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THE RAPE OF EVE AND ITS SPIRITUAL CONNOTATIONS  
IN EARLY JEWISH AND Gnostic LITERATURE\*

*And the Lord God said unto the woman, 'What is this  
that thou hast done?' And the woman said, 'The  
serpent beguiled me, and I did eat'*  
Genesis 3:13

SUMMARY – This study questions the causes and implications of the serpent's beguilement of the biblical figure Eve in Genesis 3. The answers to these questions may be found in early biblical commentaries stemming from various Jewish, Christian and Gnostic communities. Beginning with the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* as one of the earliest presentations of the serpent as Satan, the reader may note the beguilement and seduction of Eve as the entrance of evil into the human world. This is also illustrated as seduction and rape in 1 and 2 Enochic. Here, Eve is used as a vehicle for revenge on Adam and a means to bring death to man. 4 Maccabees also sees Eve as a victim of rape by satanic forces, continuing this exegetical tradition of Genesis 3. Finally the later Gnostic sources demonstrate this rape as a battle between ignorance and knowledge. The children born from this rape are unwanted children and the embodiment of evil. Each of these early biblical interpretations present the first woman, as subjugated, subdued and a vehicle for the entrance of evil into the human realm.

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\* Citations presented according to the following translations unless otherwise noted:  
**The Hebrew Bible**, New Testament and Apocrypha, *King James Bible*, 1611.  
**Babylonian Talmud**, Isidore Epstein (Ed.), *The Babylonian Talmud*, London: Soncino, 1961.  
**The Pseudepigrapha**, James H. Charlesworth (Ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985.  
**Philo**, Charles Duke Yonge (Ed.), *The works of Philo: Complete and unabridged*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993.  
**Gnostic Texts**, James M. Robinson (Ed.), *The Nag Hammadi library*, rev. ed., San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1990.

Ancient commentators have repeatedly cited the above verse in Genesis 3 as the source for an illicit sexual relationship that took place between Eve and the serpent.<sup>1</sup> By reading this verse out of the context of the larger story of Adam and in the Garden of Eden, the reader faces a sub-narrative, infused with sexual terminology and a struggle for power. The serpent's 'beguiling', followed by the punishment associated with his belly, is the result of carnal force used against Eve. He is stripped of his ability to have any sexual relations because of his grave sin of raping Eve. While some Early Jewish commentators metamorphosed the serpent into an evil spiritual force, such as Satan or other such fallen angels, and allude to this verse as Eve's physical defilement, Gnostic exegetes continue this spiritual transformation and understand this narrative as the defilement of the sacred realm by demonic and evil entities.

The defilement of Eve may possibly be related to the Greek translation of the Bible. Within the Septuagint, written in Egypt in the third century BCE, the Hebrew term **השיאני** translates into the Greek word *ἡπάτησέν*, beguilement, which carries many different meanings relating to seduction in the classical world. The term may signify tempting with food or money, but it may also mean to seduce, as seen in the Classical Greek play *Lysistra* (223-224), in which the women of Athens hope to use their sexuality to persuade their husbands to refrain from war.<sup>2</sup> This term is also used as the name for the goddess Peitho, who is associated with sexual persuasion and abduction. This is reflected in a 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE skyphos, a vessel, in which Peitho is holding a flower in her right hand, as she and her mother, Aphrodite, witness the abduction of Helen by Paris.<sup>3</sup> As in the story with Helen, seduction and persuasion are prominent in the Eve and serpent narrative. One should note the similarities between the Hebrew **פתוי**, seduction, and the Greek *ἡπάτησέν*. The two words are phonetically similar and have the same meaning in terms of sexual delusion. Furthermore, the term adopted by the Greek translator has also been used in connection with forced sexual relations with a woman, leading the reader to understand the text as rape. As a punishment for this, the snake will slither on his belly, which symbolizes a womb, the part of Eve's body where his evil act will be most apparent. In this way, the Septuagint draws a parallel between the snake's assault on Eve and his punishment. In a similar trend, the term *κοιλία*, a translation of **גח**,

<sup>1</sup> Gary Anderson, 'Celibacy or consummation in the Garden? Reflections on early Jewish and Christian interpretations of the Garden of Eden', in: *The Harvard Theological Review* 82 (1989) no.2, 121-148.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth S. Rothwell Jr., *Politics and persuasion in Aristophanes Ecclesiazusae*, Leiden: Brill, 1990, 28-29.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem.

is used throughout the New Testament as a reference to a woman's womb.<sup>4</sup> For example in Galatians 1:15 'ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ **κοιλίας** μητρός μου καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ'. [But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.] Where the Hebrew uses a term, which is in reference to a snake's belly only (see Leviticus 11:42), the translator of the Septuagint once again reinterpreted the term to relate to Eve's body.

Finally, the Greek translator altered the text once again in his translation of Genesis 4:1. The term 'to know' in biblical Hebrew, **יָדַע**, when used in the context of a male and female relationship, has typically been understood as sexual relations. In this case, the translator understood the term in a more literal sense, namely the root vowel **γνω-**, to gain knowledge. This changes the entire verse to indicate that Adam gains some newfound knowledge related to his wife, rather than signifying that he had sexual relations with her. This is further illustrated by other examples of the **γνω-**verb stem used in the Septuagint, which only refer to the gaining of knowledge. For example in Ecclesiastes 4:13: 'πένης καὶ σοφὸς ὑπὲρ βασιλέα πρεσβύτερον καὶ ἄφρονα ὃς οὐκ **ἔγνω** τοῦ προσέχειν'. [Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king.]<sup>5</sup> Thus, the term 'wise' in this verse may be understood as the opposite of foolish, relating to the acquisition of knowledge. In this light, the text may be understood as Adam knowing that Eve had conceived with another being. This is a plausible interpretation, given the sexual imagery and terms of seduction that precede this verse.

This paper will demonstrate the understanding of Genesis 3:13 as the rape of Eve and an illicit sexual encounter with evil spiritual forces, as seen in ancient Jewish and Gnostic interpretations. It will also show how the evil offspring that resulted from the illicit sexual relationship of the serpent and Eve is an additional indicator of rape.

<sup>4</sup> For other examples of **κόριος** as a womb see Mt 19:12; Lk 1:15, 42; Jn 7:38; and Acts 3:2, 14:8.

<sup>5</sup> Also see Hos 2:8; Job 12:20; Eccl 9:12; 1 Sm 1:19. The last example also pertains to a relationship between a woman and man; however, once again, the translator of the Septuagint understands Elkanah as being aware of his wife's relationship with God, seeing that God immediately remembers her.

*THE GREEK LIFE OF ADAM AND EVE*

The *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (*GLAE*) is a Jewish pseudepigraphical book written in Greek, between the first and third centuries;<sup>6</sup> most scholars agree that it is hard to give more specific information about the book's origin.<sup>7</sup> In any event, it may be one of the earliest documents to depict a sexual relationship between the serpent and Eve.

Two places in particular describe the serpent's deception of Eve, with a connotation of seduction. The first is at the start of this narrative, where *GLAE* 7.2 records Satan's possession of the serpent and his urge to deceive Eve. 'And the hour drew near for the angels who were guarding your mother to go up and worship the Lord. And the enemy gave it to her and she ate from the tree. You know that I was not near her nor the holy angels'. Here, Adam tells his children the story of how the serpent, whom Satan possessed, entered the Garden of Eden and approached Eve, at a time when she was most vulnerable: alone and unprotected. In this text, the phrase, 'And the enemy gave it to her' is problematic, since we read in Genesis 3:6 that Eve took the fruit from the tree. Furthermore, in *GLAE* 19.3, when Eve retells the story of her seduction to her children, she also states that she herself took something from the tree. Thus, what the enemy gave to her is unclear, unless understood in a sexual context. The Greek verse states that 'Και ἔδωσε σε αὐτῇ ὁ ἐχθρὸς'. What αὐτῇ refers to is difficult to determine. As John Levinson points out, this verse is unclear; as a result of this, in a sixteenth century manuscript from a Patmos Monastery of Saint John the evangelist, the text was amended, and utilized the female αὐτή, to signify that it was Eve who gave something to Adam.<sup>8</sup> One suggestion may be that αὐτή is ἐπιθυμία, lust, which is what Eve describes as receiving from the serpent in *GLAE* 19.3. The way in which one gives lust to another would naturally be through seduction. Hence, Eve was seduced unknowingly and without her consent by the serpent.

<sup>6</sup> For a thorough presentation of the date, language and provenance of *The Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, see Michael Stone, *A history of the literature of Adam and Eve*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992. For a Hebrew translation of *GLAE*, see Avraham Kahana, *Ha-Sefarim ha-hitsonim*, Tel Aviv: Masadah, 1959. For a synopsis of the various Greek manuscripts, see John R. Levison, *Texts in transition: The Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000; and Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve in Greek: A critical edition*, Leiden: Brill, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed discussion on the provenance and date of the text, see Marinus de Jonge & Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and related literature*, Sheffield, England: Academic Press, 1997, 65-78.

<sup>8</sup> Levison, *Texts in transition*, 19.

A second place where a connotation to seduction is made in *GLAE* is in 19.1. Here Eve speaks in the first person, describing her initial meeting with the serpent/Satan.

And I opened (it for him) and he entered paradise and went before me. He walked a little way, then turned and said to me: 'I have changed my mind and I will not give you to eat'. These things he said wishing to trap me in the end. And he said to me: 'If you swear to me that you will give also to your husband'.  
(*GLAE* 19.1)

At this point, the serpent enters the scene leading Eve into sin. The verse places the serpent before Eve, stating that 'he entered and went before' her, meaning that the serpent was in a position to lead her to transgression. Satan is now presented in the story, ready to teach Eve about the forbidden, and as a result she will cause her husband to transgress. Nowhere in this verse is the forbidden fruit mentioned. The author simply indicates that the serpent tempts Eve to taste the forbidden. This forbidden act must include two participants. Only the snake can 'give' it to her and only she can 'give' to her husband. Moreover, when retelling the story, Eve recognises that this was a form of seduction; this is apparent from her use of the term *δελεάζει*, which may be understood as 'seduced', as indicated in a 13<sup>th</sup> century manuscript from Venice, Marciana.<sup>9</sup> Levinson points out that this manuscript 'renders Eve the agent of Adam's demise'.<sup>10</sup> This demise was brought upon Adam by the lust of Eve, who was seduced by the serpent. Thus, at least one other copyist of *GLAE* understood the origins of the expulsion as the satanic seduction of Eve.

