THE PLACE OF THE COURT TALES IN EARLY JEWISH LITERATURE

THE PLACE OF THE COURT TALES IN EARLY JEWISH LITERATURE: FORM, DEVELOPMENT, AND FUNCTION

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Abstract

Literary tales about the lives and vicissitudes of officials serving in the courts of powerful kings are attested throughout the writings of the ancient Near East. Such ‘court tales’ were a popular literary form during the Jewish Second Temple period (515 BCE-70 CE). With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a collection of previously unknown ancient Jewish court tales was discovered, along with others preserved in their original languages. The discovery of these texts has expanded our corpus of extant Jewish court tales. Research on these texts has yet to be systematically integrated into broader analyses of the Jewish court tales. This dissertation addresses this desideratum and integrates the court tale evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls into research on the already extant Jewish court tales, with a focus on the themes of punishment, exile, and restoration.

Chapter One outlines the history of scholarship on the Jewish court tales. Chapter Two examines the literary themes and concerns of other ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tale traditions. Chapters Three and Four analyze the themes of punishment, exile, and restoration within the Jewish court tales, and highlight their uniqueness to the Jewish tales. Chapter Five discusses the development and decline of the Jewish court tales. In doing this, I demonstrate that a major purpose of the Jewish adoption of the court tale tradition was to upend earlier convictions that exilic life was solely a form of punishment, with the purpose of demonstrating the benefits of exilic life and God’s sovereignty over foreign political actors. My examination of the court tales contributes to discussions about the origins of Jewish apocalyptic literature, with the court tales employing eschatological terminology to address the theme of restoration.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 The World of the Court Tales 1

1.2 The Exilic Literary Background of the Court Tales 10

1.3 How This Study Will Proceed 23

CHAPTER TWO: THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN AND MEDITERRANEAN MILIEU: COGNATE LITERATURE AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT 26

2.1 Court Tales in the Ancient Near East and Ancient Mediterranean 26

2.2 Egyptian Court Tales 28

2.2.1 Tales from King Cheops' Court 33

2.2.2 The Stories of Setne Khamwas 34

2.2.2.1 Setne I 36

2.2.2.2 Setne II 39

2.2.3 The Instruction of Ankhsheshonq 42

2.3 Persian and Indian Court Tales 44

2.4 Greek and Roman Court Tales 47

2.4.1 The Life of Aesop 48

2.4.2 Court Tales Preserved by Herodotus 53

2.5 Mesopotamian Court Tales 58

2.5.1 The Story and Words of Aḥiqar 58

2.6 Court Tales and Hebrew Literature 65

2.6.1 Moses in Pharaoh's Court (Exodus 7:8-9:12) 66

2.6.2 The Joseph Story (Genesis 37, 39-50) 67

2.6.3 Court Tales and Early Rabbinic Judaism 70

2.7 Conclusions 71

CHAPTER THREE: COURT TALES PRESERVED AT QUMRAN 74

3.1 Introduction 74

3.2 Ancient Texts Associated with Daniel 77

3.2.1 Daniel 1-6 78

3.2.1.1 Daniel 2 81
3.2.1.2 Daniel 4 83
3.2.1.3 Daniel 5 88
3.2.1.4 Daniel 3 91
3.2.1.5 Daniel 6 94
3.2.2 Analysis of Daniel 2-6 98
3.2.1 Daniel 1 99
3.2.4 Pseudo-Daniel[a-c] (4Q243-244, 4Q245) 100
3.2.4.1. Pseudo-Daniel[a-b] (4Q243-244) 101
3.2.4.2. Pseudo-Daniel[c] (4Q245) 104
3.2.5. 4QFour Kingdoms (4Q552-3) 106
3.2.6. 4QAramaic Apocalypse (4Q246) 109
3.2.7. 4QPrayer of Nabonidus (4Q242) 112
3.2.8. 4QpapApocalypse ar (4Q489) 121
3.3 Other Aramaic Court Tales 122
3.3.1 4QTales of the Persian Court (4Q550) 122
3.3.1.1 The Tale of Patireza (4Q550, Frgs. 1-4) 125
3.3.1.2 The Tale of Bagasraw (4Q550, Frgs. 5-10) 129
3.3.1.3 Analysis of 4QTales of the Persian Court (4Q550) 131
3.3.2 The Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20), Cols. 19-20 135
3.3.3 Tobit 148
3.3.3.1. Tobit 1 and the Court Conflict Theme 153
3.3.3.2. Tobit 2-11 and the Healing Theme 156
3.4 Conclusions 161
CHAPTER FOUR: OTHER EARLY JEWISH COURT TALES 171
4.1 Introduction 171
4.2 Other Texts Associated with Daniel 172
4.2.1 Greek Additions to Daniel 172
4.2.1.1 Susanna 173

4.2.1.2. The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Children 178
4.2.1.3. Bel and the Dragon 180
4.2.2 Life of Daniel 184
4.2.3 Traditions about Daniel in Josephus 187
4.3 Other Jewish Court Tales 190
4.3.1 1 Esdras 3-4 190
4.3.1.1 The Structure of the Skill Theme in 1 Esdras 3-4 193
4.3.1.2 Court Tale Language in 1 Esdras 3-4 196
4.3.1.3 Restoration and the Significance of Zerubbabel's Victory in the Persian Court 199
4.3.2 Esther 201
4.3.2.1 Hebrew Esther 203
4.3.2.2 Greek Esther 210
4.3.3. The Letter of Aristeas, verses 187-294 214
4.3.4 Jannes and Jambres 221
4.3.5. Josephus and the Story of Archelaus (War II.111-13 and Antiquities of the Jews XVII. 345-348) 225
4.4 Conclusion 229
CHAPTER FIVE: THE JEWISH COURT TALES AND THEIR WORLDVIEW 234
5.1 Introduction 234
5.2 The Adoption of the Court Tales in a Jewish Social Context 237
5.3 The Jewish Court Tale Worldview: Exile, Foreign Rule, and Ahistoricism 239
5.4 The Decline of the Jewish Court Tales 247
5.4.1 Daniel 2 and 7 253
5.5 Final Considerations 259
BIBLIOGRAPHY 263

List of Tables

Table I: Key Literary Features of the Aramaic Court Tales 168

Table II: Key Literary Features of Court Tales not Found among the Dead Sea Scrolls 231

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David Noel Freedman; 6 vols.; New York; Doubleday, 1992)
ABRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
AbrN	*Abr-Nahrain*
AcOr	*Acta Orientalia*
ADOG	Abhandlungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANES	*Ancient Near Eastern Studies*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOS	American Oriental Studies
AS	*Aramaic Studies*
ASTI	*Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BASP	*Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*
BCE	Before Common Era
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BIFAO	*Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*
BO	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CC	Continental Commentaries
CE	Common Era
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
ClAnt	*Classical Antiquity*
ClQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CNIP	Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications
CNIANES	Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies
CP	*Classical Philology*
CTL	Current Trends in Linguistics
CurBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
DJD	*Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls

EANEC	Explorations in Ancient Near Eastern Civilization
EB	Études bibliques
EF	Erträge der Forschung
EJ	*Encyclopaedia Judaica*
FAT	Forschung zur Bibel
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GA	*Genesis Apocryphon*
HCS	Hellenistic Culture and Society
HES	Harvard Egyptological Studies
HeyJ	*The Heythrop Journal*
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
HS	*Hebrew Studies*
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
IrAnt	*Iranica Antiqua*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JAE	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements
JAL	Jewish Apocryphal Literature Series
JANE	*Journal of Ancient Near East*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBQ	*Jewish Bible Quarterly*
JCSSS	*Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JHebS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JTS	*The Journal of Theological Studies*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Periods*
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplements
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSem	*Journal of Semitics*

JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
LAE	*The Literature of Ancient Egypt*
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient
LAS	Leipziger Altorientalistische Studien
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSTS	The Library of Second Temple Studies
MAS	Münchner Ägyptologische Studien
MPONPER	Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Oesterreichischen Nationalbibliotek Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer
NABU	*Nouvelles assyriologiques bréves et utilitaires*
NIB	*The New Interpreter's Bible*. Edited by Leander E. Keck. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994-2004
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OIS	Oriental Institute Seminars
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OLZ	*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTP	*Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1983, 1985
PRSt	*Perspectives in Religious Studies*
QUCC	*Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica*
RA	*Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RevQ	*Revue de Qumrân*
RHPR	*Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*
RSR	*Recherches de science religieuse*
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLTCS	Society of Biblical Literature Text-Critical Studies
SBS	Stuttgarter biblische Monographien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SC	Sources chrétiennes. Paris: Cerf, 1943–
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SEÅ	*Svensk exegetisk drsbok*
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SrcTh	*Scripta Theologica*
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
StPB	Studia Post-biblica
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigraphica

ThStK	*Theologische Studien und Kritiken*
TAD	*Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt: Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into Hebrew and English*
TDOT	*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Wills et al. 8 vol.s Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
TPLS	*Theory and Practice in Language Studies*
TS	*Theological Studies*
TSBA	*Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*
TUAT	*Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments*. Edited by Otto Kaiser. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1984-
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WO	*Die Welt des Orients*
YNER	Yale Near Eastern Researches
ZÄS	*Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The World of the Court Tales

Literary tales about the lives and deeds of officials serving in the courts of powerful rulers are broadly attested throughout the writings of the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean regions, evidencing a popular antique literary form. It is thus no surprise that such "court tales" were also a popular literary form among the writings of Second Temple period Judaism (515 BCE-70 CE), with the most well-known examples of this literature being Daniel 1-6, Esther, and 1 Esdras 3-4. Beginning with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (henceforward DSS) in 1946/7 near Qumran, a collection of previously unknown ancient Jewish court tale texts was discovered, while others were found there for the first time in their original languages. These texts have expanded our corpus of extant Jewish court tale literature and demonstrate that the early Jewish court tale tradition was much broader and more diverse than previously thought. Several of these recently discovered court tales have only been officially published within the past twenty years, and, consequently, research on these texts has yet to be systematically integrated into studies on court tales, and into broader portrayals of early Jewish life, thought, and literature. This has left scholars with a narrow understanding of the breadth, significance and diversity of the early Jewish court tale literature and its development. This dissertation seeks to address this desideratum by incorporating the newly available court tale evidence from the DSS into research on the already extant corpus of early Jewish court tales. Incorporating this newly

available court tale material, this dissertation undertakes a fresh analysis of the early Jewish court tales within their Second Temple period setting and considers the issue of their relationship to other Second Temple literary forms, particularly apocalyptic literature. In this way, this dissertation will reshape current scholarly understandings of the development and function of the early Jewish court tales, and advance research on this popular literary form from antiquity.

Scholars have long noted the shared literary qualities of Genesis 37-50, Esther, Daniel 1-6, Bel and the Dragon, and 1 Esdras 3-4, including their narrative setting within royal courts, their interest in foreign kings, and their focus upon the vicissitudes of Hebrew courtiers. Interpreters have proposed varying literary forms to account for the works' distinctive thematic interests.[1] A general scholarly consensus has formed, recognizing that the works are most closely related to a well-established earlier Near Eastern and Mediterranean 'court tale' or 'court legend' literary tradition, exemplified by works such

[1] See James Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel*, ICC (Edinburgh: Clark, 1959), 100-101; Shemaryahu Talmon, "Wisdom in the Book of Esther," *VT* 13 (1963): 419-455; and Lawrence M. Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King: Ancient Jewish Court Legends*, HDR 26 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 1-204. For example, Montgomery describes the tales as "Wisdom stories", and Talmon maintains that both the Joseph story and the Esther narrative should be understood as representatives of the "historicized wisdom-tale". Wills labels the genre "wisdom court legend" or "court legend" for short.
Also see Klaus Koch, *Das Buch Daniel*, EF 144 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), 88-91; Hans-Peter Müller, "Die weisheitliche Lehrerzählung im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt," *WO* 9 (1977): 77-98; Ernst Haag, *Die Errettung Daniels aus der Löwengrube: Untersuchungen zum Ursprung der biblischen Danieltradition*, SBS 110 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1983), 46-47; and Tawny L. Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings: The Biblical Daniel Narratives and Ancient Story-Collections*, EANEC 1 (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013). Koch lists five different generic labels that have been attached to Daniel 1-6: *Märchen* (fairy tale), legend, court tale, romance, and midrash. Müller proposed an alternative generic designation for Daniel 1-6: the didactic wisdom tale, and Haag supports Müller's designation. More recently, Tawny L. Holm has analyzed Daniel 1-6 within the framework of story-collections.

as *Aḥikar* (c. 5th century BCE).[2] I discuss these ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean tales in greater detail in Chapter Two.

The recognition of the influence of the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales upon the development of the Jewish court tale tradition has also raised the question of the origins of the court tale tradition. A preliminary observation related to this question was that the court tales nearly universally feature formative historical periods and famous rulers from the past (e.g., King Nebuchadnezzar), as opposed to lesser-known kings. Upon further analysis, one will also note the often ahistorical character of the court tales—that is their romanticized and lavish depictions of defunct royal court systems; comedic portrayals of enraged, baffled, and/or inept kings; and the brazen (and oft incredulous) behavior of their featured heroes towards royal protocol and procedure. In other words, the court tales do not provide historiographical accounts of regimented and routine court life, but rather reflect the fanciful literary imaginations of interested communities, speculating upon the inner workings of famous royal court systems. The question thus arises regarding what influences led those writing the court tales to portray royal courts in such fanciful ways.

