav and J. Chipman; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) 33–38.

82. Thus, for example, *b. Sukk.* 52a unveils the tradition of two messiahs: “Our Rabbis taught, The Holy One, blessed be He, will say to the Messiah, the son of David (May he reveal himself speedily in our days!), ‘Ask of me anything, and I will give it to thee,’ as it is said, I will tell of the decree etc. this day have I begotten thee, ask of me and I will give the nations for thy inheritance. But when he will see that the Messiah the son of Joseph is slain, he will say to Him, ‘Lord of the Universe, I ask of Thee only the gift of life.’ As to life, He would answer him, ‘Your father David has already prophesied this concerning you,’ as it is said, He asked life of thee, thou gavest it him, [even length of days for ever and ever].” Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Sukkah*, 52a. Cf. also *b. Sukk.* 52b: “And the Lord showed me four craftsmen. Who are these ‘four craftsmen?’—R. Hana b. Bizna citing R. Simeon Hasida replied: The Messiah the son of David, the Messiah the son of Joseph, Elijah and the Righteous Priest. R. Shesheth objected, If so, was it correct to write, These are the horns which scattered Judah, seeing that they came to turn [them] back?—The other answered him, Go to the end of the verse: These then are come to frighten them, to cast down the horns of the nations, which lifted up their horns against the Land of Judah, to scatter it etc. Why, said R. Shesheth to him, should I argue with Hana in Aggada?” Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Sukkah*, 52b. Cf. also *Trg. to the Cant.* 4:5; 7:4.

83. The *Book of Zohar* I:25b, again, speaks of the same messianic pair; it reads: “According to another explanation, the words ‘no shrub of the field was yet in the earth’ refer to the first Messiah, and the words ‘no herb of the field had yet sprung up’ refer to the second Messiah. . . . This is also hinted at in the verse ‘the scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet,’ ‘the scepter’ referring to the Messiah of the house of Judah, and ‘the staff’ to the Messiah of the house of Joseph.” Sperling and Simon, *The Zohar*, 1.100–101. See also *b. San.* 98a and *Pesikta Rabbati* 36: “For seven years the Messiah, now referred to as Ephraim, will endure the suffering decreed for him even as God will endure the pain of Israel’s banishment. At Israel’s return from exile, God himself will go at the head of them. In the year in which the king Messiah will reveal himself. . . .” Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati*, 2.676.

84. In later Jewish messianic texts one can also find traces of a concept of another messianic dyad—the Jewish messiah and his opponent who will fight against him. Often these messianic opponents are associated with the Gentiles or their rulers. For example, in *Tg. Tos. Zech.* 12:10, one can find the following tradition: “I will place a spirit of true prophecy and prayerfulness upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Judah. Afterwards the Messiah of the lineage of Ephraim will emerge and fight a battle with Gog, but Gog will slay him in front of the gate of Jerusalem. Then they (i.e., Israel) will look to Me and seek from Me the reason why the nations have stabbed the Messiah of the lineage of Ephraim, and they will mourn him as a father and mother would mourn their only child, and they will grieve for him the way they would grieve for (the death of) a firstborn.” J.C. Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader* (RBS, 45; Atlanta: SBL, 2005) 50. *Midrash Wa-Yosha*^c attests to a similar tradition, in which the opponent of the Jewish messiah is a pagan king; it reads: “After that another king will arise, a wicked one and ‘strong of face’ and he will wage war with Israel for three months . . . He will come up to Jerusalem and kill the Messiah of the lineage of Joseph, as scripture attests: ‘and they shall look to Me about the one whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for him like one who mourns an only child’ (Zech. 12:10). After that the Messiah of the lineage of David will come, regarding which scripture affirms: ‘and behold with the clouds of heaven one like a mortal man’ (Dan 7:13), and it is written afterwards: ‘he will have authority and royal dignity’ (Dan 7:14). . . .” Reeves, *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic*, 174.