In *GLAE*, the rape of Eve follows the seduction of Eve by the serpent. Within the text itself, this act seems to have been illicit for two reasons. Firstly, Eve was the 'אשה' of Adam, and therefore it was forbidden for her to have any other sexual relations. Secondly, the act of seduction seems to have been intended not by God, but by Satan, in order to bring man to his downfall. The serpent, who has already been possessed by Satan (*GLAE* 16.1-16.4), enters into Eve in a sexual manner. The first place in which this may be seen is 19:3, where the text is explicit in its reference to Eve being introduced to desire and carnal relations through the serpent.

...And when he had received the oath from me, he went and poured upon the fruit the poison of his wickedness, which is lust, the root and beginning of every sin, and he bent the branch on the earth and I took of the fruit and I ate.  
(*GLAE* 19:3)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 17

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 41.

The allusion to sexuality in this passage is the literal description of the serpent pouring ‘upon the fruit the poison of his wickedness’. Of course, this image should cause one to imagine an ejaculatory poison from the snake, namely semen, seeing that it is lust.<sup>11</sup> Mason Boyd Stokes uses this verse to illustrate the ‘phallic power and intention associated with the serpent’, that is, the sexually motivated intention of this verse.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the serpent entices Eve to taste of his semen by ejaculating his poison on the fruit, a very sexual description.

*GLAE* continues with the punishments given by God to the serpent and interestingly, expands on Genesis 3:14, providing an additional explanation for the serpent’s punishment. ‘There shall not be left thee ear nor wing, nor one limb of all that with which thou didst ensnare them in thy malice and caused them to be cast out of paradise’ (*GLAE* 26:3). In this verse, the term ‘one limb of all’ is clearly an allusion to the limb that ‘the poison of his wickedness’ (*GLAE* 19:3) came from, namely his penis. Ergo, God removes this limb from the snake because it was the ultimate cause of his sin.

Adam’s exposure to lust takes place after Eve is aware of her own sexuality. This is clearly pointed out in *GLAE*, after Eve first tastes the forbidden fruit, or, in other words, after the serpent has entered her. She must share this lust with Adam as she has promised the serpent in *GLAE* 19.2. The text continues by stating that this is the root of every sin, as it is pleasing to mankind rather than pleasing to God. In a sexual encounter, man serves man and flesh serves flesh rather than the spiritual divine. As a result, when Eve and Seth reach the Garden of Eden in order to retrieve the oil of life for Adam, the angel, Michael, rejects their request and instead describes to them an apocalyptic vision of the world to come where

all flesh be raised up from Adam till that great day, – all that shall be of the holy people. Then shall the delights of paradise be given to them and God shall be in their midst. And they shall no longer sin before his face, for the evil heart shall be taken from them and there shall be given them a heart understanding the good and to serve God only. (*GLAE* 13:3)

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Prusak, ‘Woman: Seductive siren and source of sin? Pseudepigraphal myth and Christian origins’, in: Rosemary R. Ruether (Ed.), *Religion and sexism: Images of woman in the Jewish and Christian traditions*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974, 89-116: 94; Also see Sergey Minov, ‘“Serpentine” Eve in Syriac Christian literature of late Antiquity’, in: Daphna Arbel & Andrei Orlov (Eds.), *With letters of light: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls, early Jewish apocalypticism, magic and mysticism in Honor of Rachel Elijor*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011 (Ekstasis 2), 92-114: 95.

<sup>12</sup> Mason Boyd Stokes, *The color of sex: Whiteness, heterosexuality and the fictions of white supremacy*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2001, 89.

Here, Michael begins a description of an apocalyptic day to come, with the usage of the term 'flesh' similar to his reference to 'flesh' in his rebuke of Eve. The reference to flesh is literal in this passage and in both cases the term refers to a mundane satisfaction, like that of sexual relations. The verse continues by presenting a sort of 'delight' in Paradise, an entity that is the object of spiritual desires, as opposed to fleshly desires. This concept is furthered by man's 'evil heart' being taken from him and replaced by an 'understanding heart', in which only God will be served. Since only God is served when this change takes place, one must presume that part of the 'sin of the flesh' included serving something other than God's desires namely, man's desires and lust. For Levinson, this idea presents to the reader 'the manner in which transgression occurs', and illustrates that 'on the day of resurrection, sorrow will be turned into joy, the enemy will be overthrown, and human dominion will be restored'.<sup>13</sup> Thus, bliss in the world is developed through man's service to the divine rather than the mundane. This idea is magnified in *GLAE*, where sexual lust is preferred over divine worship, and a satanic act is chosen over a godly one. Thus, we have illustrated that seduction was the cause of Adam and Eve's expulsion. However, to cast the seduction as rape, we need to establish Eve's lack of consent to the sexual act. This, in fact, may be seen in her ignorance to the concept of sexual relations and her naivety to the slyness of the serpent.

One scholar who supports this interpretation is Vita Daphna Arbel. Arbel sees the expression which refers to lust, *επιθυμία*, as 'the origin of every sin'.<sup>14</sup> She continues this thought by pointing out that it is the lust, or desire of Adam and Eve, rather than any other act of the characters themselves, that is responsible for the downfall of mankind.<sup>15</sup> Although she believes that the ultimate downfall of Adam and Eve is their disobedience towards God's commandments, Arbel sees *GLAE*'s portrayal of Eve as innocent, and not 'as Satan's evil companion'.<sup>16</sup> According to Arbel, Eve is the victim of this narrative, not an accomplice to the illicit sexual act.

Although some scholars may view the sexual relationship between the serpent and Eve, or even Eve and Adam as a Christian gloss,<sup>17</sup> most scholars agree that according to *GLAE*'s portrayal, the seduction of Eve, while not necessarily violent, was conducted in a sly way; Eve is unknowingly – and without her con-

<sup>13</sup> John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam: From Sirach to 2 Baruch*, Sheffield: JSOT, 1988, 174.

<sup>14</sup> Vita Daphna Arbel, *Forming femininity in Antiquity: Eve, gender, and ideologies in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 29.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>17</sup> Michael D. Eldridge, *Dying Adam with his multiethnic family: Understanding the Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, Leiden: Brill, 2001 (*Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha* 16), 266-267; Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve in Greek*, 109.

sent – possessed by Satan and corrupted by his evil ways. Moreover, in light of *GLAE*'s portrayal of the seduction as an act of evil and satanic, one may certainly assume that Eve did not consent to the serpent's advancement and instead fell into his trap (i.e. rape), or 'poison of wickedness'.

#### ENOCHIC LITERATURE

In continuing with the idea of spiritual evil infiltration of the human world, one may find Enochic literature also using the Eve narrative as an opportunity to do so. *1 Enoch*, composed around the second century BCE, with additions made at later times,<sup>18</sup> omits any mention of a sexual relationship between Eve and the serpent – probably because of its provenance – however it does seem to begin a tradition of Eve as the *femme fatale* through her encounter with the fallen angel, Gader'el.<sup>19</sup> While its most complete version is in Ge'ez, its original language was Aramaic, as demonstrated by the textual fragments discovered at Qumran, placing its provenance in the Land of Israel.<sup>20</sup> Some scholars believe the work is similar to Daniel in its original make-up of both Hebrew and Aramaic.<sup>21</sup> This is perhaps related to the fact that its overall composition consists of disparate sections that date to different times and writers.<sup>22</sup>

The *Book of Similitudes* (*1 Enoch* 37-71, also known as the *Book of Parables*) is the section that discusses Eve's relationship with the serpent, and is considered by Michael Stone as the most recent of all compendiums of the book.<sup>23</sup> Eve's rape is first noted by the archangel, Michael, who mentions the names of the fallen angels of Genesis 6, and describes each of their wrongdoings. He also clarifies how Eve was used as a vehicle for death to come to man.

<sup>18</sup> E. Isaac, '1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch', in: James H. Charlesworth (Ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Vol. 1: *Apocalyptic literature and testaments*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2010, 5-89: 7.

<sup>19</sup> For the juxtaposition of Eve as a domesticated housewife and Lilith as the first image of the *femme fatale*, and a parallel narrative in the Babylonian tradition see Orit Kamir, *Every breath you take: Stalking narratives and the law*, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2001, 29-32.

<sup>20</sup> Isaac, '1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch', 6.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>23</sup> Michael E. Stone, 'Why study the Pseudepigrapha?', in: *Biblical Archaeologist* 46 (1983) no.4, 235-243: 238. See also Devorah Dimant, 'חנוך החבשי לז-עא) ומגילות קומראן', in: *ספר המשלים (חנוך החבשי לז-עא) ומגילות קומראן*, in: Moshe Bar-Asher & Devorah Dimant (Eds.), *מגילות: מחקרים במגילות מדבר יהודה ג* [*Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls III*], Jerusalem: Haifa University/ Bialik Institute, 2005, 49-67.



The third was named Gader'el; this one is he who showed the children of the people all the blows of death, who misled Eve, who showed the children of the people the instruments of death, the shield, the breastplate, and the sword for warfare, and all instruments of death to the children of people. Through their agency [death] proceeds against the people who dwell upon the earth from that day forevermore. (*1 Enoch* 69:6-8)

Eve's presence is simply mentioned in passing, with no serious examination of how the serpent misled her. In this context, Eve is clearly associated with the *femme fatale*, and bringing death to man. She is paralleled to the instruments of war that caused death and is seen as a medium that Gadre'el, a fallen angel and agent of Satan, used to cost man his life.<sup>24</sup> This section, a story of power and war, demonstrates how women are viewed as an expression of man's final downfall. For example, in Deuteronomy 21:10-14, captive women are presented as the triumphant display of booty from war. Thus, repeatedly, women are caught amid the power struggle between males, whether between Adam and Satan or the Children of Israel and their enemies.

This idea is echoed as well in the later *2 Enoch*, written towards the end of the first century BCE, probably in Greek, although its only surviving texts are in Old Slavonic.<sup>25</sup> Some scholars believe that the majority of the book, not including the obvious Greek allusions, was written in Hebrew and then translated into Slavonic.<sup>26</sup> Others differ greatly in their view of authorship and provenance of the text. While some believe that it was written by Christian monks in 9<sup>th</sup> century Byzantium, differing views state that it was written by Alexandrian Jews.<sup>27</sup> The

<sup>24</sup> Gader'el, in Aramaic, עדראל, may be viewed as 'a Satan', according to R.H. Charles because it was Satan who traditionally 'led astray Eve'. R.H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch*, Jerusalem: Makor, 1912, 137. For the idea that Eve, as woman is destined to be used as an instrument by Satan see Elaine H. Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the serpent*, New York: Random House, 1988, 74.