Several scholars have noted the influence of ancient Near Eastern wisdom traditions upon the court tales in general, particularly their fanciful portrayals of royal court life.[3] For

[2] Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 39-74.
[3] See John J. Collins, "The Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic," *JBL* 94 (1975): 218-24. John. J. Collins remarks that one of the distinguishing elements of Daniel 1-6 is its emphasis upon the "wisdom or ability of the courtier." Most studies on the intersection between court tales and wisdom literature have focused upon Esther and Daniel 1-7. See Eric W. Heaton, *Solomon's New Men* (New York: Pica, 1974), 126-161; Gerhard von Rad, "The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, ed. Gerhard von Rad (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 292-300; Talmon, "Wisdom in the

example, several court tales frequently invoke a group referred to as "the wise" or "wise men" (cf. Gen 41:8, Dan 4:18, 5:7, and Esth 1:13), and the Hebrew courtiers are often called wise (cf. Joseph in Gen 41:39). Moreover, courtiers, such as Daniel and his companions, are often evaluated by their wisdom in comparison with the wisdom of other foreign courtiers (cf. Dan 1:20, 4:15 MT, 5:11-16), and Zerubbabel, the Judean hero of 1 Esdras 3-4, praises God, who has given him wisdom (4:60). The court tales often depict foreign kings as lacking the kind of wisdom exhibited by the courtiers, which is ironic granted that earlier biblical wisdom traditions often associated successful rulers with wisdom (cf. Prov 20:26, and 1 Kgs 3:12). In some instances, the court tales include instructions about how the wise should conduct themselves. For instance, the Letter of Aristeas 148b asserts that "By means of creatures like this the legislator has handed down (the lesson) to be noted by men of wisdom, that they should be righteous, and not achieve anything by brute force, nor lord it over others in reliance upon their own strength."[4] Several ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales have also incorporated collections of proverbs, and attributed them to their featured court heroes. This is the case, for instance, in several of the *Aḥiqar* recensions, the Egyptian *Onkhsheshonq*, and the Greek *Life of Aesop*.

Book of Esther," 419-55, particularly 437-43, 455, and 441 (for the quote below). Heaton suggests that there was an early Jewish narrativized wisdom tradition. Evidencing a similar sentiment regarding narrativized wisdom, von Rad and Talmon proposed that Joseph and Mordecai within their respective texts embody wisdom, serving as models for the wise Jew. Talmon believes that there are three "couples" within Esther, who represent "the traditional wisdom—triangle": 1) the powerful but witless dupe (King Ahasuerus and Queen Vashti), 2) the righteous wise (Esther and Mordecai), and 3) the conniving schemer (Haman and Zeresh). Talmon proposes that the Book of Esther should be defined as a *historicized wisdom-tale*. Also, see Seth A. Bledsoe, "Can Ahiqar Tell Us Anything About Personified Wisdom?" *JBL* 132.1 (2013): 119-137, 137 (for the quote below). In contrast to the studies above, Seth Bledsoe argues that personified Wisdom cannot be found in *Aḥiqar*; however, he still considers *Aḥiqar* to be a "wisdom text".

[4] Translation from R. J. H. Shutt, "Letter of Aristeas," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1985), 7-34.

In response to this recognition of the role of wisdom within the court tales and the aforementioned question regarding the origins of the court tales, Lawrence Wills published a monograph in 1990, which sought "to understand Daniel 1-6 and Esther in the context of their genre"—that is within the broader court tale tradition.[5] In this monograph, Wills notes how "it ha[d] become common in recent scholarly literature to dissociate these [court] legends from any "wisdom" influence, which is part of a broader lament concerning the lack of precision in the definition of wisdom and "wisdom literature.""[6] Wills insisted that earlier definitions of biblical wisdom traditions had been overly dependent upon the form of the books of Proverbs, Ben Sira, and the Wisdom of Solomon. By contrast, Wills focuses on the broader ancient Near Eastern wisdom tradition and considers how it served as a milieu for the court tales. Wills' acute sensitivity for this wisdom context is reflected in his definition of the court tale genre: "a legend of a revered figure set in the royal court which has the wisdom of the protagonist as a principal motif."[7] In particular, the sort of wisdom that Wills identifies in the court tales is set "in popular, not professional, conceptions of what the "wise" hero is like and how he or she succeeds," which comports well with the observation noted above that the court tales reflect literary romanticization rather than historiography.[8]

Wills satisfactorily highlighted the impact of wisdom traditions upon the court tales, and his definition of the court tale genre has since remained the most often cited one in the

[5] Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 193. To a lesser extent, the work also examined Bel and the Dragon and *1 Esdras* 3-4.
[6] Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 24.
[7] Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 37.
[8] Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 34.

field of biblical studies. While Wills' study of the Jewish court tales served to demonstrate the shared continuity between the ancient Near Eastern and Jewish court tales by demonstrating their shared dependence upon wisdom traditions, his study did not distinguish what elements make the Jewish court tale tradition distinct from other court tale traditions. Accordingly, this dissertation employs Wills' general definition as a starting point for the court tales in general and seeks to build upon this foundational study in order to demonstrate the unique Jewish contributions to the court tale literature.

An influential article by W. Lee Humphreys differentiates the court "contest" theme from the court "conflict" theme.[9] Court contests are tales that focus on a wise courtier's rise to prominence (or greater prominence) within a royal court. The typical contest pattern involves the following: 1) The king is faced with a problem that he cannot resolve (such as the interpretation of an enigmatic dream, reading mysterious writing, etc.); 2) the king's courtiers cannot resolve the problem; 3) the hero is called upon to resolve the problem; 4) the hero resolves the problem; and 5) the hero gains prestige.[10] The court conflict involves a courtier who is already in a position of prestige, suffers, and is ultimately vindicated. The court conflict pattern can be outlined in the following manner: 1) The hero begins in a state of prosperity; 2) the hero is imperilled; 3) the hero is condemned to death or prison; 4) the hero is released; and 5) the hero is restored to their position of prestige. Though many scholars, such as John J. Collins, Lawrence M. Wills, and Tawny Holm, have employed

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[9] W. Lee Humphreys, "A Life-Style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel." *JBL* 92.3 (1973): 211-223.

[10] The court contest and court conflict patterns as outlined here draw from Collins' outline of those tale types. See John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 45-7.

Humphreys' distinction to discuss the court tales, it is important to note that Humphreys' distinction is an etic description of the tales, and is in need of further refinement.[11] Nevertheless, Humphreys' distinction serves the heuristic purpose of recognizing variety among the court tales, and helps to remind the reader that the court tales imagine a number of different scenarios involving a courtier and a king. Given the article's influence and heuristic merit, I reference Humphreys' distinction as I treat particular court tales. This distinction between court contests and court conflicts has been employed in studies of both the early Jewish and other ancient Near Eastern court tales, and it has further helped to evidence the relationship between these bodies of literature.

Other well-known attempts at contextualizing the court tales during the 1970s-1990s relied heavily upon folklore studies, a field which was greatly influenced by the study of European literature.[12] Particularly formative for a number of folktale analyses of the court tales was the work of Vladimir Propp (1895-1970), who focused on Russian folktales, and the work of the Finnish folklore school represented by Antti Aarne (1867-1925), whose work was later extended by Stith Thompson (1885-1976).[13] Propp identified thirty-one distinct functions typical of fairy tales (though not all thirty-one necessarily appear in each tale). By contrast, Aarne and Thompson, who also analyzed a broad diversity

[11] See Collins, *Daniel*, 45-7. Collins notes that the court conflicts evidence a unique court tale type, but that the designation of court contest "is in need of nuancing and of further distinction." Also, see Lawrence M. Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 2-3; and Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 2 n. 4.

[12] See, for example, Jack M. Sasson, *Ruth: A New Translation with a Philological Commentary and a Formalist-Folklorist Interpretation* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979). In this analysis, Sasson undertakes a Proppian analysis of Ruth.

[13] See Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 1-158; and Antti Aarne, Antti, and Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, 2nd ed., 6 vols. (Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia, 1964).

of folktales, were interested in categorizing various types of folklore literature by their motifs. Proponents of the Proppian analysis have included Joseph Blenkinsopp and William Soll, while proponents of the Finnish school have included Frank Zimmerman, Susan Niditch and Robert Doran.[14] For example, Susan Niditch and Robert Doran, employing the Aarne-Thompson tale type index, propose that tale type 922, "Clever Acts and Words," is the most appropriate tale type to describe the accounts preserved in Daniel 2, Genesis 41, and the Syriac version of *Aḥikar* 5-7.[15]

Although attempts, such as that of Niditch and Doran, to coordinate the court tales with largely European folklore studies and other cross-cultural studies have provided significant contributions to the field, they also tend to distance the court tales from their most immediate socio-historical and literary context: the Second Temple period. As a result, such comparative studies risk overlooking and misinterpreting key features and nuances of the court tales that are specific to their Second Temple period context. These

[14] For a helpful general overview of the influence of folklore studies upon the study of the court tale texts, see Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 4-12. For Proppian analyses, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Biographical Patterns in Biblical Narrative," *JSOT* 20 (1981): 27-46; William Soll, "Misfortune and Exile in Tobit: The Juncture of a Fairy Tale Source and Deuteronomic Theology," *CBQ* 51 (1989): 209-231; and Pamela J. Milne, "Folktales and Fairy Tales: An Evaluation of Two Proppian Analyses of Biblical Narratives," *JSOT* 11.34 (1986): 35-60; and Pamela J. Milne, *Vladimir Propp and the Study of Structure in Hebrew Biblical Literature* (Sheffield: Almond, 1988). Blenkinsopp subjects the Jacob and Tobit stories to Proppian analysis. Using a Proppian approach, Soll seeks to uncover a "heroic folktale" source within the Book of Tobit, and Milne considers the limitations of undertaking a Proppian analysis of the Book of Daniel since the stories contained therein do not conform to Vladimir Propp's framework.
For analyses employing the Aarne and Thompson typology, see Frank Zimmerman, *The Book of Tobit*, JAL (New York: Harper, 1958); and Susan Niditch and Robert Doran, "The Success Story of the Wise Courtier: A Formal Approach." *JBL* 96 (1977): 179-193. Also see Collins, *Daniel*, 45, and Alexander Krappe, "Is the story of Ahikar the Wise of Indian Origin?" *JAOS* 61 (1941): 280-284. Zimmerman employs the Aarne-Thompson index to analyze the Book of Tobit. Alexander Krappe demonstrates the similarities between *Aḥikar* and a diverse spectrum of folktales.
[15] See Niditch and Doran, "The Success Story," 179-180.

broad comparative analyses are also unable to account for those aspects that make the Jewish court tales distinctively "Jewish".

The aforementioned discovery of a collection of previously unknown court tales among the DSS have significantly expanded the corpus of previously identified early Jewish court tales, but this material has yet to be integrated in a sustained manner into larger studies of the Jewish court tale literature, such as that of Wills. Indeed, the significance of this newly (re)discovered material for the study of the court tales has only recently begun to be appreciated. At a conference in 1991, Devorah Dimant highlighted the following court tale texts found at Qumran: *Aramaic Apocalypse* (4Q246), the *Four Kingdoms* apocalypse (4Q552-553), *Tales of Jews in the Persian Court* (4Q550), and the *Prayer of Nabonidus* (4Q242).[16] In this publication, Dimant also notes the royal court setting of *Pseudo-Daniel* (4Q243-244), but considers the work different in kind due to its long-detailed analysis of biblical history. In a later article, Dimant designated the following body of related literature found among the DSS "Legendary Narratives and Court Tales": Tobit (4Q196-199); The *Prayer of Nabonidus* (4Q242); *Proto-Esther*, i.e. *Tales of Jews in the Persian Court*, (4Q550, 4Q550a, 4Q550b, 4Q550c, 4Q550d, 4Q550e); and *Daniel-Suzanna* (4Q551).[17] Alongside the texts mentioned by Dimant above, Daniel 1-6, Bel and the Dragon, 1 Esdras 3-4, and a few additional compositions should be included in a comprehensive examination

[16] See Devorah Dimant, "Apocalyptic Texts at Qumran," in *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. E. Ulrich and J. VanderKam (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 175-192, particularly 184-7.
[17] Devorah Dimant, "The Qumran Aramaic Texts and the Qumran Community," in *Flores Florentino. The Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez*, JSJSup 122, eds. A. Hilhorst, É. Puech, and E. J. C. Tigchelaar (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 197-205.

of the Jewish court tales: *Genesis Apocryphon*, cols. 19-20 (1Q20); the *Letter of Aristeas*, verses 187-294; the *Vita Danielis*; Jannes and Jambres; and selected writings of Flavius Josephus (such as *the Story of Archelaus* [War *II.111-13 and* Antiquities of the Jews *XVII.* 345-348]). I provide a rationale for the inclusion of each of these texts in chapters 3 and 4. With this expanded collection of Jewish court tales at our disposal, scholars are now in a much stronger position to contextualize the Jewish court tale tradition within the Second Temple period, rather than only within broader cross-cultural contexts.