85. Early development of a rudimentary concept of the false messiah who will serve as an eschatological opponent of the positive messianic figure is discernible in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In some Qumran materials (*11QMelch*, *4QAmram*, *4Q280*, etc.) various messianic characters, including Melchizedek, have their negative counterparts who bear conspicuous designations, such as

Melchireša⁵, which come from deformation of the names of their messianic counterparts. In these materials, the messianic traditions are often overlaid with Yom Kippur imagery. Regarding these traditions, see Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity*, 90–91.

86. Lenowitz, *The Jewish Messiahs: From the Galilee to Crown Heights*, 31.

87. Lenowitz, *The Jewish Messiahs: From the Galilee to Crown Heights*, 31.

88. As we have seen in these Christian traditions, Jesus is often portrayed as fulfilling the functions of both cultic animals: the scapegoat during his passion and the goat for YHWH after his resurrection or at the *parousia*.

89. “Then I shall sound the trumpet from the sky, and I shall send my chosen one, having in him one measure of all my power, and he will summon my people blamed among the heathen. . . .” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 34.

90. D. Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* (12 vols.; Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003–) 2.170–173. See also *Zohar* I.190a: “This is the impure side, the Other Side, who stands perpetually before the blessed Holy One, bringing accusations of the sins of human beings, and who stands perpetually below, leading humans astray. . . . But the blessed Holy One feels compassion for Israel and has advised them how to save themselves from him. How? With a shofar on Rosh Hashanah, and on Yom Kippur with a goat, given to him so that he will disengage from them and occupy himself with that portion of his, as they have established.” Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 3.160–161; *Zohar* II.184b: “Come and see: The goat that Israel sends to the desert is in order to give a portion to that Other Side, with which to be occupied.” Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, 6.37. *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 46: “Sammael said before the Holy One, blessed be He: Sovereign of all the universe! Thou hast given me power over all the nations of the world, but over Israel Thou hast not given me power. He answered him, saying: Behold, thou hast power over them on the Day of Atonement if they have any sin, but if not, thou hast no power over them. Therefore they gave him a present on the Day of Atonement, in order that they should not bring their offering, as it is said, ‘One lot for the Lord, and the other lot for Azazel.’” Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, 363.

91. Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 892.

92. Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 892.

93. “ослаба от языкаъ.” Philonenko-Sayar and Philonenko, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham*, 100.

94. Rubinkiewicz translates *oslaba* as “liberation, security, relaxation,” tracing this term to Gk. *adeia*, *anesis*. Cf. Rubinkiewicz and Lunt, “The Apocalypse of Abraham,” 1.703. Rubinstein also notes that *oslaba* is used

in the Slavonic Bible (for *anesis*) in Acts 24:23. A. Rubinstein, “Hebraisms in the Slavonic ‘Apocalypse of Abraham,’” *JJS* 4 (1953) 108–115 at 113. *Oslaba* can also be translated as “loosing.” In his messianic reinterpretation of the imagery of two sacrificial goats, Justin Martyr appears to be using similar terminology when he mentions the “loosing” the strangle of violent contracts: “[Y]ou shall recognize him whom you had subjected to shame, and who was a sacrificial offering for all sinners who are willing to repent and to comply with that fast which Isaiah prescribed when he said, *loosing the strangle of violent contracts*, (διασπώντες στραγγαλιὰς βιαιῶν συναλλαγμάτων) and to observe likewise all the other precepts laid down by him (precepts which I have already mentioned and which all believers in Christ fulfill). You also know very well that the offering of the two goats, which had to take place during the fast, could not take place anywhere else except in Jerusalem.” Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris Dialogus Cum Tryphone*, 137; Bobichon, *Justin Martyr: Dialogue avec Tryphon*, 284; Falls et al, *St. Justin Martyr. Dialogue with Trypho*, 62. Scholars have noticed that Justin Martyr seems to be reworking here the Septuagint version of Isa 58:6, a passage which speaks of loosing the bonds of injustice and the thongs of the yoke: “λύε πάντα σύνδεσμον ἀδικίας διάλυε στραγγαλιὰς βιαιῶν συναλλαγμάτων.” But Justin’s quotation from the Septuagint has “διασπώντες” instead of “διάλυε.” With respect to the usage of this expression in Justin, see Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy*, 55–56.