<sup>25</sup> F.I. Anderson, '2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch', in: *Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments (The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Vol. 1)*, 91-221: 94.

<sup>26</sup> Grant Macaskill, '2 Enoch: Manuscripts, recensions, and original language', in: Andrei Orlov, Gabriele Boccaccini, & Jason M. Zurawski (Eds.), *New perspectives on 2 Enoch: No longer Slavonic only*, Leiden: Brill, 2012 (*Studia Judaeslavica* 4), 83-101: 101.

<sup>27</sup> F.I. Anderson, '2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch', 95. On the priestly relationship to Enochic literature see Rachel Elijor, "חנך בחרת מבני אדם" – חנוך סופר הצדק והספרייה של 'הכוהנים בני' – הכתיבה והזיכרון מסורת הכהונה, ספריית המגילות והמאבק על הדעת, העדות, הכתיבה והזיכרון [You have chosen Enoch among human beings: Enoch 'the Scribe of Righteousness' and the scroll library of the Priests the Sons of Zadok]', in: Rachel Elijor & Peter Schäfer (Eds.), *Creation and re-creation in Jewish thought*. Festschrift in honor of Joseph Dan on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005, 15\*-64\*.

fragments of *2 Enoch* in Coptic discovered in the region of Nubia, Egypt support the Alexandrian hypothesis.<sup>28</sup>

As seen above with the Septuagint, the description of the serpent's sexual relationship with Eve was a tradition of demonic permeation stemming from the Egyptian region, supporting the Alexandrian theory. In the portrayal of Eve in Enochic literature, this text is similar to *1 Enoch's femme fatale* description, in which Eve is responsible for man's death. The author of *2 Enoch* describes Satanail's (Satan's) jealousy of Adam and thus, his plan to destroy him through Eve.

And I put sleep into him and he fell asleep. And I took from him a rib, and created him a wife, that death should come to him by his wife, and I took his last word and called her name mother, that is to say, Eve. Adam has life on earth, and I created a garden in Eden in the east, that he should observe the testament and keep the command. I made the heavens open to him, that he should see the angels singing the song of victory, and the gloomless light. And he was continuously in paradise, and the devil understood that I wanted to create another world, because Adam was lord on earth, to rule and control it. The devil is the evil spirit of the lower places, as a fugitive he made Sotona from the heavens as his name was Satanail thus, he became different from the angels, did not change intelligence as far as understanding of righteous and sinful. And he understood his condemnation and the sin which he had sinned before, therefore he conceived thought against Adam, in such form he entered and seduced Eve, but did not touch Adam. But I cursed ignorance, but what I had blessed previously, those I did not curse, I cursed not man, nor the earth, nor other creatures, but man's evil fruit, and his works. (*2 Enoch* 30:16-31:6)

The author introduces Eve into the text with an account of her creation and naming. The text takes care to note that 'Adam has life on earth', which is a contradiction of the earlier verse, where God states 'that death should come to him by his wife'. Thus, Eve is connected to death, as Adam is to life. She is the cause of his death, and Adam is the protector of life, as seen in his upkeep of the Garden of Eden. She, rather than the serpent, is the vehicle that will hurt Adam, and in turn it is the woman who will be wounded. Eve is the vessel for his pain. Furthermore, Eve, being the final of God's human creations, is the only one that is cursed. 'But I cursed ignorance, but what I had blessed previously, those I did not curse, I cursed not man, nor the earth, nor other creatures, but man's evil fruit, and his works'. 'His works', being Adam's relations with Eve, which directly caused his death. In this sense, Eve is both the seduced and

<sup>28</sup> Liudmila Navtanovich, 'The provenance of 2 Enoch: A philological perspective – A response to C. Böttrich's paper "The 'Book of the Secrets of Enoch' (2 En): Between Jewish origin and Christian transmission – An overview"', in: Orlov, Boccaccini & Zurawski, *New perspectives on 2 Enoch*, 69-82: 80.

seducer, as in *GLAE*. She is the link between Satan and man. As in *1 Enoch*, woman, and desire for her, ultimately lead to man's downfall.

In *2 Enoch's* narrative of Eve and the serpent, the tension and conflict lies between Adam and the serpent, but it is Eve who is punished. This is demonstrated where the text reads, 'therefore he conceived thought against Adam, in such form he entered and seduced Eve, but did not touch Adam'. *2 Enoch* is quite explicit in its description of the serpent not only seducing, but also entering Eve in a sexual manner, flaunting his power to take man's possession and use it against him. This idea echoes the exegesis described in the *GLAE*: both narratives point to the serpent's sly seduction and rape of Eve, playing on her vulnerabilities and thus turning her into the *femme fatale*. For her part, Eve is unknowing, and duped into this relationship, but her voice has been silenced. One can only imagine what the female voice would have said; however, its omission indicates the author's intent, namely to subdue woman to man because of the grief that she may cause him.

Neil Forsyth correctly states that by the second to third century CE, readings of the Adam and Eve story had revamped earlier narratives, and as such 'angelic rebellion is explicitly linked to the Adam and Eve story, and the motivation is not lust but envy'.<sup>29</sup> Michael Stone, as well, understands the seduction as an attempt to take revenge on Adam.<sup>30</sup> He does not, however, mention the usage of Eve as the vehicle for revenge. By placing Eve as the main character, a different narrative may be understood. Rather than a tale of power, jealousy and avengement, the story of Eve may be understood as 'man's evil fruit'. She is created from him so that 'death should come to him' from her. She is named 'mother', as a play on Adam's name. F.I. Andersen states in his commentary of *2 Enoch*, that the last syllable of אַדָּם is אִמָּ, allowing the name 'mother' to arise from his name.<sup>31</sup> She is then used by Satan as a means to kill Adam. This illustrates the first dichotomy of Eve, where she is both the mother of life and the cause of death. The second dichotomy is her femininity, which constitutes her ability to seduce, as well as her vulnerability to be seduced, sexually penetrated and violated. Daphna Arbel notes that *2 Enoch*, similar to *GLAE*, points to the possibility of numerous Eve traditions; however, none of these traditions play

<sup>29</sup> Neil Forsyth, *The old enemy: Satan and the combat myth*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987, 237.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Stone, 'The fall of Satan and Adam's penance', in: Gary A. Anderson, Michael E. Stone & Johannes Tromp (Eds.), *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected essays*, Leiden: Brill, 2000, 43-56: 46.

<sup>31</sup> One should note that the biblical verse has Adam naming Eve 'Mother' rather than God. See Anderson, '2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch', 153.

an important role in advancing the narrative itself.<sup>32</sup> This may be linked to the fact that Eve is the passive agent in the story. Through these sexual approaches, Satan rapes Eve, leaving her to be the unheard victim. Satan does ‘not touch Adam’, leaving Eve as the cause of his death. She is the ignorant, foolish and unstable woman, who may be taken advantage of, as well as the evil *femme fatale*, who causes man to die.

#### 4 MACCABEES

4 *Maccabees* also mentions Eve as the victim of a rape. Probably written between 63 BCE –70 CE in Greek in Alexandria, Egypt,<sup>33</sup> the book indirectly illustrates Eve as violated by Satan. Unlike the Enoch narratives, 4 *Maccabees* does not associate Eve with death.

The rape of Eve appears as a reference in the discourse presented by the mother to her seven sons, as she utters her last words before her death. The mother emphasizes how she differed from Eve; unlike Eve, she avoided being in a situation that left her vulnerable and successfully guarding her body and faith.

I was a chaste maiden and did not leave my father’s house; but I kept guard over the built up rib.<sup>34</sup> No seducer of the desert or deceiver in the field corrupted me, nor did the seducing and beguiling serpent defile my maidenly purity. Through all the days of my prime I stayed with my husband. (4 *Maccabees* 18:7-9)

Although Eve is not mentioned by name, the mother’s reference to her rib is a clear allusion to Eve in Genesis 2.<sup>35</sup> Thus, in this passage, Eve is clearly depicted as being seduced by the serpent.<sup>36</sup> In reference to the seducer of the desert, H. Anderson cites the ancient belief that satanic spirits resided in the wilderness, and therefore, women were forbidden from leaving the protection of their homes

<sup>32</sup> Daphna Arbel, ‘On Adam, Enoch, Melchizedek, and Eve’, in: Orlov, Boccaccini & Zurawski, *New perspectives on 2 Enoch*, 431-453: 432.

<sup>33</sup> H. Anderson, ‘4 Maccabees’, in: Charlesworth, *Apocalyptic literature and testaments (The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Vol. 1)*, 531-564: 534-537.

<sup>34</sup> It should be noted that H. Anderson has changed the Greek text from ‘built-up rib’ to the ‘rib built into a woman’s body’. The former translation of the Greek seems more appropriate mostly because the mother is speaking of her entire body rather than a single bone. The rib built into a body is more meaningful in this context, as opposed to a rib being placed in an already existing female body.

<sup>35</sup> Israel Knohl, ‘Cain: Son of God or son of Satan?’, in: Natalie B. Dohrmann & David Stern (Eds.), *Jewish biblical interpretation and cultural exchange: Comparative exegesis in context*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008 (Jewish Culture and Contexts 8), 37-50: 46.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem.

out of fear that they would be raped by these demons.<sup>37</sup> The mother's chastity was due to her care to remain under the protection of her father's or husband's roof. Later, Rabbinic exegesis will use this concept of leaving the father's or husband's home as leading inevitably to rape.<sup>38</sup> She also distinguishes herself from Eve in her care to guard the rib from which she was created, namely her body, not allowing any unwanted and illicit sexual acts to occur. She remained with her husband, and allowed only him to touch her. (This idea is reinforced in the previous chapter, in which the mother is described as having thrown herself into a fire to avoid any contact with a male. 'Some of the guards declared that when she, too, was about to be seized and put to death, she threw herself into the fire so that no one could touch her body' (4 *Mc* 17:1). In the eyes of the author of 4 *Maccabees*, this woman was – unlike Eve – untainted, not raped, never defiled by demonic forces.

#### GNOSTIC TEXTS

The Gnostic texts transform not only the serpent, but also Eve into a spiritual form. The Gnostic texts, namely those discovered in the ancient Nag Hammadi library, include a large collection of narratives referring to the rape of Eve. Perhaps this is further indication of a tradition that was originally set in Egypt, only to become a basis of a new religious sect. The texts discovered in the Nag Hammadi Library date between the third and fourth centuries; however some of the codices were composed earlier than this date.<sup>39</sup> Many scholars think that Gnosticism emerged as a sectarian group on the 'fringes of Judaism'; they were, perhaps, Jews originating from the community in Egypt, who paid much attention to the origins of evil beginning between the first and second centuries CE.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Anderson, '4 Maccabees', 534-537.