Several questions arise from the discovery of the DSS court tales: Are there any features that distinguish the court tales found at Qumran from those that were not? What is the relationship between the court tales found at Qumran and those that were not? Several scholars, such as George Brooke, have demonstrated how ancient Jewish genres were not static entities and changed over time, as new texts were added to their number.[18] Thus, the question arises whether a comparison between the tales preserved among the DSS and those that were not exhibit any development within the genre. I demonstrate in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 that development does occur within the literature in terms of these texts' foci, and in their interest in diasporic court life and eschatological matters. Of particular interest in regard to eschatological concerns are the court tales' disparate and developing understanding of the significance of communal Judean penitence, restoration, and return to Israel from exile (see below).

1.2. The Exilic Literary Background of the Court Tales

[18] George Brooke, "Genre Theory, Rewritten Bible and Pesher," *DSD* 17 (2010): 375.

Before a proper analysis of the court tales can take place, it is important to consider some of their shared Second Temple period conceptual frameworks. In this regard, I turn the reader's attention to the Jewish court tales' nearly universal diasporic literary setting, outside of the Land of Israel.[19] However, diasporic literary settings are not universal within the broader ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales. Accordingly, the Jewish court tales' universal diasporic literary settings and special interest in Judean life outside of Israel are significant since they are unique literary features of the Jewish court tale tradition.

In order to understand the significance of the exilic setting within the court tales, it is important to note that ancient Israel has a rich literary tradition, which speculates upon the theological implications of living in exile. Most often, exile is associated with Israel's transgression of the LORD's covenantal agreement with the people of Israel, and, in particular, exile is envisioned as punishment for Israel's disobedience towards God and his commandments. However, a plurality of views regarding the significance of exile is evidenced within the literature of ancient Israel. Accordingly, it is necessary for to go through some examples in detail in order to demonstrate how this theme developed within several texts in the Hebrew Bible.

The paradigm of exile and return is found within the Pentateuch.[20] This association is found both in sources that exhibit Deuteronomic influence and in works that exhibit

[19] If Josephus' *the Story of Archelaus* (*War II.111-13* and *Antiquities of the Jews XVII*. 345-348) is grouped among the early Jewish court tales, it provides a late exception to the otherwise universal diasporic setting of the Jewish court tales. This text and its relationship to the court tales is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

[20] For more on the compositional history of the Pentateuch/Hexateuch, see Rainer Albertz, "The Recent Discussion on the Formation of the Pentateuch/Hexateuch," *HS* 59 (2018): 65-92; Rainer Albertz, "Die neue

priestly influence. For example, Leviticus, a source that exhibits priestly concerns, threatens that:[21]

> But if you will not obey me, and do not observe all these commandments, … I will devastate the land, so that your enemies who come to settle in it shall be appalled at it. And you I will scatter among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword against you; your land shall be a desolation, and your cities a waste. (Lev 26:14, 32-33 NRSV)

Here Israel is punished by being sent into exile for not observing the commandments, and the land is reoccupied by other foreign peoples. Not only will the Israelites suffer while living outside of Israel, but they will be continuously pursued by the sword in exile.[22]

Several Deuteronomic sources also share the sentiment that Israel will be punished and sent into exile for disobedience. This is the case, for instance, in Deuteronomy, which has a particular view of history, interpreting Israelite history through the lens of Israel's (in)ability to maintain the statutes of God's covenantal agreement with Israel:

> If you will only obey the LORD your God, by diligently observing all his commandments that I am commanding you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth… But if you will not obey the LORD your God by diligently observing all his commandments and decrees, which I am commanding you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you… The LORD will cause you to be defeated by your enemies; you shall go out against them one way and flee before them seven ways. You shall become an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth." (Deuteronomy 28:1, 15, 25 NRSV)

Debatte über die Entstehung von Pentateuch und Hexateuch," in *Pentateuchstudien: Herausgegeben von Jakob Wöhrle* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 7-29; and David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[21] Jacob Milgrom maintains that Leviticus is comprised of two Priestly sources: P and H. Leviticus 1-16 is primarily comprised of the P source, while Leviticus 17-27, and, in particular, most of Leviticus 26, can be attributed to the H source. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1-57; and Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 2272-2365.

[22] Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, CC (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 321.

Here, Israel is promised international political success and prosperity for observing the commandments. By contrast, if Israel is disobedient, they will be punished by their enemies and become "an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth."

The quotation above provides the basic thesis of the Deuteronomic understanding of history: If the people of Israel keep God's commandments, then they will be blessed, and if they fail to obey God's commandments, then they will be cursed.[23] Deuteronomy also notes that exile is among the punishments to be experienced for the disobedience of God's commandments:

> The LORD will bring you, and the king whom you set over you, to a nation that neither you nor your ancestors have known, where you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone. You shall become an object of horror, a proverb, and a byword among all the peoples where the LORD will lead you. (Deut 28:36-7, NRSV)

The so-called Deuteronomistic history—namely Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, and 1-2 Kings—shares a similar sentiment regarding the theological significance of exile as a form of God's punishment for the disobedience of his statutes.[24] Following the subjugation of the northern Kingdom of Israel by the neo-Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser III and

[23] See Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien: Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament*, vol. l. of *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gessellschaft. Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse (Halle: Niemeyer, 1943); Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 1-9; and Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 5 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 13-14. In 1943, Martin Noth proposed that a Deuteronomic work, spanning from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings (excluding some insertions), contained a unified history, with a shared theological and philosophical outlook. Moshe Weinfeld has provided some of the most significant discussions regarding the major linguistic and thematic reasons regarding why Deuteronomy, Joshua-2 Kings, and Jeremiah were composed by a common scribal school.

[24] For an overview of the Deuteronomistic view of history, see Steven L. McKenzie, "Deuteronomistic History," *ABD* 2:160-68; Moshe Weinfield, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*; and Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*, JSOTSup 18 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981).

Shalmaneser V, Assyria began to relocate Israelites in 740 BCE. Recounting these events, 2 Kings 15:28-29 notes that:

> He [King Pekah, son of Remaliah] did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he caused Israel to sin. In the days of King Pekah of Israel, King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria came and captured Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried the people captive to Assyria. (NRSV)

The description of Assyria's captivity of the north occurs following a description of King Pekah's perpetuation of the sins of King Jeroboam. Thus, implicit here is that the consequence of King Pekah's perpetuation of sin is that a large portion of the Israelite population was deported to Assyria. Ultimately, following Hoshea's deposition by Shalmaneser, Israel was doomed to become a vassal state of Assyria.[25] A second set of Assyrian deportations, under Sargon II, is then undertaken in 722 BCE. In this instance, 2 Kings 18:11-12 is more explicit on the relationship between Israel's disobedience towards the God of Israel and their subsequent exile:

> The King of Assyria carried the Israelites away to Assyria, settled them in Halah, on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God but transgressed his covenant—all that Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded; they neither listened nor obeyed. (NRSV)

The view that Israel's exile is a form of punishment is also evidenced in the prophetic writings; for example, Amos asserts that "they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away" (Amos 6:7 NRSV).[26] Isaiah depicts

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[25] Norman K. Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel*, LAI (ed. Douglas A. Knight; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 67-8.

[26] See Göran Eidevall, *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 24G (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 181-2. Eidevall describes the irony found in v. 7, whereby the participants of the banquet will be forced to leave and their state of luxury, and "lead the march of the prisoners of war."

Assyria as the punishing instrument of God's anger at Israel's impiety: "Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger—the club in their hands is my fury! Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." (10:5-6 NRSV).[27]

Following the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem (597 BCE), he captured the surrounding region, looted it, and took King Jeconiah, along with his court and Judah's elite, captive to Babylon.[28] Two subsequent deportations also occurred in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth and twenty-third years. Similar to the description of the Assyrian captivity, 2 Kings interprets the Babylonian deportations as punishment for Judah's disobedience towards God's covenant:

> The LORD sent against him [Jehoiakim] bands of the Chaldeans, bands of the Aramaeans, bands of the Moabites, and bands of Ammonites; he sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by his servants the prophets. Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the LORD, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, for all that he had committed, and also for the innocent blood that he had shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD was not willing to pardon (24:2-4 NRSV).

Alongside these literary portrayals of exile as a form of punishment, the Deuteronomic school suggests that there will be a future period when Israel will repent and be restored to the Land of Israel. Deuteronomy 30:1-4, for instance, promises that after

[27] This passage is situated within the context of a woe-saying. See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 252-4.
[28] See Gottwald, *The Politics of Ancient Israel*, 69-71. Incidentally, 2 Kgs 25:27-30 also includes a brief description of Jeconiah's life in exile, noting that Evil-merodach (Nebuchadnezzar's successor) demonstrated favor to Jeconiah, and allowed him to eat at the king's table. Thus, even the Books of Kings already begin to demonstrate Judean interest in the lives and successes of Judeans living in the courts of foreign kings (though fall short of the literary flourishes found in later Jewish court tale literature).

Israel has been punished for her sins that, if she returns to the LORD and obeys his commandments, then God will restore the people of Israel from their state of exile:

> When all these things have happened to you, the blessings and the curses that I have set before you, if you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, **2** and return to the LORD your God, and you and your children obey him with all your heart and with all your soul, just as I am commanding you today, **3** then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, gathering you again from all the peoples among whom the LORD your God has scattered you. **4** Even if you are exiled to the ends of the world, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will bring you back. (Deut 30:1-4 NRSV)

This quote exemplifies the expectation found within several biblical texts—that if Israel corporately repents and maintains God's commandments, then her people will be restored from their state of exilic punishment—even from the furthest reaches of the world.[29]

Jeremiah, which exhibits rhetorical similarities to the Deuteronomic school, also portrays the Babylonian Exile as a form of punishment (cf. Jer 19), but provides a unique attitude towards the prospects of a future restoration.[30] In particular, Jeremiah blames the Judean monarchy for the exile:

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[29] See Hans Walter Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomic Historical Work," in *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions*, eds. Walter Brueggemann and Hans Walter Wolff; trans. Frederick C. Prussner (Atlanta; John Knox Press, 1982), 83-100 especially 99-100. Wolff cautions that this is the only instance, however, in the Deuteronomic historical work that refers to a specific return to the land. Wolff suggests that the work's main focus is a return to the God of Israel, and a wholehearted devotion to his instructions.

[30] Many scholars, such as Thiel, Nicholson, McKane, and Carroll, suggest that portions of Jeremiah exhibit the work of later exilic or post-exilic redactors. See Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20: A New Translation and Commentary*, AB 21A (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 63-69; Winfried Thiel, *Die Deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1-25*, vol. 1 of *Die Deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia*; Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 41 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchner Verlarg, 1973), 1-302; Winfried Thiel, *Die Deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 26-45*, vol. 2 of *Die Deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia*; Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 41 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchner Verlarg, 1981), 1-115; Ernest Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), 38-115, for example 65-66; William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, vol. I of *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on*

> Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. (Jer 23:1-2, NRSV; cf. Ezek 34:3-6)

Here, it is the kings (the shepherds) who have scattered the LORD's people (flock) and caused them to go into exile.[31]

Writing to the elders, priests, and prophets in the Babylonian Exile, Jeremiah voices a rather different view of exilic life, emphasizing that the Judean return from exile is not imminent and predicting that the Exile will last seventy years:

> **4** Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: **5** Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. **6** Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. **7** But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. **8** For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, **9** for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the LORD.
>
> **10** For thus says the LORD: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. (Jer 29:4-10, NRSV)

Here Jeremiah offers some rather pragmatic advice to the Judeans—noting that their welfare is bound up with that of the Babylonians. Thus, the Judeans ought to settle down in exile, learn to survive in this new circumstance, and live their daily lives rather than focus on the future restoration. Jeremiah even warns against listening to other "would-be

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Jeremiah, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986), xv-xcix; and Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 65-82.

[31] Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 614-6.

prophets" who envision a swift restoration.[32] Nevertheless, Jeremiah does assert that exilic life is an impermanent state, noting that only after seventy years will God return the Judeans to Jerusalem. Jeremiah also asserts that, along with Israel and Judah's eventual restoration, God will establish a new covenant with Israel and Judah, which will be written on their heart (Jer 31:31-34).[33]

Other prophetic works also suggest an eventual mass restoration for Judah and Israel, but do not provide a particular timeline for these events.[34] For instance, Ezekiel, which exhibits priestly interests, asserts that a future restoration is on the horizon.[35] Ezekiel suggests that certain social and geographical changes will come into effect at the time of

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[32] Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 21B (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 342-367, quotation from 359. Note that a few scholars such as Duhm and Cornill suggest omitting vv. 8-9 (the repudiation against false prophets) from the oracle. The message, however, seems to be the same as that given to the Babylonian exiles in Jeremiah 27-28, and is without textual basis and should be rejected. See Carl Heinrich Cornill, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1905), 316; and Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jeremia* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1901), 229-230.

[33] See Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "The Covenant in the Book of Jeremiah," *Covenant in the Persian Period: From Genesis to Chronicles*, eds. Richar J. Bautch and Gary N. Knoppers (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 153-174. Notably, one of the most important aspects of the "new covenant" imagery was to indicate a certain ongoing continuity with the covenant relationship in the new circumstance of the sixth century BCE.