95. Reflecting on the misleading function of the false messiah in chapter 29, Alexander Kulik suggests that the Slavonic term *oslaba* might be connected with the notion of laxity in relation to the weakness in observance of the Torah, which the messianic man will bring to the Hebrews, misleading some of them. He points to some later rabbinic materials in which the false messiah brings neglect or laxity in upholding the Law. Kulik observes that “Greek counterparts of CS ослаба, ослабление, ослабѣние may also have negative connotations: ‘willfulness’—Gk ἄνεσις or ‘weakening,’ ‘laxity’—Gk. ἔκλυσις or παράλυσις (Mikl: 518; Srezn: 2.723–724; SRJa11–17: 13.1013). The last one might have rendered Heb. רפיון and relate to a pseudo-Messiah; cf. התורה רפיון רפיון ‘laxity [= neglect] of the Law’ (*Lam. Rab.* 1:4) or התורה רפיון ידים מן התורה ‘laxity of hands in upholding the Law’ (*Midrash Tanhuma, Beshalah* 25).” Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, 51.

96. Rubinkiewicz thinks that the concept of liberation was present in the messianic traditions that constitute the conceptual basis of chapter 29. In his opinion the interpolator used an ancient text, a messianic apocryphal prophecy, which he inserted in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, after adjusting it in line with Christian convictions. The original text presented the messianic figure as the liberator who would break the yoke of the heathen. Rubinkiewicz, *L’Apocalypse d’Abraham en vieux slave*, 66.

97. Robert Hall underlines this aspect arguing that “the man who is worshiped severs the unfaithful Jews from Abraham’s seed and joins them to the Gentiles.” Hall, “The ‘Christian Interpolation’ in the Apocalypse of Abraham,” 108.

98. Lenowitz, *The Jewish Messiahs: From the Galilee to Crown Heights*, 31.

Adoil Outside the Cosmos: God Before and After Creation in the Enochic Tradition

1. The unique details of this cosmogonic account have been noted elsewhere. See A. Orlov, “Secrets of Creation in 2 (Slavonic) Enoch,” in: A. Orlov, *From Apocalypticism to Merkabah Mysticism: Studies in the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha* (JSJSS, 114; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 175–195.

2. G. Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in Kabbalah* (New York: Schocken, 1991) 98–101; M. Idel, *Ascensions on High in Jewish Mysticism: Pillars, Lines, Ladders* (Past Incorporated. CEU Studies in Humanities, 2; Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005) 75ff.

3. The longer recension, while preserving the general narrative structure of the shorter one, supplies some additional details. The longer recension of *2 Enoch* 25 reads: “And I commanded the lowest things: ‘Let one of the invisible things descend visibly!’ And Adoil descended, extremely large. And I looked at him, and, behold, in his belly he had a great light. And I said to him, ‘Disintegrate yourself, Adoil, and let what is born from you become visible.’ And he disintegrated himself, and there came out a very great light. And I was in the midst of the [great] light. And light out of light is carried thus. And the great age came out, and it revealed all the creation which I had thought up to create. And I saw how good it was. And I placed for myself a throne, and I sat down on it. And then to the light I spoke: ‘You go up higher (than the throne), and be solidified [much higher than the throne], and become the foundation of the higher things.’ And there is nothing higher than the light, except nothing itself. And again I bowed (?) myself and looked upward from my throne.” Andersen, “2 Enoch,” 1.144.

4. Andersen, “2 Enoch,” 1.145.

5. Much scholarship has been devoted to clarifying the etymology of the enigmatic name of the great aeon. Many scholars consider the name to provide an important clue for understanding the origins of the text. Robert Henry Charles suggests that Adoil might be derived from the Hebrew אֱלֹהֵי, translated as the “hand of God.” Charles, *APOT*, 2.445. Marc Philonenko supports this etymology, pointing to some Egyptian parallels in which “les premières créatures naissent du liquide séminal que le démiurge solitaire