<sup>38</sup> See the Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin*, 102a.

<sup>39</sup> Frederik Wisse, 'After the synopsis: Prospects and problems in establishing a critical text of the Apocryphon of John and defining its historical location', in: John Douglas Turner & Anne Marie McGuire (Eds.), *The Nag Hammadi library after fifty years*. Proceedings of the 1995 Society of Biblical Literature Commemoration, Leiden: Brill, 1997 (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 44), 138-153: 149.

<sup>40</sup> See the Gedaliahu Stroumsa's discussion of Adolf Hönig, *Die Ophiten: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des jüdischen Gnosticismus* (Berlin: Manner-Muller, 1889) in Gedaliahu A.G. Stroumsa, *Another seed: Studies in Gnostic mythology*, Leiden: Brill, 1984 (Nag Hammadi Studies 24), 9; For further arguments of Gnosticism stemming from the fringes of Judaism see Michel Desjardins, 'Judaism and Gnosticism', in: Wendy E. Helleman (Ed.), *Hellenization revisited: Shaping a Christian response within the Greco-Roman world*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1994, 309-322; and B.A. Pearson, 'Biblical exegesis in Gnostic literature', in: M.E. Stone (Ed.), *Armenian and biblical studies*, Jerusalem: St. James Press, 1976, 70-80; For the most

Whereas *4 Maccabees* intimated that Eve was vulnerable, these narratives depict Eve as intelligent and capable of outsmarting her perpetrator. To guard herself from the evil advances of the angels who are trying to defile her, she transforms her heavenly state, or soul, into a tree, namely the Tree of Knowledge (γνῶσις). Her bodily form remains in the presence of Adam, who ineffectively, is silent and idle while the angels ‘acted rashly; they came up to her and seized her and cast their seed upon her. They did so wickedly, defiling not only in natural ways but also in foul ways’ (*On the Origin of the World* II NHC 117, 6). As seen in the above texts, this pointedly describes an assault on Eve by demonic forces; in fact, the violence that she endures is what modern law refers to as ‘gang rape’, in which multiple offenders rape the same woman.<sup>41</sup>

This narrative differs from earlier texts because the conflict that takes place in this story is not an expression of Satan’s revenge on Adam; rather it is a struggle between ignorance and knowledge, light and darkness. Two heavenly bodies, the Creator and Wisdom, compete for power, and the Gnostics, who promote Wisdom and her feminine elements, use their literature to describe the evil angels’ defilement of Eve. Thus, the Gnostic texts have an understanding of the Garden of Eden that is different from most other commentaries. Rather than symbolizing a demonic or malicious figure, the snake has come to be understood by the sect as a power who presents knowledge and understanding to Adam and Eve. Yaltabaoth, the Judeo-Christian understanding of God, and his army of angels are the ultimate evil archons who attempt to rape Eve in pursuit of Wisdom and thus, cause her (Wisdom/Eve) to hide in the form of a tree. Hence, the Tree of Knowledge provides a haven for the soul of Eve, or the spiritual Eve, while the bodily Eve is defiled by the archons, all wanting to taste her.

But what sort is this God? First he maliciously refused Adam from eating of the tree of knowledge, and, secondly, he said ‘Adam, where are you?’ God does not have foreknowledge? (...) And in one place, Moses writes, ‘He made the devil a serpent <for> those whom he has in his generation’. Also, in the book which is called ‘Exodus’, it is written thus: ‘He contended against the magicians, when the place was full of serpents according to their wickedness; and the rod which was in the hand of Moses became a serpent, (and) it swallowed the serpents of the magicians’. Again it is written (Numbers 21:9): ‘He made a serpent of bronze (and) hung it upon a pole (...)’

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updated perspective on the beginning of Gnosticism stemming from Jewish thought see R. van den Broek, *Gnostic religion in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 211 and his extensive list of additional scholars who support this belief in his footnote on this comment.

<sup>41</sup> Sarah E. Ullman, ‘A comparison of gang and individual rape incidents’, in: *Violence and Victims* 14 (1999) no.2, 123-133.

[... (1 line unrecoverable)...] which (...) for the one who will gaze upon this bronze serpent, none will destroy him, and the one who will believe in this bronze serpent will be saved'. (*The Testimony of Truth* IX NHC 48, 1-49, 8)

The Gnostics refute any God who has a loss of foreknowledge. Why must God ask Adam where he is if he is all knowing? The answer lies in the fact that Sophia, Wisdom, is all knowing and Yaltabaoth, is her evil counterpart. Her act of disobedience in itself entails and demonstrates Wisdom.<sup>42</sup> For the Gnostics, the snake is the savior of this story. 'This is Christ' (*The Testimony of Truth* IX NHC 49, 9), they wrote. The belief that the snake is the savior is not uncommon in Egyptian thought, given that it sheds and renews its skin every season and thus, represents life. Serpents as deities were prominent in the ancient world, as demonstrated by Pliny, Justin, Ovid and Josephus, who all described the serpents and Isis cults.<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, when Adam, or man, is created, he is the image of the demonic figures. Adam as their 'modelled form' will be the mundane, bodily, the opposite of the divine, spiritual soul and Epinoia/Sophia/Wisdom. Her form is a vessel, which requires the light of a woman; thus, his creation was 'not good', until it received the counterpart that gave it life. The soul of the vessel, that brings life to him, as her name itself intimates: חוה/חיה/חווה/Eve.

After the day of rest, Sophia sent her daughter Zoe, being called Eve, as an instructor, in order that she might make Adam, who had no soul, arise, so that those whom he should engender might become containers of light. When Eve saw her male counterpart prostrate, she had pity upon him, and she said, 'Adam! Become alive! Arise upon the earth!' Immediately her word became accomplished fact. For Adam, having arisen, suddenly opened his eyes. When he saw her, he said, 'You shall be called "Mother of the Living"'. For it is you who have given me life'. (*On the Origin of the World* II NHC 115, 34-116,6)

Here, Wisdom, helped by Eve, is responsible for the creation of Adam. This is not a foreign idea in Jewish thought. In *2 Enoch* 30:8, the author states 'And on the sixth day I commanded my Wisdom to create man...'. Thus, Sophia, in this source as well, creates Adam. Adam, being simply a vessel in this reading, is powerless against the evils of the divine beings who seek to emulate him. Eve holds the power in this narrative, as she will present him with what Genesis 2:7 calls 'נפש חיה', which the Gnostic authors understand as the soul of חוה/חיה/חווה or the Greek 'psyche'. This is exemplified in *The Exegesis on the Soul*, where the soul and woman are identified as being one and the same.

<sup>42</sup> Ilana Pardes, *Countertraditions in the Bible: A feminist approach*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth A. McCabe, *An examination of the Isis cult with preliminary exploration into New Testament studies*, Lanham: University Press of America, 2008, 102-105.

Wherefore the prophet said concerning the first man and the first woman, 'They will become a single flesh'. For they were originally joined one to another when they were with the father before the woman led astray the man, who is her brother. This marriage has brought them back together again and the soul has been joined to her true love, her real master, as it is written 'For the master of the woman is her husband'. (*The Exegesis on the Soul* II NHC 133, 1-10)

Thus, as a man and woman copulate, so do the soul and the body come together. Genesis 3:16 addresses Eve, saying that her 'husband shall rule over thee'. The Gnostics understood this as the body ruling over the soul, which indeed it does, seeing that it imprisons the soul until its death. Nonetheless, without a soul, or Eve, Adam is helpless to the authorities, or evil spirits, who attempt to destroy her. To them, Eve contains more strength, which threatens their power.

As with the previous readings of the power struggle leading to Eve's rape, the Gnostic understanding of Genesis 3 posits that the rape arises from jealousy.

Then the authorities were informed that their modeled form was alive and had arisen, and they were greatly troubled. They sent seven archangels to see what had happened. They came to Adam. When they saw Eve talking to him, they said to one another, 'What sort of thing is this luminous woman? For she resembles that likeness which appeared to us in the light'. (*On the Origin of the World* II NHC 116, 6-16)

In this section of the text, the author attempts to explain the biblical verse of 'luminary things' as Sophia, or Eve, and that all women arise from this light and therefore have a distinct connection to Wisdom. As scholars have already shown, Early Jewish literature often influenced Gnostic literature.<sup>44</sup> This is often demonstrated by the continuance of exegesis in the later texts. In this case, one may note the earlier tradition of wisdom and light recurring here as demonstrated in the books of Ecclesiastes and *Ben Sira*. Ecclesiastes 2:13 that states, 'Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness'. This tradition is also seen in *Ben Sira* 3:25, a Wisdom book written in Hebrew in Judea in the second century BCE,<sup>45</sup> 'Without eyes thou shalt want light: profess not the

<sup>44</sup> For two of many examples of traditions passed on from Early Jewish texts to some of the documents discovered at the Nag Hammadi library see Zlatko Pleše, *Poetics of the Gnostic universe: Narrative and cosmology in the Apocryphon of John*, Leiden: Brill, 2006; and J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, 'The four rivers of Eden in the Apocalypse of Paul (Visio Pauli): The intertextual relationship of Genesis 2.10-14 and the Apocalypse of Paul', in: Jan N. Bremmer & István Czachesz (Eds.), *The Visio Pauli and the Gnostic Apocalypse of Paul*, Leuven: Peeters, 2007, 50-76.

<sup>45</sup> F.V. Reiterer, 'Review of recent research on the Book of Ben Sira', in: Pancratius Cornelis Beentjes (Ed.), *The Book of Ben Sira in modern research*. Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference, 28-31 July 1996, Soesterberg, Netherlands, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997, 23-60: 37; For the idea that Ben Sira was a work contemporary to and in dialogue with



knowledge therefore that thou hast not'. In each of these examples wisdom and light may be synonymous with each other. This leads to a larger question of how the Gnostics interpreted the first chapter in Genesis and how they perceived the dichotomy between light and darkness, wisdom and ignorance.