[34] See Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "Deuteronomic Concepts of Exile Interpreted in Jeremiah and Ezekiel," in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature and Post-biblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. H. Cohen, V. A. Hurwitz, B. J. Schwartz, J. H. Tigay, and Y. Muffs (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 101-123. Rom-Shiloni interprets Jeremiah and Ezekiel as representing two different sides of an ideological divide regarding the ancient Israelite view of the significance of exile. With one living in Judah and the other in Babylon, each prophet was loyal to their community, and adapted Deuteronomic concepts for their particular social reality.

[35] A number of scholars have affirmed a literary relationship between Ezekiel and the priestly Holiness Code (Lev 17-26). For an overview of the relationship between Ezekiel and Leviticus 17-26, see Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48*, trans. Ronald E. Clements, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1979), 46-52. An early proponent of this connection was Karl Heinrich Graf, who argued that the connection between Ezekiel and Leviticus 18-23, 25 was so strong that Ezekiel should be regarded as the author of Leviticus 1-23. See Karl Heinrich Graf, *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig, 1866), 81. Subsequent scholars have dramatically nuanced this perspective, with little consensus on whether Ezekiel or the Holiness Code borrowed from the other, or whether both borrowed from a third source. A majority of commentators have long noted the particular affinities between Leviticus 26 and Ezekiel. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 2348-2352.

the restoration, which will include "reset boundaries, a realignment of the various tribes within the land, a new temple, and a new Jerusalem" (47:13-48:35).[36] Ezekiel also imagines a future reallotment of Israel different from other accounts of Israel's tribal allotment, which will include an additional and unprecedented thirteenth portion that will serve as a "consecrated area" (תרומה) for the LORD.[37]

Hope for a future return and restoration from exile also persisted into the Persian era, a period in which some Judeans already experienced a return to the land of Israel (cf. Zech 8:1-12 and 10:6-12).[38] Among these various views regarding exile and hopes of a possible restoration, Gary Knoppers describes a different view of exilic life in Ezra-Nehemiah, which focuses on the positive aspects of diasporic life, including its political, social, and religious advantages.[39] For Ezra-Nehemiah, having Judeans living both inside and outside of Judea means that Judean ethnicity and identity now enjoy an international dimension, along with the benefits that international status entails. Knoppers notes how Ezra-Nehemiah "advocate a number of complementary strategies for dealing with life under a single empire."[40] The Eastern Diaspora becomes a key strategic avenue for supporting the restoration and reform of Judea. This is accomplished due to the presence of Judeans, who have aspired to prominent ranks within the administrative system in Persia

[36] See Gary N. Knoppers, "The Construction of Judean Diasporic Identity in Ezra-Nehemiah," *JHebS 15.3* (2015): 19.
[37] Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel Chapters 25-48*, trans. James D. Martin, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 532-4.
[38] See J. Kessler, "The Diaspora in Zechariah 1-8 and Ezra-Nehemiah: The Role of History, Social Location, and Tradition in the Formation of Identity," in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. G. N. Knoppers and K. Ristau (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 119-45.
[39] See Knoppers, "The Construction of Judean Diasporic Identity," 1-21.
[40] Knoppers, "The Construction of Judean Diasporic Identity," 20.

and help to organize groups of Judeans to return home, help in the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple, and help to procure special privileges and resources for Judea. While exilic life may not be ideal, Ezra-Nehemiah espouses a pragmatic view, and highlights the distinct advantages of long-term diasporic life for the benefit of Judea.[41]

Biblical literature thus espouses a plurality of views about the exile: 1) In much of the Deuteronomistic and Priestly literature, exile is depicted as a form of punishment for disobedience, with several texts also maintaining hope for a possible future restoration; 2) Jeremiah presents a pragmatic view of the exile, whereby Judeans should invest themselves in Babylon until the eventual restoration; and 3) Ezra-Nehemiah highlight the distinct international political, social, and religious advantages of dwelling in exile. As demonstrated above, the view of exile as a form of punishment is more broadly attested within the biblical literature, but this was certainly not the only view. The texts above emphasize that, while exile was a significant topic of discussion within the biblical literature, these texts still emphasize the special importance of the Land of Israel. In some of the texts above, exile is depicted as a catastrophic situation. This view is often coupled with a hope of a future restoration and renewal. While Ezra-Nehemiah highlight the merits of diasporic life, the benefits that derive from diasporic living do have an advantageous impact for life in Judea.

[41] It is notable that Ezra-Nehemiah does not present a monolithic view of the exile, but rather textual development evident within Ezra 7-10 and Nehemiah 8 may exhibit different views of exile that develop diachronically. See Juha Pakkala, "The Exile and the Exiles in the Ezra Tradition," in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Contexts*, eds. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin, BZAW 404 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 91-101.

As inheritors of many of these earlier biblical traditions, the question arises: How do the court tales interpret the significance of living in exile? Do they treat their exilic settings as a form of punishment (perhaps with an eye to a possible future restoration of Israel)? Do they focus on the political advantages of exilic life? Do they espouse a different view? A few scholars have considered the role of exile in individual court tale texts. For example, Humphreys proposed that Daniel 1-6 and Esther "suggest and illustrate a certain style of life for the Jew in his foreign environment."[42] However, such studies did not systematically account for the diversity of depictions of exilic life found within the Jewish court tales, nor did they fully consider how the court tales enter into broader early Jewish interpretations of exile, as described above.

In this dissertation, I analyze the court tales' responses to and interpretations of the problem of exile and exilic life. Court tales are a well-established literary tradition, featuring heroes that serve foreign kings. The Jewish court tales, in particular, adopted this traditional literary form, and utilized it to respond to distinctively Jewish concerns, particularly regarding the meaning, nature, and purpose of exilic life. I demonstrate that the early Jewish adoption and adaptation of the court tale tradition was a deliberate literary strategy, which offered an innovative response to the problem of Judean life and practice outside of the land of Israel. In particular, the adaptation of court themes that emphasize the victory of the courtier serve as indicators of Israel's victory in the face of the apparent punishment of exile.

[42] Humphreys, "A Life-Style for Diaspora," 211.

As will become evident in later chapters of this dissertation, some of the Jewish court tales attempt to shift attention away from Judea-centric interpretations of exile (as evidenced within the biblical traditions discussed above) to a different perspective, whereby diasporic life is viewed as normative and sustainable. In doing this, these court tales upend traditional concerns about exile as a state of punishment, and evidence a distinctive shift away from the Judaism in the Diaspora that was "still centered intellectually and religiously in Jerusalem."[43] Other court tales employ the court themes as evidence of an imminent or impending restoration for Israel. In this way, an examination of the Jewish court tale corpus presents a discourse on the solution to the problem of exile, with some tales emphasizing a return to Israel and others focusing on the continued viability of Jewish life under foreign rule.

In order to facilitate this shift in understanding regarding the significance of living outside of the Land of Israel, the Jewish court tales hearken back to key events from Israelite history, which also took place outside of the Land of Israel. The court tales typically focus on the lives and actions of Hebrew heroes who lived in situations of exile (such as Abram and Daniel), and (re)imagine these figures as influential court officials, who served in the courts of powerful foreign rulers. The court tales demonstrate that in spite of the apparent power of these foreign rulers, it is the God of Israel who ultimately imparts wisdom and success, and who is sovereign over foreign empires. This point is

[43] Feldmeier Spieckermann, *God of the Living: A Biblical Theology*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011), 57-8.
Dimant, "Apocalyptic Texts at Qumran," 186. Dimant also notes how remarkable it is that the remaining court tale fragments from Qumran do not explicitly refer to "Israel or its fortunes."

emphasized by depicting how God often grants political and religious victories to the Hebrews serving in the courts of these foreign kings. In this way, the court tales are also didactic, demonstrating how living in exile can serve as a place of prosperity and success for Judeans. For instance, *Genesis Apocryphon*, cols. 19-20 (which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three) reimagines Abram's sojourn in Egypt (cf. Gen 12), and focuses on Abram's rise to prominence before the Pharaoh and his courtiers. By extension, Abram's success in the Pharaoh's court suggests the potential prominence that other Judeans living in exile might experience, in spite of circumstances that may appear to the contrary.

I do not suggest that interest in the Land of Israel is absent within the court tales, but rather that a restoration of life in Judea is not the sole benefit of life in exile for Judeans depicted within the court tales. This leads to a final point before progressing into my analysis of individual tales. It is noteworthy that at times, in spite of the general tendency to focus on the long-term status of those living in the Diaspora, the court tales make occasional references to a hoped-for restoration for the people of Israel. This tension between the court tales' primary focus upon the benefits of exilic life and their infrequent reference to Judean restoration will be explored further, as I examine individual court tale texts. Often these expectations of restoration are imbued with eschatological overtones. Accordingly, I explore the relationship between the court tales and apocalyptic literature, as well as their interest in Israel's restoration in the final chapter of this dissertation.

1.3. How This Study Will Proceed

Having established a framework for understanding the Jewish court tales, the following four chapters of this dissertation will provide a focused analysis of the role of exile in the court tales. Chapter Two provides a summary of the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tale traditions. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide an exhaustive introduction to these diverse traditions, this chapter provides a general introduction to the literary contours of the broader court tale traditions, with a focus upon those tales that emphasize diasporic literary settings for the deeds of their featured heroes.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the new court tales discovered among the DSS. The primary reason for separating these texts from other early Jewish court tales is due to the fact that much of this material has not yet been systematically integrated into court tale studies. A secondary consideration is that often the other early Jewish court tales exhibit certain literary features, which distinguish them from the concerns of the DSS court tales, evidencing development within the literary tradition. The purpose of Chapter Three is threefold: 1) to provide an introduction to each of the individual DSS court tale texts, 2) to demonstrate how these court tales have drawn from the structural and thematic motifs found within earlier ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales, and 3) to consider the (usually) relatively positive outlook that the court tales have regarding Jewish life in exile. Furthermore, I demonstrate how these tales emphasize Judean victory in exile through the successes of their respective heroes. Of course, I do not suggest that these are the only themes present within the court tales; rather, I seek to highlight how these court

tales subvert negative interpretations of exile as punishment. I also emphasize that in the tales' normative and more sustainable view of exile, they suggest a distinctive worldview.

Chapter four examines those early Jewish court tales that were not preserved among the DSS. I highlight their reliance upon the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tale traditions. As in chapter three, I demonstrate how these tales provide relatively positive, yet diverse, views of exilic life, which serves to emphasize Jewish victory in the Diaspora. The final portion of this chapter considers the relationship between these tales with those found among the DSS. I demonstrate that the court tales presume a distinctive worldview.

The fifth and final chapter of my dissertation contextualizes the development of the court tales within the Second Temple period, by providing a focused historical examination of the period. I do this by drawing the reader's attention to particular formative events, which would have influenced the development of the Jewish court tale tradition. In doing this, I suggest that a major purpose of the Jewish adoption of the court tale tradition was to upend earlier convictions that exilic life was solely a form of punishment, with the goal of demonstrating the benefits of exilic life and how God remains sovereign over foreign political actors (in spite of circumstances that may appear to the contrary). In contextualizing the court tales, I contribute to the discussion regarding the origins of Jewish apocalyptic literature, suggesting that the court tales' occasional shifts of focus to the redemption of Israel are often expressed in eschatological terms.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN AND MEDITERRANEAN MILIEU: COGNATE LITERATURE AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Court Tales in the Ancient Near East and Ancient Mediterranean

The early Jewish court tales did not develop in a vacuum; rather, they represent a distinctive literary development within a much older and broader ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tale tradition. Administrative documents attesting to the proceedings of royal courts are broadly attested throughout the ancient Near East and much of the Mediterranean Basin, but providing an exhaustive overview of this material lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. Instead, this chapter focuses specifically upon the more fanciful ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean literary works that recount the romanticized vicissitudes of courtly heroes, and their adventurous (and sometimes humorous) interactions with kings and fellow courtiers. While only a few of these texts (such as *Aḥiqar*) had a direct literary impact upon some of the Jewish tales, they do broadly attest to the general atmosphere of a common story telling pattern, which the Jewish court tales partake of and contribute to. In order to understand the Jewish court tales as fully as possible, one must read them with this broader cultural background in mind, as it will help to elucidate the unique Jewish contributions to this narrative pattern. Thus, the goal of this chapter is to provide an overview of the Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales, which will help to paint the general background from which Jewish court tales draw a common storytelling pattern. I provide this background in the following two ways: First, I

demonstrate the proliferation and diversity of the court tales throughout the ancient Near East and Mediterranean. Second, I highlight several of the themes and tropes shared by the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean tales, particularly those that have also been adopted within the Jewish court tales. I am, however, careful to note that, while the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales evidence shared story telling patterns, their purposes differ markedly among particular clusters. The themes of exile, restoration, and apocalyptic revelation, for instance, are not universal among the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean sources, but became prominent within the Jewish literature, as I demonstrate in Chapters Three and Four.