Gnostic exegesis of biblical texts may be seen as relying on Wisdom literature. This can be traced to the Gnostics' story of Creation, in which Eve is the 'luminous' woman who has come to place a soul in Adam. This idea most likely comes from the belief that Sophia/Wisdom was mentioned in other Jewish and Christian contemporary sources as being formed at the beginning of Creation. She is the 'light' created in Genesis 1:3: 'God said 'Let there be light' and there was light'. This may be seen in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, a first century Alexandrian book,<sup>46</sup> which states in 7:29 that 'Wisdom is more beautiful than the sun, above all the order of stars, compared with the light of which she was discovered before'. This light, the first of God's creations, will be used as a metaphor for Wisdom in traditions contemporary with this period. For example *Ben Sira* states that:

Wisdom hath been created before all things, and the understanding of prudence from everlasting. The word of God most high is the fountain of wisdom; and her ways are everlasting commandments. To whom hath the root of wisdom been revealed? or who hath known her wise counsels? Unto whom hath the knowledge of wisdom been made manifest? and who hath understood her great experience? There is one wise and greatly to be feared, the Lord sitting upon his throne. He created her, and saw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his works. She is with all flesh according to his gift, and he hath given her to them that love him. (*Ben Sira* 1:4-10)

Pre-dating Gnostic literature, *Ben Sira* is making reference to an early tradition understanding Sophia/Wisdom to be the first of all creations (i.e. Proverbs 8:12, and 8:22). Although *Ben Sira* was surely not speaking of Sophia in terms of a woman, mostly because his clear misogynist approach to womanhood,<sup>47</sup> the

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*1 Enoch* and other such texts from Qumran see Benjamin G. Wright III, 'Sirach and 1 Enoch: Some further considerations', in: Gabriele Boccaccini (Ed.), *The origins of Enochic Judaism*. Proceedings of the First Enoch Seminar, University of Michigan, Sesto Fiorentino, Italy, June 19-23, 2001, Torino: Zamorani, 2002, 179-187.

<sup>46</sup> Andrew T. Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10: A Jewish Hellenistic reinterpretation of early Israelite history through sapiential lenses*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011 (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 9), 12-14.

<sup>47</sup> For the misogyny found in the Book of *Ben Sira* see: Charles Foster Kent, 'The social life of the Jews between 444 and 160 B.C', in: *The Biblical World* 13 (1899) no.6, 369-379; S. Schechter, 'The quotations from Ecclesiasticus in Rabbinic literature', in: *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 3 (1891) no.4, 682-706; Tal Ilan, "'Wickedness comes from women" (42:13): Ben Sira's misogyny and its reception by the Babylonian Talmud', in: Idem, *Integrating women into Second Temple history*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999, 155-174.

Gnostics use this tradition in personifying Sophia as an actual woman, the mother of Eve/Zoe (ζοε /Life) and thus, the counterpart of God himself. The continuance of this tradition for about four hundred years (the period between the writing of *Ben Sira* and the emergence of Gnostic literature) is verified by the fragments of *Ben Sira* discovered in Qumran.<sup>48</sup> Hence, this tradition will lead to an understanding of a struggle between light/Sophia/Wisdom/Eve/Zoe versus the dark archons/rulers/Satan. As a personification of Wisdom, Eve will protect mankind from all evil in the world, but at the price of the rape of her bodily form, as will be demonstrated shortly in at least four different texts from the Nag Hammadi library.

*The Wisdom of Solomon* seems to be one of the earliest sources of this idea in relation to Wisdom and Eve. As mentioned above, the author of this book personified Wisdom as a female, as well as the lover of Solomon. Speaking of his relationship with her, Solomon states that, ‘Wisdom reacheth from one end to another mightily: and sweetly doth she order all things. I loved her, and sought her out from my youth, I desired to make her my spouse, and I was a lover of her beauty’ (*Wisdom of Solomon* 8:1-2). His love affair began from when he was a child and his love grew to a stage of marriage. In terms of Wisdom’s relationship with Adam, the text states that, ‘She preserved the first formed father of the world, that was created alone, and brought him out of his fall, and gave him power to rule all things’ (*Wisdom of Solomon* 10:1-2). Precisely as *On the Origins of the World* described Wisdom/Sophia as bestowing Adam with Life/Eve, so does the *Wisdom of Solomon*, echoing the possible Alexandrian Jewish tradition, at least 300 years after it first arose.

Probably the earliest source that shows Wisdom as being God’s counterpart may be found in Proverbs 8:22-36. This source clearly states in the Hebrew text that there was an opposing force – a female spiritual power – that was present at the creation of the world. Moreover, Proverbs uses unambiguous language in describing Wisdom’s relationship with G-d, language that will be reminiscent of rape in other such texts.

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water (...) Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not (...) For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain

<sup>48</sup> Solomon Alexander Nigosian, *From ancient writings to sacred texts: The Old Testament and Apocrypha*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004, 205.

favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. (Proverbs 8:22-36)

The text begins with the term 'possessed', קנני, describing a female entity acquired, or seized, before Creation. This entity was used to create the physical world, and then used for the wisdom and light that she provided. Seeing that the mundane has been created, the 'children of man' must 'hearken' to her, finding life and keeping his soul. All of these terms, 'wise', 'soul' and 'life' are descriptive terms for the primitive female force; they will be understood by the Gnostics as Epinoia/Sophia, the female element who brings life to man, who is raped, and whom the Lord 'possessed'.

In the Gnostic texts, however, Eve's tradition of rape will be somewhat altered. Rather than being a silent victim, as in the Enoch traditions, she escapes the demonic rapists. Eve brings life to Adam through her bestowment of a soul, and essentially triggers the authorities' (archons/demons) urge to destroy her. These authorities are very much related to Eve and her representation as a נפש חיה. This idea may be seen in a later Jewish source where demons are first created. Genesis Rabbah 7:5, a rabbinic work probably completed between 400-450 C.E. in the Land of Israel,<sup>49</sup> states in its commentary on Genesis 1:24:

R. Eleazar said: Living Creature [נפש חיה]. And God made the beast of the earth (1:25). R. Hoshaya the Elder said: This means the serpent R. Hama b. R. Hoshaya said: In speaking of souls it enumerates four, but in speaking of bodies only three! Rabbi said: This [extra soul] refers to the demons whose soul the Holy One, blessed be He, created, but when he came to create their bodies the sanctity of the Sabbath commenced and He could not create them. This gives you a lesson in behaviors from Scripture, viz., that if a man is holding on his hand a costly article or a precious stone on the eve of the Sabbath about sunset, we say to him 'Throw it away', for He who behest the world came into existence was engaged in the creation of the world and has [already] created their soul, but when he came to create their bodies the holiness of the Sabbath commenced and He did not create them. (Genesis Rabbah 7:5)

Just as the Gnostic text presents a relationship between Eve and the authorities before the awakening of Adam, so does the Midrash present a relationship between נפש חיה and demons. Genesis Rabbah explains that because the expression 'living soul' is used four times in the chapter, yet Genesis 1:24 only lists three types of animals that it was used for, there is an unaccounted fourth soul with a missing body. The intention of the Midrashic text is to demonstrate that Sabbath takes precedence over other entities, and even a valuable object may need to be discarded, just as God discarded a soul prior to the onset of the Sab-

<sup>49</sup> Jacob Neusner, *Judaism's story of creation: Scripture, Halakha, Aggadah*, Leiden Brill, 2000 (The Brill Reference Library of Judaism 3), 169.

bath. But for our purposes, the author presents the reader with a source for the creation of demons, perhaps the demons responsible for the rape of Eve in *On the Origins of the World*. Given that Genesis Rabbah was probably written later than the Gnostic text,<sup>50</sup> an earlier supporting source would be the text of 2 *Enoch* as discussed above.<sup>51</sup> Here, as in the Midrash, Satan, an 'evil spirit', was created on the sixth day of creation, before the Sabbath, along with Adam and Eve (2 *Enoch* 30:10). In this text as well, after his creation as a demon, or 'evil spirit', he defiles Eve. Thus, the sixth day of creation is when demons were created and they wickedly defiled Eve.<sup>52</sup> It is this defilement which will cause her to turn to Wisdom and become the Tree of Life.

Now come, let us lay hold of her and cast our seed into her, so that when she becomes soiled she may not be able to ascend into her light. Rather, those whom she bears will be under our charge. But let us not tell Adam, for he is not one of us. Rather let us bring a deep sleep over him. And let us instruct him in his sleep to the effect that she came from his rib, in order that his wife may obey, and he may be lord over her. Then Eve, being a force, laughed at their decision. She put mist into their eyes and secretly left her likeness with Adam. She entered the tree of knowledge and remained there. And they pursued her, and she revealed to them that she had gone into the tree and become a tree. Then, entering a great state of fear, the blind creatures fled. (*On the Origins of the World* II NHC 116, 16-26)

Eve's success in this narrative is inevitable for the Gnostic writers. She is the daughter of Wisdom, Life, and as such, her destiny was to metamorphose herself

<sup>50</sup> See David Stern's short discussion on dating Genesis Rabbah to the third century as outlined in Leopold Zunz (*Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden historisch entwickelt: Ein Beitrag zur Altertumskunde und biblischen Kritik, zur Literatur- und Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin: Asher, 1832) and Chanoch Albeck (*HaDerashot b'Yisrael*, Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1947) in David Stern, *The anthology in Jewish literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, 202.

<sup>51</sup> For a continuance of tradition of midrash in texts as early as those in Qumranic literature to those as late as rabbinic texts such as Midrash Rabbah see Steven D. Fraade, *מבט חדש על "מגילות ים המלח ומדרשי חז"ל"* [Comparative Midrash' revisited: The case of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Rabbinic Midrash], in: Joshua Levinson, Jacob Elbaum & Galit Hasan-Rokem (Eds.), *קובץ. האגדה והפיוט. קובץ*. [Higayon LYona: New aspects in the study of Midrash, Aggadah and Piyut: In honor of Professor Yona Fraenkel], Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2006, 261-284; and Vered Noam, *בין ספרות, קומראן למדרש ההלכה: לשחזור של פולמוס פרשני* [Qumranic exegesis and Rabbinic Midrash: Common interpretations and implied polemics], in: Moshe Bar-Asher & Devorah Dimant, *מגילות: מחקרים במגילות מדבר יהודה ז* [Meghillot – Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls VII], Jerusalem: Haifa University / Bialik Institute, 2009, 71-98.

<sup>52</sup> See Birger Albert Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004 [Studies in Antiquity and Christianity] 132-150) for the relationship between Enochic literature and Gnostic literature; also see Madeleine Scopello, 'The Apocalypse of Zostrianos (Nag Hammadi VIII.1) and the Book of the Secrets of Enoch', in: *Vigiliae Christianae* 34 (1980) no.4, 376-385 for the specific relationship between 2 Enoch and Gnostic literature.

into the epitome of what she stands for: the Tree of Life, which is in itself Wisdom. This idea is demonstrated in the earlier source of Proverbs 3:13-18.

Happy is the man that findeth Wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her. (Proverbs 3:13-18)

In this text, as in *Ben Sira* and the *Wisdom of Solomon*, Wisdom is the blessing *par excellence*. In the Gnostic texts, Sophia, the mother of Eve, symbolizes Wisdom. She enters the Genesis narrative to battle evil, which is practiced by the rulers, or evil archons. This now allows Genesis 3 to be understood as a dichotomy between the good and the evil, the spiritual and mundane, where the female element represents the good and spiritual, as Sophia/Wisdom, Eve/Life/ *נפש חיה*. In the above verse from Proverbs, the Gnostics literally understood Wisdom/Sophia/Eve to be the Tree of Life from the Garden of Eden. Proverbs refers to it in the female, although tree in Hebrew is male. They may have understood tree as a metaphor for Wisdom, seeing that in Genesis 2-3 it is referred to as *עץ הדעת טוב ורע*. Thus Wisdom, or knowledge herself, is the embodiment of a tree<sup>53</sup>. Similarly, when Proverbs states in verse 3:17, 'to lay hold upon her', the Gnostics understood this literally as rape. Given that the root *ק.ז.ח.* or the infinitive *להחזיק* may be understood as forceful sexual relations, this reading is understandable. This may be seen in 2 Samuel 13:14 in the rape story of Amnon and Tamar, where the same terminology is used: *ולא אבה, לשמע בקולה; ויחזק ממנה ויענה, וישכב אתה ואם-בשדה*. 'Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her'. In addition, in Deuteronomy 22:25 the same word is used for rape: *ימצא האיש, את-הנער המארשה, והחזיק-בה האיש, ושכב עמה: ומת, האיש אשר-שכב עמה לבדו*. 'But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die'. Thus, the Gnostics literally understood Sophia/Wisdom/Eve to have been attacked by the demons. However, Eve's transformation into a Tree of Life or the Tree of Knowledge, allows her to escape their evil advances.

Since this narrative is represented in three additional Gnostic texts, the *Apocryphon of John*, *Hypostasis of the Archons* and *The Exegesis on the Soul*, a comparative chart is provided, to enable a thorough comprehension of Gnostic thought on the rape of Eve.

<sup>53</sup> Elaine Pagels, 'Pursuing the spiritual Eve: Imagery and hermeneutics in the Hypostasis of the Archons and the Gospel of Philip', in: Karen L. King (Ed.), *Images of the feminine in Gnosticism*, Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000, 187-206: 196.

<i>On the Origins of the World</i> II NHC 116, 34-117, 14	<i>The Apocryphon of John</i> II NHC 23, 35-24, 15	<i>Hypostasis of the Archons</i>	<i>The Exegesis on the Soul</i> II 127, 20-128,17
<p>Afterwards, when they had recovered from the daze, they came to Adam; and seeing the likeness of this woman with him, they were greatly disturbed, thinking it was she that was the true Eve. And they acted rashly; they came up to her and seized her and cast their seed upon her. They did so wickedly, defiling not only in natural ways but also in foul ways, defiling first the seal of her voice – that had spoken with them, saying, ‘What is it that exists before you?’ – intending to defile those who might say at the consummation (of the age) that they had been born of the true man through verbal expression. And they erred, not knowing that it was their own body that they had defiled: it was the likeness that the authorities and their angels defiled in every way.</p>	<p>And when Yaltabaoth noticed that they withdrew from him, he cursed his earth. He found the woman as she was preparing herself for her husband. He was lord over her, though he did not know the mystery which had come to pass through the holy decree. And they were afraid to blame him. And he showed his angels his ignorance which is in him. And he cast them out of paradise and he clothed them in gloomy darkness. And the chief archon saw the virgin who stood by Adam, and that the luminous Epinoia of life had appeared in her. And Yaltabaoth was full of ignorance. And when the foreknowledge of the All noticed (it): she sent some and they snatched life out of Eve.</p>	<p>Then the authorities came up to their Adam. And when they saw his female counterpart speaking with him, they became agitated with great agitation; and they became enamored of her. They said to one another, ‘Come, let us sow our seed in her’, and they pursued her. And she laughed at them for their witlessness and their blindness; and in their clutches she became a tree, and left before them her shadowy reflection resembling herself; and they defiled it foully. - And they defiled the stamp of her voice, so that by the form they had modeled, together with their (own) image, they made themselves liable to condemnation.</p>	<p>As long as she was alone with the father, she was virgin and in form androgynous. But when she fell down into a body and came to this life, then she fell into the hands of many robbers. And the wanton creatures passed her from one to another and [...] her. Some made use of her by force, while others did so by seducing her with a gift. In short, they defiled her, and she [...] her virginity. And in her body she prostituted herself and gave herself to one and all, considering each one she was about to embrace to be her husband. When she had given herself to wanton, unfaithful adulterers, so that they might make use of her, then she sighed deeply and repented. But even when she turns her face from those adulterers, she runs to others and they compel her to live with them and render service to them upon their bed, as if they were her masters. Out of shame she no longer dares to leave them, whereas they deceive her for a long time, pretending to be faithful, true husbands, as if they greatly respected her. And after all this they abandon her and go.</p>

These four texts are similar in their description of the rape of Eve. Each narrative presents a slightly different variation of the rape, but the victim, the rapist and the motive are common to all four. In each of the above stories, Eve, or the first primordial woman, is the victim, her rapists are the archons (or the chief archon), and their motive is desire for her light/Wisdom. In all of these instances, Eve is left to suffer alone. She challenges the archons' existence in *On the Origins of the World* and *Hypostasis of the Archons*, causing them to question their sources, and as such, they defile the seal/stamp of her voice. The archons desire her soul, knowledge and life, and this is what they attempt to rob and snatch from her. Her bodily existence, or the vessel in which she is hidden, must be defiled, raped and torn open in order to retrieve her Epinoia. This leaves her abandoned, without the ability to speak, and without a soul. In some of the sources, however, she has the ability to save herself by transforming into a tree, as discussed above in Proverbs 3.

The conclusion of the rape story in *On the Origins of the World*, and in the *Apocryphon of John* seems to represent a type of domino effect. At first, the evil archons sin through illicit sexual relations with Eve. They had felt threatened because of Eve's presence; however, once they understood that she was helpless, as noted in her actions with man, they were no longer fearful of being 'conquered'.

<p>Next, let me say that once the rulers had seen him and the female creature who was with him erring ignorantly like beasts, they were very glad. When they learned that the immortal man was not going to neglect them, rather that they would even have to fear the female creature that had turned into a tree, they were disturbed, and said, 'Perhaps this is the true man – this being who has brought a fog upon us and has taught us that she who was soiled is like him – and so we shall be conquered!' (<i>On the Origins of the World</i>)</p>	<p>Now up to the present day, sexual intercourse continued due to the chief archon. And he planted sexual desire in her who belongs to Adam. And he produced through intercourse the copies of the bodies, and he inspired them with his counterfeit spirit. (<i>Apocryphon of John</i>)</p>
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The beastly act of rape was necessary in order to subdue Eve, so that she may not rise up and defile them as they did to her. 'They were glad' that Adam and Eve now continued to act like beasts, referring to some type of violent, forced physical relationship.

Gedaliahu Stroumsa does not perceive the archons' rape of Eve as motivated by an urge to possess knowledge, as posited above. Rather, he believes that the Gnostic texts demonstrate how the archons used 'lust in their mischievous plan, to maintain their domination over mankind'.<sup>54</sup> Stroumsa continues by stating

<sup>54</sup> Stroumsa, *Another seed*, 43.

that ‘the archons behaved like the sons of God in Genesis 6.2’.<sup>55</sup> For him, the essence of the Gnostic myth is ‘the problem of the origins of evil and righteousness’, where the ‘mixis’, the union of divine beings and women, leads to the birth of evil, the Giants of Genesis 6.<sup>56</sup> Stroumsa believes that ultimately, this is the origin of the Gnostic ‘anthropodicy’, which is their redemption via purity, ‘while the rest of mankind was tainted by lust’. Rather than a struggle between evil and righteousness, one may want to read the Gnostic literature as a struggle between wisdom and ignorance.

More recent scholarship on the Nag Hammadi texts holds that the Gnostics understood the Bible very literally, similar to ancient Greek mythology and the story of Daphne and Apollo.<sup>57</sup> Thus, as stated earlier, when Genesis is read according to Proverbs, a literal understanding of the Gnostic Eve may emerge.<sup>58</sup> The Gnostic’s interpreted the archons’ pursuit of knowledge, and Adam’s pursuit that followed, not as a willingness to create evil, but rather as a drive to possess through a power struggle, and the rape of Eve.

By the end of the narrative, Eve has been raped by both the evil archons and Adam. This understanding of sexual relations as being a violent and beastly act is also seen in Philo’s writings. In his *On Creation*, written in Alexandria roughly between 20 BCE to 40 CE,<sup>59</sup> Philo explicitly uses the same idea of animalistic acts, or the Gnostics ‘beastly’ performance described Genesis 4:1.

Now, the first approaches of the male to the female have a pleasure in them which brings on other pleasures also, and it is through this pleasure that the formation and generation of children is carried on. And what is generated by it appears to be attached to nothing rather than to it, since they rejoice in pleasure, and are impatient at pain, which is its contrary (...) For every animal, it is said, hastens to pleasure as to the cud which is most indispensable and necessary to its very existence; and, above all other animals, this is the case with man. For other animals pursue pleasure only in taste and in the acts of generation; but man aims at it by means of his other senses also, devoting himself to whatever sights or sounds can impart pleasure to his eyes or ears. And many other things are said in

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>57</sup> Willis Barnstone & Marvin Meyer (Eds.), *The Gnostic Bible*, Boston: Shambhala, 2006, 167.

<sup>58</sup> While Elaine Pagels states the opposite, namely that ‘the story was never meant to be taken literally but should be understood as spiritual allegory – not so much history with a moral as myth with meaning’, the idea of rape based on the language of the text remains, in this sense, Gnostic interpretations of the Genesis narrative is indeed literal in that it represents the exact wording of the original text; See Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, New York: Vintage Books, 1989, 64.