Central to the court tale pattern is the hero, who serves as a courtier within the royal court. The professional designations of these courtiers differ among different texts; in some instances, the courtier is a court magician, a wise man, a dream interpreter, etc. The role of the courtier is so prominent within the ancient Near Eastern texts that deities rarely feature extensively within them. Instead, the focus of these accounts generally rests upon the agency of the hero courtier, and pivots primarily upon their wisdom—that is, the courtiers solve problems within the court through their wisdom, and/or are vindicated through their wisdom.[44]

Fanciful descriptions of the vast power, disposition, and mannerisms of the great king are also key literary features shared by the ancient Near Eastern court tales in general, as well as by the Jewish court tales in particular. Typically, the ancient Near Eastern and

[44] Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 23-38. Wills firmly establishes this point.

Greek court tales depict the great king as seemingly without any earthly equal in terms of their political power. In some instances, the great king represents the cultural perspective of the text's own community (such as the Pharaohs in the Egyptian literature), while in other cases the great king is foreign and potentially dangerous (as in the Jewish tales). The question, thus, arises how particular people groups might respond to social situations where they have been subjected to a foreign ruler. As I demonstrate below, the Greek Ionian court tales provide one example of this sort of situation and focus upon the exploits of the last Ionian king, Croesus, who features in some tales as a ruler and, in others, as a courtier serving the king of Persia. Similarly, the Jewish court tales respond to historical situations of foreign rule, albeit in their own unique ways, emphasizing the God of Israel's power over the foreign king, who is ultimately forced either to acknowledge the sovereignty of the God of Israel or to be swiftly deposed. I explore this feature in the following two chapters.

In what follows below, I survey the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean tales in five sections: 1) I begin with an examination of the Egyptian court tales. 2) I then turn to the Persian and Indian court tales. 3) In the third section I discuss the Greek and Roman tales. 4) In the fourth section, I examine the Mesopotamian court tales, with a special focus upon the *Story and Words of Aḥiqar*. 5) I conclude by considering some precedents for the Jewish tales found in earlier Hebrew literature. Throughout this survey, I provide some analysis regarding the function of the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales and consider how they relate to the early Jewish tales.

2.2. Egyptian Court Tales

While scholars have often given special attention to the literary relationship between the Mesopotamian court tale, *Aḥiqar*, and the Jewish court tales, some consideration should also be given to the broader ancient court tale milieu. I begin here with an examination of the Egyptian court tales. While there has been some limited consideration of the relationship between the Egyptian and Jewish court tales in the past, Tawny Holm recently drew much greater attention to the plethora and diversity of the ancient Egyptian court tale tradition, and their relationship with the Book of Daniel.[45]

The Egyptian court tales were a popular form of literature, as evidenced by a broad proliferation of literary remains dating from the time of the Assyrian invasion of Egypt in the seventh century BCE and continuing into the Hellenistic era.[46] Several of the Egyptian court tales can be classified as court contests and/or as court conflicts—themes also adopted within Daniel 1-6.[47] Moreover, the Egyptian court tales, much like several of the Jewish tales (such as Daniel), often circulated within larger narrative collections, which included diverse types of literary material.[48] In general, both the Egyptian and Jewish court tale corpora focus upon the miraculous feats of courtiers, who exhibit their wisdom within royal courts before powerful rulers. In particular, the heroes of the Egyptian tales are often court

[45] See Tawny Holm, "The Fiery Furnace in the Book of Daniel and the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 128.1 (2008): 193-224; and Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*.
[46] See Kim Ryholt, "The Assyrian Invasion of Egypt," in *Assyria and Beyond: Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen*, ed. J. G. Derckson (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2004), 483-510, especially 483. Kim Ryholt notes that several of the early Egyptian court tales were greatly influenced and shaped by the Assyrian invasion of Egypt.
[47] Tawny Holm, "Daniel 1-6: A Biblical Story-Collection," in *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian and Jewish Narrative*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick and Chris Shea (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature), 149-166.
[48] Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 92-182.

magician-priests (Egyptian *ẖry-tp/tb*).[49] The cognate Aramaic and Hebrew term (חרטם) is also employed within several of the Jewish court tales, but, within the Jewish context, these magician-priests do not feature as heroes, but instead as rivals to the Hebrew courtiers.[50] Some examples of Egyptian court tales featuring the deeds of magicians, include the *Story of Petese Son of Petetum and Seventy Other Good and Bad Stories*; the stories about the priest and vizier, Imhotep, including an account in which he duels an Assyrian sorceress; the story of the imprisoned magician Ḥenenu-son-of-Ḥor; *Djedseshep, Nanoufesakhme, and Ḥarmakhroou*; a series of texts and traditions about Pharaoh Nectanebo; *Boy at Court Who Is Asked about the King's Health*; the *Prophecies of Neferti*; the story of *Naneferkasokar and the Babylonians*; and the story of the wrongfully accused Tinouphis.[51]

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[49] See Collins, *Daniel*, 39; Stricker, "Trois études de phonétique et de morphologie copte," *AcOr* 15 (1937): 1-20; and Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 104-114. Collins translates this term as "dream interpreter". Following B. H. Stricker, Holm argues that the term was derived from the Egyptian designation for "chief lector priest".

[50] For a discussion of the Egyptian *ẖr*(*y*)-*tb* and *ẖr*(*y*)-*tp* and its adoption into later Hebrew and Aramaic, particularly within Daniel, Genesis, and Exodus, see Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 104-114. B. H. Stricker, however, was the first to suggest an etymological connection between the Hebrew and Aramaic *חרטם* and the Egyptian *ẖr*(*y*)-*tb* and *ẖr*(*y*)-*tp*. See B. H. Stricker, "Trois études de phonétique et de morphologie copte," 1-20.

[51] The *Story of Petese* dates between 400 BCE and 100 CE. An edition of the first three manuscripts of the *Story of Petese* can be found in Kim Ryholt, *The Story of Petese Son of Petetum and Seventy Other Good and Bad Stories (P. Petese)*, CNIP 23 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1999). Imhotep features as the protagonist within the story of *Djoser and Imhotep* (or the *Life of Imhotep*) and *Vengeance of Isis* (preserved on the recto of P. Dem. Saqqāra 2), dating to the fourth or third centuries BCE. On *Djoser and Imhotep*, see J. W. B. Barns, "Egypt and the Greek Romance," in *Akten des VIII. internationalen Kongresses für Papyrologie, Wien 1995*, MPONPER 2/5, ed. H. Gerstinger (Vienna: Rohrer, 1956), 33; Dietrich Wildung, *Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige im Bewusstsein ihrer Nachwelt: I, Posthume Quellen über die Könige der ersten vier Dynastien*, MÄS 17 (Berlin: Hesslin, 1969), 91-93; Dietrich Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep: Gottwerdung im alten Ägypten*, MÄS 36 (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1977), 130-31; Kim Ryholt, "The Life of Imhotep (P. Carlsberg 85)," in *Actes du IXe Congrès International des Études Démotiques, Paris, 31 août-3 septembre 2005*, ed. G. Widmer and D. Devauchelle, Bibliothèque d'étude 147 (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2009), 305-315; and Kim Ryholt, "Djoser og Imhotep. Fra samlingen af Carlsberg Papyri," *Papyrus* 20.1 (2000): 33-35. For a translation of *Vegeance of Isis*, see Edda Bresciani, *Letteratura e poesia dell'antico Egitto: Cultura e società attraverso i testi*, Nuova edizione, ET Biblioteca 36 (Turin: Einaudi, 2007), 951-54. On the text of Ḥi-Ḥor, which is preserved on Spiegelberg's jar-text A.1 (Jar Berlin 12345, lines 1-9), dated to the first or second century BCE, see Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Demotische Texte auf Krügen*, Demotische Studien 5 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912), 8, 14-15, 18. Translations of the story

can be found in Robert Kriech Ritner, "The Magician Hihor (Jug Berlin 12845)," in *LAE*, 3rd ed., ed. William K. Simpson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 492-93; Emma Brunner-Traut, *Altägyptischen Märchen*, Die Marchen der Weltliteratur (Düsseldorf: Diedrichs, 1965), 215-216, and 300-301; G. Roeder, *Altägyptischen Erzählungen und Märchen* (Jena: Diederichs, 1927), 312-313; Marilina Betrò, "La storia del mago Hi-Hor: variazioni Egiziane sul tema de Ahiqar," in *Donum Natalicium: Studi presentati a Claudio Saporetti in occasione del suo 60. Compleanno*, ed. P. Negri Scafa et al. (Rome: Borgia, 2000), 23-35. On the text of Ḥenenu-son-of-Hor, which is preserved on the recto of P. Heidelberg 736 and dates to the second or third century BCE, see Wilhelm Spiegelberg, "Der demotische Papyrus Heidelberg 736," *ZÄS* 53 (1917): 30-35.

For an edition of *Djedseshep, Nanoufesakhme, and Ḥarmakhrou (P. Demotic Saqqāra 1)*, preserved on P. Demotic Saqqāra 1, see H. S. Smith and W. J. Tait. *Saqqâra Demotic Papyri 1* (Texts from Excavations 7, Excavations at North Saqqâra, Documentary Series 5; London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1983), 1-69.

Nectanebo was remembered as the last native king of Egypt and as a magician. Texts associated with Nectanebo include the first episodes of the Greek *Alexander Romance* (book 1, 1-14) by Pseudo-Callisthenes, which may have been composed in Egypt in the third or second century BCE; a dream attributed to Nectanebo; and The *Demotic Chronicle*. On the *Alexander Romance*, book 1, 1-14, see Theodor Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans*, Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch-Historische Classe 38.5 (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1890); Richard Stoneman, *The Greek Alexander Romance* (London: Penguin, 1991); Richard Stoneman, "The Alexander Romance: From History to Fiction," in *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context*, ed. J. R. Morgan and R. Stoneman (London: Routledge, 1994), 117-129; Richard Jasnow, "The Greek Alexander Romance and Demotic Egyptian Literature," *JNES* 56 (1997): 95-103; and Richard Stoneman, *Alexander the Great: A Life in Legend* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). For a translation of the Greek version of Nectanebo's Dream, see Jörg-Dieter Gauger, "Der 'Traum des Nektanebos': Die griechische Fassung," in *Apokalyptik und Ägypten: Eine kritische Analyse der relevanten Texte aus dem griechisch-römischen Ägypten*, ed. A. Blasius and B. U. Schipper, OLA 107 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 189-219; Friedhelm Hoffmann, and Joachim Friedrich Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur*, Einführungen und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie 4 (Berlin: LIT, 2007), 162-165; and Ludwig Koenen, "The Dream of Nektanebos," *BASP* 22 (1985): 171-194. On the *Demotic Chronicle*, see Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Die sogenannte Demotische Chronik des Pap. 215 der Bibliothèque Nationale zu Paris nebst den auf der Rückseite des Papyrus stehenden Texten*, Demotische Studien 7 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1914). For a translation of the Demotic version of Nectanebo's Dream, see Kim Ryholt, "A Demotic Version of Nectanebo's Dream (P. Carlsberg 562)," *ZPE* 122 (1998): 197-200.

The *Boy at Court Who is Asked about the King's Health* is preserved in two fragments and may date to the second century CE. For the published text, see Friedhelm Hoffmann, "Zwei neue demotische Erzählungen (P. Wien D 62)," in *Res severa verum gaudium: Fetschrift für Karl-Theodor Zauzich zum 65. Geburtstag am 8. Juni 2004*, ed. F. Hoffmann and H. J. Thissen, Studia Demotica 6 (Leuven: Peters, 2004), 249-59, pls. 18-19.

For the *Prophecies of Neferti*, see Wolfgang Helck, *Die Prophezeiung des Nfr.tj*, 2nd ed., Kleine Ägyptische Texte 2, (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1992). For a translation, see Vincent A. Tobin, "The Prophecies of Neferty," in *LAE*, 3rd ed., ed. William K. Simpson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 214-220; Miriam Lictheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, vol. 1, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 139-145.

A fragment of the Tebtunis manuscript of *Naneferkasokar and the Babylonians* has been published in Wilhelm Spiegelberg, "Aus der Geschichte vom Zauberer Ne-Nefer-Ke-Sokar: Demotischer Papyrus Berlin 13640," in *Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith*, ed. S. R. K. Glanville and Nora McDonald Griffith, (London: Egypt Exploration Society, H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1932), 171-180. The story of *Naneferkasokar and the Babylonians* has also been preserved on the Edfu ostracon, a copy of which can be found in Michel Chauveau, "Montouhotep et les Babylonians," *BIFAO* 91 (1991): 147-153. Additional unpublished fragments are mentioned in K.-T. Zauzich, "Einleitung," in *Demotic Texts from the Collection*, ed. Paul John Frandsen, Caarlsberg Papyri 1/The Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies 15 (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 1991), 1-11; and Chauveau, "Montouhotep et les Babylonians," 147-153.