<sup>59</sup> Samuel Sandmel, ‘Philo’s environment and Philo’s exegesis’, in: *Journal of Bible and Religion* 22 (1954) no.4, 248-253: 248.



the way of praise of this inclination, especially that it is one most peculiar and kindred to all animals. (Philo, *On Creation* LVII, 161-163)

When reading this text, one should note that Philo begins with the understanding that pleasure is sought by the male. The male 'approaches' the female in search of pleasure, which eventually leads to procreation. A dichotomy is then presented by Philo between 'pleasure' and 'pain', which one may see as a male/female illustration. Whereas man searches for pleasure, woman is always connected to pain, especially in childbearing and rearing. This illustration is connected to Genesis 3:16, where the woman is eternally cursed to experience the pain of childbirth, as well as to be the object of man's pleasure.

In his search for pleasure, Man is as a beast, similar to the description of *On the Origins of the World*. His innate nature, just as that of an animal to chew its cud, is to search for sexual pleasure. Even more so, man uses all of his senses in searching for this pleasure. He is not in control of himself, but rather a slave to his passion.<sup>60</sup> When Philo discusses animals and man's urge for pleasure, he does not include women as feeling these urges; rather, women are the objects of this pleasure. This idea is in agreement with some modern scholarship on the understanding of rape, which suggests that all sexual relations are, in fact, forced upon women.<sup>61</sup> In legal scholarship, Catherine Mackinnon, in her 1987 book *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*, claimed that rape 'is defined around penetration. What women experience as degrading and defiling when we are raped includes as much that is distinctive to us as is our experience of sex'.<sup>62</sup> Thus, for MacKinnon, almost all forms of sexual intercourse are rape because penetration, by definition, is a form of force. Furthermore, MacKinnon believes that women's agreement to sexual relations often comes out of a woman's cultural expectation of her inferior role to man. Indeed, this is a feminist perspective, and Philo could hardly begin to understand a woman's view of the sexual intercourse and the pain that she may endure. Nonetheless, these two scholars – from the ancient world and the modern world, from the androcentric perspective and gynocentric perspective – agree that sexual intercourse, for a woman, is a forceful entry into the female body thus, classifying the act, by modern day standards, as rape. This may be seen in Philo's view of virgins,

<sup>60</sup> See the discussion in John Byron, *Slavery metaphors in early Judaism and Pauline Christianity: A traditio-historical and exegetical examination*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003 (WUNT II 162), 109; See also Philo, *On Creation*, 165; *Alleg. Interp.* 3. 221; *On Sacrifices* 32. 22; *Heir* 271.

<sup>61</sup> For legal, modern scholarship on this issue see Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Feminism unmodified: Discourses on life and law*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987, 87; and more recently, a survey of legal research on penetration as rape David Archard, 'Rape', in: Alan Soble (Ed.), *Sex from Plato to Paglia: A philosophical encyclopedia*. Vol. 2, Westport, CN: Greenwood, 2006, 901-907.

<sup>62</sup> MacKinnon, *Feminism unmodified*, 87.

where he states that a penetration takes place where the woman is essentially broken and thus, unlike a man who is complete.<sup>63</sup> Hence, a virgin woman is closest to being like a man, as she has not been penetrated.<sup>64</sup> In this sense, a woman, by the biological fact that her body allows entrance of the male sexual organ, will always make her the object of passivity and thus, man, like the archons, has the possibility to defile her in a sexual manner.<sup>65</sup>

#### HIPPOLYTUS – REFUTATION OF ALL HERESIES

Another source from the same period that insinuates that the serpent's rape of Eve, and its spiritual connotations, was the beginning of sin is Hippolytus' *Refutation of all Heresies*.<sup>66</sup> Hippolytus of Rome, an early church father who lived between 170-236 CE, polemicized against the Christian Gnostic group, known as the Naassenes. His work is the sole record of the group's religious narratives.<sup>67</sup> Most scholars believe that the Naassenes may have rejected all forms of sexual intercourse, since it is a carnal relationship, rather than divine relationship.<sup>68</sup> This is similar to the idea of the Gnostics, described above, who have difficulty seeing sexual intercourse as a just act. For them, every act of intercourse is rape.

Hippolytus' account of the Gnostic exegesis of the story in the Garden of Eden begins with the description of the female and male divinities, Elohim and Edem, respectively. The name 'Elohim' may signal a connection to the Nag Hammadi texts above, since it is in the plural form, reflecting that she was often seen as Sophia, Eve and Epinoia. The cohabitation of these two entities produce a number of angels, one of which is named Naas who attempts to

<sup>63</sup> Sharon Lea Mattila, 'Wisdom, sense perception, nature, and Philo's gender gradient', in: *The Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996) no.2, 103-129: 111.

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>65</sup> Some legal scholars have pointed out that the male sexual organ may not be the only means of rape; so long as there is penetration in an orifice it may be considered rape. David Archard, 'Rape', 902.

<sup>66</sup> Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love between women: Early Christian responses to female homoeroticism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, 338.

<sup>67</sup> Charles Hodge, 'Hippolytus (ca. 170 – ca. 236)', in: George Thomas Kurian (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of Christian literature*. Vol. 1, Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2010, 367-368: 368; For the connection of the group's name to the Hebrew שָׁנָא, serpent, see Attilio Mastrocinque, *From Jewish magic to Gnosticism*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005, 151; For the exceptional attributes of the serpent as viewed in the ancient world and iconography see Adolfo D. Roitman, "'Crawl upon your belly' (Gen. 3:14): The physical aspect of the serpent in early Jewish exegesis' (Heb.), in: *Tarbiz* 64 (1994) no.2, 157-182.

<sup>68</sup> Brooten, *Love between women*, 339.

‘chasten the spirit of Elohim which is in men, in order that Elohim, through the spirit, might be punished for having deserted her spouse...’. Again, there is some similarity between this narrative and the texts of Nag Hammadi: both see the female entity as a spirit or soul that was poured into man. However, as opposed to the portrayal in the Nag Hammadi texts, Naas then becomes the hero of the texts rather than Sophia. He punishes Eve for leaving her husband, perhaps alluding to Genesis 2:21, when God, or Elohim, caused a deep sleep over Adam, thus abandoning him. In the Hippolytus texts, Elohim then discovers Naas’ intentions and thus, sends an angel, Baruch, to instruct all men not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, in which Naas is incarnated. In this sense, Naas must be seen as a metaphor for the serpent, clearly a play on the Hebrew שָׁחַד, given that the serpent wants Adam and Eve to taste from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In fact, Hippolytus makes reference to this play on words where he states ‘Naassenes, so called after the Hebrew word’ (Book V, 6).<sup>69</sup> Because of Baruch’s instructions, Naas then sins himself and,

went in unto Eve, deceiving her, and debauched her; and (such an act as) this is a violation of law. He, however, likewise went in unto Adam, and had unnatural intercourse with him; and this is itself also a piece of turpitude, whence have arisen adultery and sodomy. (*Refutation of All Heresies*, Book V, 21)

Thus, Naas rapes and defiles Eve. This idea is parallel to the archons of the Nag Hammadi documents and their defilement of Eve. Naas ‘debauched’ her and then assaulted Adam in ‘unnatural ways’. Thus, two rapes occur here: the rape of Eve and Adam. His seduction of Eve and Adam is once again a form of revenge against Elohim and Baruch. Shlomo Giora Shoham observes in this text as a common idea presented throughout Gnostic texts, specifically with the story of Adam, Eve and the serpent. ‘The order of temptation presented in the story of the Fall begins with the serpent, through Eve, to Adam. If the serpent is the mytho-empirical archetype of sexual desire, the cycle of sinful sex is actually initiated by the woman’.<sup>70</sup> Thus, in the Gnostic texts, it is the female’s power of wisdom that the evil forces desire, and they use rape as a weapon to achieve this power.

<sup>69</sup> Mary Beard, John North & Simon Price, *Religions of Rome*. Vol. 1, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 341.

<sup>70</sup> Shlomo Giora Shoham, *The mytho-empiricism of Gnosticism: Triumph of the vanquished*, Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2003, 9.

## RABBINIC TEXTS

Similar to the tradition of the biblical interpretation of Second Temple literature, followed by the Gnostic literature, rabbinic literature also seems to carry a tradition of sexual and spiritual relations between the serpent and Eve.<sup>71</sup> Genesis Rabbah explicitly relates to the sexual possession of Eve by the serpent. This may be seen in its commentary on the curses placed upon the serpent, namely that as a punishment, he will be required to slither on his belly, eat dust and have a hateful relationship with woman.

R. Issi and R. Hoshaya in the name of R. Hiyya the Elder said four things: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him [the serpent]: I made thee that thou should be king over all cattle and beasts, but thou would not have it; therefore, More cursed are you etc.; I made thee that thou should go upright like man, but thou would not; hence Upon thy belly thou shall go; I made thee that thou should eat the food of man, but thou would not; hence, And earth shall thou eat; you did desire to kill the man and take his wife: therefore, And I will put an enmity between thee and the woman. Thus, what he desired was not given to him, and what he possessed was taken from him. (Genesis Rabbah 20:5)<sup>72</sup>

The serpent's desire in the above verse is to kill Adam and possess Eve. This is reiterated by the midrashic comment that what the serpent possessed was taken from him. He possessed all that he wanted, including Eve, however, his wish to kill man was not granted to him. While the moral of the midrash is that one should appreciate what one has rather than desiring more (as this can lead to unethical acts such as murder), it is important to note that the focus here is not on possessing Eve but rather on the desire to kill Adam. This is the cause of his harshest punishment. Because of his inclination to kill, he loses his ability to walk like a man and eat the food of man; in contrast, his lust and urge to defile Eve resulted in a lesser punishment: the enmity between him and the woman. The text overlooks the suffering of Eve.

Another instance where Eve's pain is ignored and she is used by the serpent as a vessel of revenge against Adam appears in the Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 146b. In this case, a discussion takes place as to whether or not sexual lust was present at Sinai, similar to *GLAE*'s narrative of the lust injected into Eve by the serpent.

Why are idolaters lustful? Because they did not stand at Mount Sinai. For when the serpent came upon Eve he injected a lust into her: [as for] the Israelites who stood at Mount Sinai, their lustfulness departed; the idolaters, who did not stand

<sup>71</sup> For a discussion on this, Knohl, 'Cain: Son of God or son of Satan?', 38.

<sup>72</sup> See the Babylonian Talmud, *Sotah* 9b for a variation of this midrash.

at Mount Sinai, their lustfulness did not depart. R. Aha son of Raba asked R. Ashi. What about proselytes? Though they were not present, their guiding stars were present, as it is written, [Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath], but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day. Now he differs from R. Abba b. Kahana, for R. Abba b. Kahana said: Until three generations the lustful [strain] did not disappear from our Patriarchs: Abraham begat Ishmael, Isaac begat Esau, [but] Jacob begat the twelve tribes in whom there was no taint whatsoever. (B. Shab 146b)

The Rabbis are explicit about the sexual relations between Eve and the serpent. Since the sex between the two was not consensual, the Rabbis do not blame Eve for the relationship, as they would normally do, given that it would be considered adultery, but rather use her rape as an example of how evil-doers, or idolaters, may enter into the nation. Once again, consideration for the woman and her pain is silenced. Instead a theoretical discussion takes place on the number of generations it may take for this evil to disappear from the nation. Eve is a vessel for man's seed, and in this sense, she is carrier for both good and evil. Her attributes are ignored and the father of the seed is seen as the source of the child. Thus, if the father is righteous, so too will the child be righteous; if he is evil, his progeny will be the same.

This discussion is continued in later rabbinic discourse, namely *Pirquei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, an eighth century work written in the Land of Israel,<sup>73</sup> which describes Sammael's discovery of the serpent's ability to commit evil and thus, rides on him like a 'camel'.<sup>74</sup> The text then later states that Sammael, a satanic figure, 'riding on the serpent came to her, and she conceived; afterwards Adam came to her and she conceived Abel'.<sup>75</sup> The implication is that Cain, the first-born, was a product of Sammael/Satan and Eve, whereas Abel was a product of Adam and Eve. This explains Genesis 4:1 where Eve claims to have begotten a child 'from the Lord'. Hence, she copulated with a divine being, and gave birth, naming her child, Cain, after the act. In terms of Abel, the text states nothing indicating that he may be a child of Adam. Similarly, the Gnostics believed that Abel was born from a divine figure, and that Seth was born of man; this is supported by the text that states that he was the son of Adam, thus the pure seed. The reader knows only that the intermingling between the spiritual and the mundane world was an evil act.

<sup>73</sup> Shai Cherry, *Torah through time: Understanding Bible commentary from the Rabbinic period to modern times*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2007, 199.

<sup>74</sup> Kristen E. Kvam, Linda S. Scheering & Valarie H. Ziegler (Eds.), *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian and Muslim readings on Genesis and gender*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999, 205.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

## PRODUCT OF EVE'S RAPE

In order to fully grasp the interpretations of Genesis 3:13, one must look at the result of the mixing of the spiritual and mundane worlds, which is ultimately Eve's offspring. The evil consequences of this heinous act are forcefully presented in the first chapter of *GLAE*, which begins with Eve's conceiving and bearing of Cain and Abel. One should note that the text fails to mention that Adam took part in the conception of Cain and Abel, and instead mentions him only in association with the birth of Seth and all children thereafter.

<p>And Adam took his wife Eve and went to the east and abode there eighteen years and two months.</p> <p>And Eve conceived and bore two sons; Adiophotos, who is called Cain and Amilabes who is called Abel. (<i>The Greek Life of Adam and Eve</i> 1.2-3)<sup>76</sup></p>	<p>And after this, Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Seth.</p> <p>And Adam said to Eve: 'Behold! we have begotten a son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed, let us give glory and sacrifice to God'.</p> <p>And Adam begat thirty sons and thirty daughters (<i>The Greek Life of Adam and Eve</i> 4.1-5.1a)</p>
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When comparing the birth of Cain and Abel in relation to Seth and Eve's younger children, one should note that Adam is mentioned only in connection with the latter births. This then presents the question, of who is the father of Cain and Abel if not Adam? In order to answer this question one must return to the seduction of Eve by the serpent and the numerous references and understandings of her intercourse with him. Similar to the Giants that were born out of the illicit relationship between the Daughters of Man and the Sons of God (Genesis 6), Cain and Abel were born to Satan and Eve. This results in the understanding of why Cain performed the horrific act of killing his brother. This also explains why in *GLAE* 3.2, the archangel Michael appears to Adam and tells him not to instruct Cain because he is 'a son of wrath' (*GLAE* 3.2). Seemingly the wrath that Michael is speaking of refers to the events that occurred in *GLAE* 15-19, where a description of the Satan's revenge on Adam takes place, with Eve as the victim. This then illustrates two types of offspring: Seth, the holy, and Cain the wicked. The text continues in 4.2, where Seth is understood to have replaced 'both the reprobate eldest son and the murdered one', and in fact it is Seth who explains to Adam of his role.<sup>77</sup> Seth is the product of consensual intercourse between Adam and Eve, where

<sup>76</sup> Note that Kahane adds 'וַיֵּדַע אָדָם אֶת חוּהַ' in the Hebrew texts however none of the Greek manuscripts attest to this addition.

<sup>77</sup> Johannes Tromp, 'Cain and Abel in the Greek and Armenian/ Georgian recensions of the Life of Adam and Eve', in: Anderson, Stone & Tromp, *Literature on Adam and Eve*, 277-296: 287.

Adam, Eve's rightful partner, is the father of the offspring. The conception of Seth by Adam and Eve did not violate the holy through such a profane act as forced, illicit, carnal relations.

Gnostic and Christian sources also view the rape of Eve as the origin of evil and the cause of the first murder in the Bible. Cain's fratricide manifests the evil that was produced by the rape of Eve, and the narrative spurs the Gnostics to tie themselves to the pure and goodly seed of Seth. Cain and Abel, also referred to as Eloim and Yave in some sources, are the results of the archons' defilement of the first woman. Seth is a product of Adam's relations with Eve, allowing for an account of proper sexual intercourse that occurs between two mortals, rather than between a divine being and a mortal. In the *Apocryphon of John*, Yaltabaoth, who initially raped Eve (followed by the archons), planted 'sexual desire' in the union between Adam and Eve. These two mortals in bodily form were able to produce the pure seed of Seth because it was fleshly and mundane, rather than a forced intercourse between a spiritual and earthly being.<sup>78</sup>

And the chief archon seduced her and he begot in her two sons; the first and the second (are) Eloim and Yave. Eloim has a bear-face and Yave has a cat-face. The one is righteous but the other is unrighteous. (Yave is righteous but Eloim is unrighteous. [IV NHC 38, 4-6]) Yave he set over the fire and the wind, and Eloim he set over the water and the earth. And these he called with the names Cain and Abel with a view to deceive. (*Apocryphon of John* II NHC 24, 19-26)

Here the text states that as a result of the chief archon's rape of Eve, Cain and Abel were born. The result of this is the entrance of darkness into the world, which comes from Yaltabaoth. This ultimately leads to the 'continuous struggle between the powers of light and the powers of darkness for the possession of the divine particles in man'.<sup>79</sup> In contrast, when two mortals cohabit, the result is two powers of light in search of the divine particles.

Similarly, *On the Origins of the World* also points to this production of evil being in a human form that continues the archons' endeavor to capture Epinoia. This begins with the aftermath of Eve's rape and her pregnancy with Abel and Cain.

First she was pregnant with Abel, by the first ruler. And it was by the seven authorities and their angels that she bore the other offspring. And all this came to pass according to the forethought of the prime parent, so that the first mother might bear within her every seed, being mixed and being fitted to the fate of the universe and its configurations, and to Justice. A prearranged plan came into

<sup>78</sup> *Apocryphon of John* II NHC 24, 30-36; Stroumsa, *Another seed*, 39.

<sup>79</sup> Fredrick Wisse, *The Apocryphon of John: The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981, 104.

effect regarding Eve, so that the modeled forms of the authorities might become enclosures of the light, whereupon it would condemn them through their modeled forms. (*On the Origins of the World* NHC II 117, 16-30)

Continuing from the rape story discussed above in *On the Origins of the World*, Eve, who was raped by a number of the archons, gave birth to Abel after Yaltabaoth raped her, and then to Cain, conceived in the attack by the seven authorities or 'evils'.<sup>80</sup> The authorities envelop her, or become 'enclosures' of the light that Sophia/Epinoia has implanted in all of her offspring via Eve. Thus, in this way, light is shielded or shaded by evil. The fact that she gives birth to Abel and Cain as a result of her rape in *On the Origins of the World* is significant. Because evil is what shields the light, all bodily forms are evil, as they shield the soul. The soul, in contrast, is goodness. In this sense, the struggle for the archons to tear apart Eve's body is in essence the struggle between good and evil. The act of murder by Cain is inevitable seeing that he is represented in the pain and evil of what the archons did to Eve.<sup>81</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The exegetical traditions of Genesis 3:13-4:1 have evolved from a simple reading of the Hebrew text, to an account permeated with Greek sexual terminology that highlights the gullibility women to evil spiritual possession, and symbolizes the struggle for power and wisdom between the spiritual and mundane realms. *GLAE*, *2 Enoch* and the rabbinic literature all point to the rape of Eve as the downfall of man. Her vulnerability and ability to be raped caused the serpent/Satan/demonic forces to enter into the Garden of Eden and entice her and in turn, her husband, to eat from the forbidden fruit. She was raped in a struggle between Adam and Satan and in a quest to conquer knowledge. In some cases, this power struggle was between the male factors of the narrative, as in *GLAE* and *2 Enoch*; on the other hand, *4 Maccabees* portrays the struggle for woman to retain self-governance. The Gnostic texts focus on the archons' interest in Eve's knowledge and their strategy to rape her as a way of attaining her wisdom. In many cases, they steal her voice in order to prevent her from telling of her

<sup>80</sup> Dan Merkur, *Gnosis: An esoteric tradition of mystical visions and unions*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993, 124.

<sup>81</sup> One should note that the demonization of children born as a result of rape continues to be a phenomenon up until the present day. For an example of a study on this please see Susan Harris Rimmer, 'Orphans or veterans?', in: Charli Carpenter (Ed.), *Born of war: Protecting children of sexual violence survivors in conflict zones*, Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, 2007, 53-77: 59.



pain. The result of these rapes, as shown in *GLAE* and some Gnostic literature, is the birth of unwanted children. Now a second victim comes into play, who is demonized because he is a reminder of his mother's pain and suffering, and embodiment of evil. These ancient paradigms of womanhood portray Eve, the first woman, as vanquished, persecuted and subjugated. Divine, superior powers, be it the serpent of Eden, archons or angels manifest a fear of men over the theft of their wives, and possibly other women in their lives. Here lies the belief, which provides the basis that women must be hidden from the threat of abduction and rape, not for their own benefit, but rather to protect the dignity of man. This may then be noted as a possible underlying argument for the need of rules governing a woman's modesty, for it is through her that mankind may be corrupted.