The literary setting of the Egyptian tales is not typically a foreign court, but, instead, is usually the Egyptian royal court.[52] Thus, the rulers that feature within the Egyptian tales are Pharaohs, and are portrayed much more favorably than the foreign rulers that feature within many other court tales. Another unique aspect of some of the Egyptian tales is that they feature a second foreign Nubian king, along with their courtiers. In these tales, the Nubian king and their court serve as rivals to the Egyptian court, and are portrayed pejoratively.[53] Hence, the Egyptian tales evidence an 'ethnic perspective', that is a heightened awareness of the hero's distinctive ethnic identity as compared with their rivals.[54] Several of the Egyptian court tales extend beyond the royal court and involve elaborate journeys to distant regions of Egypt, such as Hardedef's search for the famous courtier, Dedi, in the *Tales of Cheops' Court*. The Egyptian tales, thus, help to paint a broader canvas of the ancient Near Eastern court tale traditions. Below, I draw attention to three Egyptian court tales that employ the court conflict and court contest themes, themes that are also taken up within the Jewish court tales and hence illustrate the Jewish tales' employment of established court tale motifs: The *Tales from King Cheops' Court*, the *Stories of Setne Khamwas*, and the *Instruction of Ankhsheshonq*.

The story of Tinouphis is preserved in Papyri Turner 8. For a translation, see M. W. Haslam, "Narrative about Tinouphis in Prosimetrum," in *Papyri: Greek & Egyptian: Edited by Various Hands in Honour of Eric Gardner Turner on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday (P. Turner)*, Graeco-Roman Memoirs 68 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1981), 35-45.

[52] While *Papyrus Amherst 63*, cols. 17-23 contains an Egyptian Aramaic court tale composed in Demotic script dating to the fourth century BCE that includes an exilic literary setting, in Mesopotamia (Babylon and Nineveh), the work lacks many of the themes associated with broader ancient Near Eastern court tale traditions. The tale features Assurbanipal and his half-brother, Shamash-shum-ukin. Tawny Holm is working on a critical edition of the text with a translation. An edition has been published by Karel van der Toorn. See Karel van der Toorn, *Papyrus Amherst 63* AOAT 448 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2018).

[53] In *Setne II*, for instance, ethnic tensions between the Egyptians and the Nubians are a focus, as evidenced, for example, in the duels between the Egyptian and Nubian sorcerers.

[54] On the phrase "ethnic perspective", See, Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 68.

2.2.1. Tales from King Cheops' Court

The *Tales from King Cheops' Court* is preserved within Papyrus Westcar.[55] The text probably dates to the Hyksos period (ca. 1640-1550 BCE), but may have been composed earlier during the 12th Dynasty (ca. 1991-1783 BCE).[56] The narrative framework of the story is set within "the 4th Dynasty of the Egyptian Old Kingdom (ca. 2575-2467 BCE) in the reign of Khufu (that is, Cheops, builder of the great pyramid at Giza, ca. 2551-2528 BCE)."[57]

The account features Cheops' sons—Khaefre, Bauefre, and Hardedef—each of whom recounts a tale about the feats of a different court magician.[58] The first tale recounts the story of the chief magician, Webaoner, who forms a crocodile out of wax and brings it to life. The second tale recounts the story of the magician and scribe, Djadjaemonkh, who, through magic, recovers the king's charm from the waters of a lake. The third tale concerns a commoner, Dedi, who has the ability to reattach severed heads, tame lions, and knows the number of the god Thoth's enclosures. Cheops' son, Hardedef, then goes on a journey

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[55] For a translation, see Lictheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Volume* I.215-222; and William Kelly Simpson, "King Cheops and the Magicians," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies and Poetry*, ed. William Kelly Simpson, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 13-24.
[56] Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 114.
[57] Holm, *Courtiers and Kings*, 114.
[58] Although, the names of only three sons are extant, there seems to have been more. King Khufu was known to have several sons. Evidence of additional sons can be found in the first tale of the text. Given the logical structure of the tale with one son after another providing an account, it is fairly certain that given the fragmentary nature of the text, there would have been space for another son to give his account. See Adolf Erman, *Literature of the Ancient Egyptians: Poems, Narratives, and Manuals of Instruction from the Third and Second Millenia B.C.*, trans. Aylward M. Methuen (London: Methuen, 1927), 36; Brunner-Traut, *Altägyptische Märchen*, 255; and Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 114-115.

to find Dedi, and brings him back to King Cheops. Dedi then further evidences his skill by prophesying the birth of three children, who will rule over Egypt.

The *Tale of King Cheops' Court* evidences an acute interest in the interior workings of the Egyptian royal court. As Holm notes, the account can be considered to be a "court contest", with each of Cheops' sons attempting to demonstrate which magician is the greatest.[59] This theme of demonstrating one's superior skill within the royal court is well-known among the court tales more broadly, including the Jewish court tales, such as Daniel 2, 4, and 5. The source of the Hebrew courtiers' skill, however, does not derive from their own magic, but, rather, from wisdom and God. A special point of interest is that the court tales of the *Tale of King Cheops' Court* are followed by the prophecy of the birth of three kingly brothers, which may hint at a proclivity to pairing court tale and visionary material together, as is common among the Jewish court tales (cf. Daniel 7-12, *4QPseudo-Daniel*$^{a\text{-}b}$ [4Q243-244], *4QPseudo-Daniel*^{c} [4Q245], *4QFour Kingdoms*$^{a\text{-}b}$ [4Q552-553], and the Greek Additions to Esther).

2.2.2. The Stories of Setne Khamwas

The historical Khamwas was the fourth son of Ramesses II (ca. 1290-1224) and was known as the *setem*-priest of Ptah at Memphis.[60] Later literary traditions about Khamwas depict him as a sage and magician, who was obsessed with ancient writings. A diverse wealth of stories of Khamwas circulated from the beginning of the third century BCE and

[59] See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 133. Holm considers the work to be a court contest.
[60] For a discussion of the historical Khamwas, see Farouk Gomaà, *Chaemwese: Sohn Ramses' II. Und Hoherpriester von Memphis*, Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 27 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1973).

into the early centuries CE.[61] Such texts include: a story about the birth of Khamwas' son, Si-Osire, on a terracotta shard; some unpublished texts from Tebtunis; P. Cairo 30692; P. Cairo 30758; a fragment in Marburg (pMarburg Inv. 38); and the P. Carlsberg 207 papyrus.[62]

Of special interest for the development of the court tales are the Demotic tales associated with Khamwas, referred to as *Setne Khamwas I* and *II.*[63] *Setne I* is preserved in

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[61] Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 139.

[62] For the first or second century CE account of Si-Osire, see Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Demotische Texte auf Krügen*, 18-19, 51-52 (jar-text B, 1-9); and Robert K. Ritner, "The Childhood of Si-Osire (Jug Strassburg)," in *LAE*, eds. William Kelly Simpson, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 490-91.
On the texts from Tebtunis, see Mark DePauw, *A Companion to Demotic Studies*, Papyrologica bruxellensia 28 (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1997), 88; and K.-T. Zauzich, "Einleitung," 1-11.
Both P. Cairo 30692 and P. Cairo 30758 can be dated to the Ptolemaic era. For the text and translation of P. Cairo 30692, see Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Die Demotische Denkmäler II*, 112-15. Also, see K.-T. Zauzich, "Die schlimme Geschichte von dem Mann der Gottesmutter, der ein Gespenst war," *Enchoria* 6 (1976): 79-82. Zauzich clarifies some portions of P. Cairo 30692.
For the text and translation of P. Cairo 30758, see Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Die Demotische Denkmäler II: Die Demotischen Papyrus* (Strassburg: M. Dumont Schauberg, 1908), 145-48.
On pMarburg Inv. 38, see Joachim Friedrich Quack, "Ein Setne-Fragment in Marburg (pMarburg Inv. 38)," *Enchoria* 30 (2006/7): 71-74.
On P. Carlsberg 207, see Joachim Friedrich Quack and Kim Ryholt, "Notes on the Setne Story P. Carlsberg 207," in *A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies*, eds. P. J. Frandsen and K. Ryholt, The Carlsberg Papyri 3/CNIANES 22 (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2000), 141-163. For an earlier publication of the text, see W. John Tait, "P. Carlsberg 207: Two Columns of a Setna-Text," in *Demotic Texts from the Collection*, eds. P. J. Frandsen, The Carlsberg Papyri 1/CNIANES 15 (Copenhagen: The Carsten Niebuhr Institute of Ancient Near Eastern Studies, University of Copenhagen, 1991), 19-46.
Kim Ryholt argues that a story of Khamwas is embedded within the *Stories of Petese*. See Kim Ryholt, *The Story of Petese Son of Petetum*, 20.
Holm argues that *Merib, the High Steward, and the Captive Pharaoh* and *Merire and Sisobek* narratives may be related to the Khamwas traditions. On *Merire and Sisobek*, see Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 150-7. The text of the tale of the magician, Merire, which takes place during the (fictional) reign of Pharaoh Sisobek in the New Kingdom is preserved on the recto of Papyrus Vandier, and dates to the late sixth century BCE. Of particular interest within this tale is that Pharaoh Sisobek falls ill within the tale and summons his magicians to help him. Ultimately, only the courtier Merire can help Sisobek, by descending into the Netherworld and petitioning to prolong Sisobek's life. Later the other magicians are punished. For a translation, see G. Posener, *Le Papyrus Vandier* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1985); Hans-Werner Fischer-Elfert, "Der Pharao, die Magier und der General: Die Erzählung des Papyrus Vandier," *BO* 44 (1987): 15-16; Frank Kammerzell, "Mi'Jare' in der Unterwelt (Papyrus Vandier)," in *TUAT*.3 of *TUAT*, ed. Otto Kaiser (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995), 973-990; and Friedhelm and Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur*, 153-160.

[63] Translations of *Setne Khamwas I* and *II* can be found in Francis Llewellyn Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis: The Dethon of Herodotus and the Demotic Tales of Khamuas*, vol. 1 of *Stories of the*

the Cairo Museum Papyrus No. 30646, and *Setne II* is preserved on the *verso* of the British Museum Papyrus No. 30646. Both manuscripts are missing portions from the beginning of the tales, though a variant of the beginning of *Setne I* has been preserved in Cairo Papyrus No. 30692. The *Setne I* papyrus dates to the third century BCE, while the *Setne II* papyrus dates to the first century CE.[64] While Setne was well-established as a famous Egyptian courtier and featured within court tales in the literature associated with his namesake, he also featured in other types of literature. In this way, Setne fulfills a similar role in Egyptian literature to Daniel in the Jewish literature, who features within court tales and apocalyptic literature.

2.2.2.1. Setne I

Setne I is a collection of two tales, with one embedded in the narrative framework of the other. Both tales focus upon Setne's search for the Book of Thoth. While not literarily situated within the royal court, *Setne I* features a protracted competition between two Egyptian magician courtiers, a common theme within the *Setne* court tales. The focus within the framing tale is Setne's unhealthy desire to recover the Book of Thoth, which has been hidden away within the tomb of an ancient magician prince, Naneferkaptaḥ.[65] Setne

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High Priests of Memphis: The Dethon of Herodotus and the Demotic Tales of Khamuas (Oxford: Clarendon, 1900). For introductions and translations, see Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature 3,* 125-51; Brunner-Traut, *Altägyptische Märchen*, 171-214; Edda Bresciani, *Letteratura e poesia dell'antico Egitto: Cultura e società attraverso i testi*, Nuova edizione, (ET Biblioteca 36; Turin: Einaudi, 2007), 615-26; Hoffmann and Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur*, 118-152; and R. K. Ritner, "The Romance of Setna Khaemuas and the Mummies (Setna II)" in *LAE*, 453-469 AND 470-489. For another textual edition and commentary, see, Steve Vinson, *The Craft of a Good Scribe: History, Narrative and Meaning in the First Tale of Setne Khaemwas*, HES 3 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018).

[64] Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 138.

[65] For a discussion about the significance of the names within the text, see Steve Vinson, "The Names 'Naneferkaptaḥ,' 'Ihweret,' and 'Tabubue' in the 'First Tale of Setne Khamwas," *JNES* 68 (2009), 283-304.

breaks into the tomb, and encounters the spirit of Ahwere, Naneferkaptaḥ's wife. Ahwere warns Setne against stealing the Book of Thoth, recounting Naneferkaptaḥ's pursuit of the book and subsequent downfall.[66]

The text then transitions to the story of Nanerferkaptah, which begins with a description of the relationship between Naneferkaptaḥ and Ahwere, who were the children of a previous Pharaoh. Ahwere later bears a son, Merib.[67] Naneferkaptaḥ discovers that the book is in the water of Coptos, protected by serpents, scorpions, and reptiles, as well as an eternal snake.[68] Naneferkaptaḥ rows a boat into the middle of the water. He subdues the serpents, scorpions, and reptiles, and kills the eternal snake. The prince retrieves the book, and recites the spells contained therein. The first spell allows one to understand what the birds, fish, and beasts are saying.[69] The second spell allows one to see the god Pre, his Ennead, the Moon, and the stars. Naneferkaptaḥ returns to Coptos, but the god, Thoth, discovers that Naneferkaptaḥ has stolen his book, and seeks revenge. Thus, on the way home, Naneferkaptaḥ's son and wife drown. Naneferkaptaḥ uses magic to retrieve their bodies, and then, ties the book around his body and drowns himself.

[66] Ahwere's first-person account of Naneferkeptah's quest for the Book of Thoth comports well with other first-person accounts found within the court tales, such as that of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 and that of Nabonidus within the *Prayer of Nabonidus*.
[67] Notably, Merib also features in other Egyptian court tales.
[68] See Robert Kriech Ritner, "A Uterine Amulet in the Oriental Institute Collection," *JNES* 43.3 (1984): 219-221. The depiction of the eternal snake corresponds to images found on protective stelae.
[69] An interest in communing with animals is also found in Daniel 4, whereby Nebuchadnezzar is driven into the wild by the LORD due to his hubris. Both accounts evidence an interest in humanity's relationship with nature, but from contrasting perspectives. In *Setne I*, the courtier gains a sort of mastery over the animals through his understanding of their speech. By contrast, King Nebuchadnezzar's hubris in Daniel 4 results in his being driven mad and becoming bestial.

At this point, the story returns to the broader frame narrative. Despite Ahwere's warnings, Setne demands that he be given the book.[70] The spirit of Naneferkaptaḥ challenges Setne to a game for the possession of the book.[71] Though Setne is losing, at the last moment, his foster-brother, Inaros, brings a set of magical amulets to Setne, who is able to free himself and steal the book. Naneferkaptaḥ vows to retrieve the book again.[72] One day after reading the book, while Setne is strolling through the forecourt of the temple of Ptah, he is seduced by a beautiful woman, Tabubu. Setne travels to meet Tabubu, and she convinces him to sign over a deed for all of his belongings and to have his own children killed.[73] Setne and Tabubu lay down together, and Setne suddenly awakens to find Tabubu gone and the Pharaoh nearby. Setne discovers that his children are still alive in Memphis and agrees to return the book to the tomb of Naneferkaptaḥ and bring the bodies of Naneferkaptaḥ's wife and son to his tomb.

The supernatural skill of courtiers (Setne and Naneferkaptaḥ) is evidently a major interest within *Setne I*, as it is among the Jewish tales. The text can also be broadly

[70] See Richard Jasnow, "“And Pharaoh Laughed…”, Reflections of Humor in Sente 1 Late Period Egyptian Literature," *Enchoria* 27: 62-81. Jasnow maintains that neither Setne, nor Naneferkaptaḥ truly feature as wise men since, against better judgment, they still seek the Book of Thoth, which has devastating consequences. Hence, *Setne I* may be poking fun at the traditional image of the wise courtier from the court tales.

[71] See Peter A. Piccione, "The Gaming Episode in the *Tale of Setne Khamwas* as Religious Metaphor," in *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer*, ed. David P. Silverman, SAOC 55 (Chicago: The Oriental Institution of the University of Chicago, 1994), 197-204.

[72] See Jose M. Serrano Delgado, "Rhampsinitus, Setne Khamwas and the Descent to the Netherworld: Some Remarks on Herodotus II, 122, 1," *JANE* 11.1 (2011): 94-108. Jose M. Serrano Delgado sees a common folkloric background between this episode in *Setne I* and the Greek tale about Pharaoh Rhampsinitus, preserved within Herodotus II. Another example of confluence between the Egyptian Setne and Greek literary traditions is discussed in Ian Rutherford, "Kalasiris and Setne Khamwas: A Greek Novel and Some Egyptian Models," *ZPE* 117 (1997): 203-209.

[73] On Tabubu, see Piyong Liu, "“Evil Woman” in the Ancient Egyptian Literature," *TPLS* 4.1 (2014): 187-188. Analyzing the role of the "evil woman" within ancient Egyptian literature, Piyong Liu interprets Tabubu to represent the temptation of women's beauty for men, which not even Khamwas is able to resist.

considered to be a contest between courtiers (Setne and Naneferkaptaḥ).[74] A common challenge faces the two courtiers—both seek to retrieve the Book of Thoth, and, in order to obtain it, they evidence their skill by overcoming various puzzles. For instance, Naneferkaptaḥ defeats the eternal serpent, and Setne defeats the spirit of Naneferkaptaḥ in a game. *Setne I* features an established Egyptian court tale hero, Setne, employs court tale themes, but is not set within a royal court. *Setne I* thus serves to demonstrate a degree of adaptability and malleability of the court themes to other literary contexts.

2.2.2.2. Setne II

Setne II is a collection of at least three discrete stories—an account of the birth of Setne's son, Si-Osire; Setne's visit to the underworld; and Si-Osire's duel with a Nubian magician. Despite the fact that these tales can be read as relatively self-contained stories (similar to the collection of tales in Daniel 2-6), they are also all connected by their shared focus upon Setne's skillful son, Si-Osire, known also from other Demotic and Aramaic tales.[75]

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[74] See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 196. Holm suggests that *Setne I* and *II* can be understood as a conflict and a contest, but *Setne I* scarcely fits Humphrey's schema of court contest or court conflict in the strict sense, though one can broadly classify the interactions between the two princes, Setne and Naneferkaptaḥ, as a conflict. Furthermore, Setne does not behave in a manner typically associated with the courtiers of the tales; rather than giving advice or assistance to the ruler, the Pharaoh advises him. All this, however, can be understood to be the author's way of adapting the court tale themes to a particular purpose—here to demonstrate the dangers of seeking the Book of Thoth.

[75] For instance, the Spiegelberg jar-texts. Jar-text B.1 discusses the birth and childhood of the son of Setne and his wife, Mehusekhe. Translations of this text can be found in Spiegelberg, *Demotische Texte,* 18-19, and 51-52; and Robert Kriech Ritner, "The Childhood of Si-Osire (Jug Strassburg)," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies and Poetry*, ed. William Kelly Simpson, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 490-491.

The third episode, in particular, is a court conflict, a pattern commonly employed among the Jewish court tales. It also exhibits an ethnic perspective. A Nubian chieftain arrives at the court of the Pharaoh in Egypt and challenges him to find someone who can read the document, which he bears, without breaking its seal. This interest in miraculous reading is found in other court tales, such as Daniel 5, where Daniel is found to be the only courtier able to read and interpret the writing on the wall. In *Setne II*, the Pharaoh and his nobles are unable to read the text, and send for Setne Khamwas, who arrives and asks for ten days' time to solve the issue. While Setne bewails the situation, his son, Si-Osire informs him that he can read the document. Setne and Si-Osire attend the Pharaoh's banquet, and Si-Osire recites the contents of the document in the presence of the Nubian chieftain.

The contents of the document recount another court contest about the magician, Horus-son-of-Paneshe, and at this point the narrative shifts focus to him.[76] The account takes place 1,500 years earlier, during the time of Pharaoh Menkh-Pre-Sia-mun. During this time, a Nubian ruler hires a Nubian magician, Horus-son-of-the-Nubian-woman, to use his magic to abduct the Egyptian Pharaoh, have him magically beaten at night, and then, returned to Egypt. The Pharaoh then is depicted as an innocent victim of the Nubians in

[76] In keeping with Robert Kriech Ritner, Holm believes that the word 'Paneshe' is a contracted form of "the Wolf", which would make Horus-son-of-Paneshe Horus-son-of-the-Wolf, thus linking this figure to other tales preserved in Demotic and Aramaic. See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 141; and Robert Kriech Ritner, "The Adventures of Setna and Si-Osire (Setna II)," in *LAE*, ed. William Kelly Simpson, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 470-489. The Egyptian magician courtier, Horus-son-of-the-Wolf features within the two fragments of papyrus *AP* 71, wherein he utters a series of catastrophes against a king. The text has been published in Bezalel Porten and Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt: Newly Copied, Edited and Translated into Hebrew and English,* vol. 3 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1993), 54-57.

this tale, which contrasts markedly from other tales that typically portray the foreign king as hostile. The Pharaoh then summons the Egyptian magician, Horus-son-of-Paneshe, to his court to discover a way to bring an end to his nightly beatings. After having a dream vision of Thoth, Horus-son-of-Paneshe discovers how to protect the king by using a book of Thoth called "the book of magic". He then brings four wax figures to life and has the ruler of Nubia brought to Egypt to inflict five hundred wounds upon him nightly. In retaliation, Horus-son-of-the-Nubian-woman traverses to Egypt to confront Horus-son-of-Paneshe. The Nubian magician casts a series of spells, but each of them are defeated by Horus-son-of-Paneshe.[77] Another character, the Nubian woman then attempts to save her son, the Nubian magician, but is also defeated by Horus-son-of-Paneshe. The Nubian woman pleads for the lives of herself and her son, and Horus-son-of-Paneshe agrees, sending them away upon a sky-boat.

The text then returns to the narrative about Si-Osire's reading of the sealed document, and Si-Osire reveals the document's bearer to be Horus-son-of-the-Nubian-woman, who has returned, and Si-Osire is revealed to be Horus-son-of-Paneshe reincarnated. Si-Osire defeats Horus-son-of-the-Nubian-woman, vanishes, and is praised by Pharaoh and his father, Setne.[78]

[77] See Hans-Peter Müller, "חַרְטֹם *ḥarṭōm*," in *TDOT*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, vol. 5 of *TDOT*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974-2003), 177-79. Hans-Peter Müller notes that elements of the contest in *Setne II* bear similarities to several of the Moses' plague contents in Exodus, which the Egyptians sorcerers attempt to mimic. For instance, the Nubian sorcerer creates a great fire, and Horus-son-of-Paneshe puts it out with rain. The Nubian sorcerer casts a mist so that none can see, but Horus-son-of-Paneshe causes it to vanish.

[78] For a discussion of contests between magicians within the royal court, see N. Grimal, "Le roi et la sorcière," in *Hommages à Jean Leclant* vol. 4, ed. C. Berger et al., Bibliothèque d'Étude 106/4 (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1994), 97-108.

2.2.3. The Instruction of Ankhsheshonq

The Instruction of Ankhsheshonq is noteworthy among the Egyptian court tales since it exhibits the theme of the wrongfully accused and later vindicated courtier, a theme commonly employed among the Jewish court tales (such as Daniel 3 and 6).[79] The text is preserved within the P. British Museum 10508 manuscript and consists of twenty-eight columns.[80] Miriam Lichtheim notes that the handwriting of the manuscript dates to the late Ptolemaic era and that the composition may be earlier.[81] The text may date to the period following the Persian conquest of Egypt.[82] A later copy of the tale is preserved within the Tebtunis manuscript, which dates to the late second century CE and contains several significant differences from the P. British Museum manuscript.[83]

[79] See John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel*, HMS 16 (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977), 33; Jürgen C. H. Lebram, Das *Buch Daniel* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1984), 10; Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 43. John Collins and Jürgen-Christian Lebram discuss the significance of this text for the study of Daniel. Wills also considers the relevance of the work for the study of Esther, noting that *Anksheshonq* features a character who overhears a conspiracy against the Pharaoh, akin to the way that Mordecai overhears a plot to kill Ahasuerus.
[80] The text was first published in S. R. K. Glanville, *Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum: Volume II, The Instructions of ʿOnchsheshonqy (British Museum Papyrus 10508)* (London: British Museum, 1955). For an overview of the manuscript, see Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3.159-60. For an introduction to the text, see Robert K. Ritner, "The Instruction of ºOnchsheshonqy (P. British Museum 10508)," in The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies and Poetry, ed. William Kelly Simpson, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 497–499. For a translation of the text, see Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3.159-88; Miriam Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context: A Study of Demotic Instructions*, OBO 52 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), 13-92; and Hoffmann and Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur*, 273-299.
[81] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3.159-161.
[82] Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 43.
[83] For an overview of the differences between P. British Museum 10508 and the Tebtunis manuscript, which may not have included the collection of provers found in P. British Museum 10508, see Kim Ryholt, "A New Version of the Introduction to the Teachings of 'Onch-Sheshonqy," in *A Miscellany of Demotic Texts and Studies*, eds. P. J. Frandsen and K. Ryholt (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2000), 134-136. Also, see Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 162-163.

Ankhsheshonq is an early Egyptian court conflict, a form also regularly employed by the early Jewish court tales, including Daniel 3 and 6, *4QTales in the Persian Court* (4Q550), and Tobit. The tale is set during the twenty-sixth dynasty (i.e., the Saite Period, 672-525 BCE).[84] The introduction of the text is not preserved within P. British Museum 10508; however, an introduction is preserved in the Tebtunis manuscript, which begins with an infancy narrative about Ankhsheshonq and Harsiese, who are the sons of two priests of Re.[85] They attend school, and their skill surpasses that of other children. Ankhsheshonq eventually becomes a priest of Re, and Harsiese becomes assistant to the chief physician. The narrative then continues in P. British Museum 10508 and describes Harsiese's accession to the rank of chief physician, who receives all the possessions of his predecessor. Harsiese's prestige is emphasized with a description of how the Pharaoh would consult him before making any decision.

The text then shifts to the conflict pattern, and focuses on the hero, Ankhsheshonq, son of Tjainufi. Ankhsheshonq visits Harsiese in Memphis, where Harsiese invites Ankhsheshonq to partake in a conspiracy to kill the Pharaoh. Ankhsheshonq denounces Harsiese's plot. A third courtier, Wahibre-makhy son of Ptahertais overhears the conversation, and relays it to the Pharaoh.[86] The Pharaoh addresses Harsiese about his treason and asks whether anyone else had conspired with him in this plot. Harsiese wrongfully implicates Ankhsheshonq. In response to this alleged court intrigue, the

[84] Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 161.
[85] Lictheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Volume*, 3.159.
[86] Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 43. Wills notes how Wahibre-makhy's overhearing of the plot to kill the Pharaoh is reminiscent of Mordecai's overhearing of a plan to kill Ahasuerus in Esther 2:21-23.

Pharaoh has Harsiese and those who conspired against the Pharaoh, burned alive upon an altar.[87] Anksheshonq is thrown into prison. Ankhsheshonq's betrayal by Harsiese is in conformity with other ancient Near Eastern tales where a courtier is betrayed by a close companion (such as Aḥiqar's betrayal by his adoptive son, Nadin, as discussed below).[88]

Anksheshonq voices his resentment for being wrongfully imprisoned, and claims that, due to his unjustified imprisonment, Pre is angered against a land. A series of proverbs follows the narrative, which are attributed to Anksheshonq's time in prison.[89] Though the tale does not end with Anksheshonq's vindication, as is common among court conflicts, the inclusion of a final hopeful proverb may hint at Anksheshonq's future release from prison.[90]

2.3. Persian and Indian Court Tales

Persia evidences a strong literary court tale tradition with many elements reminiscent of the Jewish court tales. The composition of the Persian tales is relatively late, and they seem to have had little direct influence upon the Jewish tales. Nevertheless, the

[87] See Holm, "The Fiery Furnace," 193-224. Holm notes that the practice of burning criminals alive as a form of punishment (as in Daniel 3:15 with Daniel's three friend) is rarely attested in Mesopotamian or Persian literature, whereas the motif is quite common in the Egyptian literature. Holm demonstrates that the motif of the brazier appears within four Egyptian court tales, including within *Ankhsheshonq*. Also see Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 436-448; Anthony Leahy, "Death by Fire in Ancient Egypt," *JESHO* 27 (1984): 199-206; and Kerry Muhlestein and John Gee, "An Egyptian Context for the Sacrifice of Abraham," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 20.2 (2011): 70-77.
[88] For example, Greek Esther, emphasizes Haman's status as a Macedonian: "For Haman son of Hammedatha, a Macedonian (really an alien to the Persian blood, and quite devoid of our kindliness), having become our guest," (Addition E:10, NRSV).
[89] Holm notes that the tale of *Ankhsheshonq* may have existed independently at an earlier point and that the proverbs were later added to the text. See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 163.
Tawny Holm also notes that the inclusion of proverbial material and attributing them to the lead hero is a trait found within *Aḥiqar*. See Holm, *Of Courtiers and* Kings, 163.
[90] See Holm, "The Fiery Furnace," 97, n. 83.

Persian tales appear to rely upon earlier, no longer extant, court tale traditions, and evidence another branch of a thriving ancient Near Eastern court tale tradition.[91] In so far as the Persian tales exhibit a blending of traditional court tale themes, along with their own unique concerns, the Persian tales thus serve to demonstrate the malleability of the tales to new cultural and ideological contexts, and so are worthy of some consideration here.

Most of the Persian and Indian tales are literarily situated within their own national royal courts and lack the ethnic tensions indicative of other tales that feature foreign kings. Instead, the Persian tales exhibit a tension between the hero's religious reformist tendencies and the more traditionalist views of the rival courtiers. For instance, the *Zarusht-Nama* recounts a court conflict involving Zoroaster, the reputed 7th or 6th century BCE founder of Zoroastrianism. Though the work was compiled in the medieval era, it likely preserves earlier traditions.[92] Within this account, Zoroaster is condemned before King Vishtaspa by the priests of the court, who represent the old Persian religion. Zoroaster is imprisoned, and later vindicated before the king after healing his treasured horse. The account lacks the ethnic unease typical of some other court tale traditions, and instead focuses on the religious tensions experienced by courtiers, a concern also found within the Jewish tales.

The *Shah Nameh,* the *Epic of the Persian Kings*, by the renowned Persian poet Ferdowsi, also preserves a number of tales, which take place within the Persian court.[93] While the text dates to the end of the 10th-early 11th century CE, the contents of the poem

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[91] Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 40.
[92] Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 40; and Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 63-64.
[93] For a recent translation of a large portion of the work, see Abolqasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*, trans. Dick Davis (New York: Viking, 2006).

focus on three eras of Iran: the mythical, the heroic, and the historical. The work spans from the creation of the world to the death of the last Sassanid ruler and Iran's succumbing to the Islamic conquest.[94] The latter portion contains several tales, which recount the interactions between courtiers and kings. In one conflict tale that takes place during the reign of King Qōbad, the courtier, prophet, and social reformer of Zoroastrianism, Mazdak, attempts to convince the king to distribute food during a drought. In this process, Mazdak comes into conflict with Qōbad's son.[95]

Another intriguing tale within the *Shah Nameh* takes place during the reign of King Khosrow Anushirwan (531-579 CE) and adapts the court theme of the wrongfully accused courtier, who is eventually vindicated.[96] The loyal chancellor, Buzurdjmihr is falsely accused of stealing and swallowing the king's bracelet and is put under house arrest. Later King Khosrow inquires about Buzurdjmihr's state. Buzurdjmihr responds, stating that he considers his diminished state to be superior to that of the king's. Angered by the response, King Khosrow has Buzurdjmihr thrown into a dungeon. Later the king inquires of Buzurdjmihr again and discovers that the chancellor still lives each day more happily than the king. The king then has Buzurdjmihr locked up in an iron cage, inquires again about Buzurdjmihr's status, and discovers that he is still happier than the king. Eventually, the king is filled with remorse, and has Buzurdjmihr released. The tale thus begs comparison with other court tales, involving the wrongful punishment and eventual vindication of the

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[94] On the history and development of the transmission of art along with the *Shah Nameh*, see Barbara Brend and Charles Melville, *Epic of the Persian Kings: The Art of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh* (London: Cambridge/New York: The Fitzwilliam Museum, 2010).
[95] Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King,* 41.
[96] Alexander Krappe, "Is the Story of Ahikar the Wise of Indian Origin?" *JAOS* 61(1941): 283.

courtier, such as Anksheshonq. Another episode featuring Buzurdjmihr employs the court contest theme, whereby Buzurdjmihr exhibits his supernatural skill. King Khosrow is sent a locked casket by the emperor of Rum, who challenges the king to reveal its contents without opening it. With the king unable to read the writing, Buzurdjmihr is summoned to the court, and accurately describes the contents of the casket. A similar theme of reading a text without opening it is also encountered within *Setne II* and will also be surveyed in the Jewish tales (in *4QTales in the Persian Court*) in Chapter Three. More generally, the courtier's display of miraculous skills is common among the Near Eastern court tales.

Notably, the court tales also have a long nachleben within Indian literature, with themes of court conflicts and contests dating back at least to 300 CE and possibly as early as the second century BCE, though given their late dating their analysis lies beyond the scope of this dissertation.[97]

2.4. Greek and Roman Court Tales

Several court tales have been preserved among the vast literary remains of ancient Greece. Many of these examples appear to derive from Near Eastern sources, suggesting that the genre was adopted from the east (as evidenced through several representative examples below). This demonstrates that this Near Eastern literary tradition had a broad currency, which extended beyond the Near East, so it is not surprising that the dynamic tradition would also be familiar to and taken up within Jewish contexts. The literary setting of many of these accounts is within the Near East. Ctesias, for instance, a fifth century BCE

[97] For an overview of Indian court tales, see Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 60-4.

physician from Cnidus, demonstrates an interest in matters of the Assyrian and Persian courts, in *Persika*, a text largely preserved in abridged form by later writers. The text evidences an interest in ethnic matters as they pertain to minorities within the court, particularly the role of Greeks in the Persian court. Another work, Xenophon's *Cyropaedeia* or *The Education of Cyrus*, depicts Cyrus imparting wisdom to his courtiers, a line of sapiential transmission.[98] A number of Greek tales also feature kings (rather than courtiers) who compete within contests, a shift in focus that appears within some Egyptian tales.[99] For instance, Plutarch's (ca. 46 CE-120 CE) *Convivium Septem Sapientium* features a tale of the meeting of the Seven Sages at Periandros' court in Corinth, which includes a riddle-contest between Pharaoh Amasis and the King of Ethiopia.[100]

2.4.1. The Life of Aesop

The figure, Aesop, is described to have been either a Phrygian or a Thracian, who lived during the sixth century BCE. He was born mute, granted the ability to converse by

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[98] Joseph R. Reisert has argued that while Cyrus' rule initially seems to be portrayed in a positive light, by the end of the text, his rule is demonstrated to be ignoble and does not appear to follow the advice that he gives to his courtiers. See Joseph R. Reisert, "Ambition and Corruption in Xenophon's Education of Cyrus," *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought* 26.2 (2009): 296-315.

[99] Recall, for instance, the contest between the princes in the Egyptian *Tales of King Cheops' Court*.

[100] See Ioannis M. Konstantakos, "Trial by Riddle: The Testing of the Counsellor and the Contest of Kings in the Legend of Amasis and Bias," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 55 (2004): 85-137. Konstantakos contends that the tale derives from Egyptian sources, but, in its current form, it has been edited by Greek narrators. The 'riddle-contest of kings' theme, wherein kings undertake a contest of wits instead of going to war, has literary precedents that go back to the Sumerian epic of *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* from the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE. See Samuel Noah Kramer, *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta: A Sumerian Epic Tale of Iraq and Iran*, University Museum Monograph 7 (Philadelphia: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1952); and Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once… Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 275-319. This literary theme likely influenced the Egyptian episode of *Aḥiqar*, wherein the Pharaoh of Egypt challenges the King of Assyria to a contest of wisdom, necessitating Aḥiqar to demonstrate his superior wisdom. A similar tradition is found within the Arabic story of Shimas, which circulated both independently and as part of *The Book of the Thousand Nights and Night* collection. See Ben Edwin Perry, "The Origin of the Book of Sindbad," *Fabula* 3 (1960): 1-94.

the Muses, and became the slave of a philosopher (Xanthus, though sometimes Iadmon) on the island of Samos.[101] Aesop was famous for his fables and stories, became an influential politician, yet was ultimately treacherously killed. Whether Aesop is a historical figure, however, is a matter of contention.[102] No accounts of his life survive from the sixth century BCE, but later authors (including Herodotus, Plato, Aristophanes, and Aristotle) describe him as a fabulist, and other authors (Demetrius Phalereus, Babrius, Phaedrus, and Avianus) were said to have collected fables attributed to him.[103] The famous *Fables of Aesop* have occasionally been preserved and transmitted alongside of the *Life of Aesop*, a text that was likely composed in the first century BCE, adapts court tale themes, and bears thematic similarities to the Jewish tales.[104]

The court themes exhibited within the *Life* are particularly similar to those found within *Aḥiqar* (a text that I discuss below), suggesting that the *Life* is literarily dependent

[101] See Francisco Rodríguez Adrados, "The "Life of Aesop" and the Origins of Novel in Antiquity," *QUCC, New Series* 1 (1979): 93-112. Francisco Adrados focuses on Aesop's lowly origins as a slave. By contrast, Aḥiqar's role would have been far removed from that of a slave in Greek eyes. Adrados also notes how Aesop is depicted as a *pharmakos*, a reviled and ugly annual god or daemon, who is on the verge of being killed over and over and becomes the source of income for Xanthus.
[102] Kanavou believes that the name Αἴσωπος lends some credibility to the hypothesis that Aesop could have been a historical figure due to its connection with the time and places associated with the Aesop traditions. See N. Kanavou, "Personal Names in the Vita Aesopi (Vita G or Perriana)," *ClQ, New Series* 56.1 (2006): 208-219. Robert Temple suggests that the historical Aesop was a native of Mesembria, Thrace. See Olivia Temple and Robert Temple, *Aesop: The Complete Fables* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), ix-xxiii. Richard Lobban thinks that Aesop could have been an Ethiopian slave, whereby the name *Aesop* could have been a corruption of *Aethiop* (meaning "burnt-faced people"). See Richard Andrew Lobban, "Was Aesop a Nubian Kummaji (Folkteller)?" *Northeast African Studies*, New Series 9.1 (2002): 11-31.
[103] However, no manuscripts dating back to this early period are extant. See John E. Keller and L Clark Keating, *Aesop's Fables with a Life of Aesop*, Studies in Romance Languages 34 (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 1.
[104] The earliest extant collection of Aesopic fables have been preserved in the Augustana manuscripts (dating to the fourth or fifth centuries CE). See Francisco Rodríguez Adrados, *History of the Graeco-Latin Fable*, vol. 1 of *Introduction and from the Origins to the Hellenistic Age*, trans. Leslie A. Ray, Mnemosyne: bibliotheca classica Batava, Supplementum 201 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 60-67.
On the composition of the *Life*, see See Ben Edwin Perry, *Studies in the Text History of the Life and Fables of Aesop*, Philological Monographs 7 (Haverford, Penn.: American Philological Association, 1936), 71-130.

upon *Aḥiqar*.[105] Only a few manuscripts of the *Life* have survived, including some Roman period papyrus fragments and two Byzantine recensions from the Augustana (*Life G*) and the Vindobonensis (*Life W*).[106] Both court contest and conflict literary patterns feature within the *Life*.[107] The court contest theme underlies the episodes in which Aesop demonstrates his superior wisdom over his master (the philosopher Xanthus), King Croesus of Lydia, and King Nectanebo of Egypt, as well as within several episodes where Aesop solves riddles and other problems that others are unable to solve. The episodes in which Aesop serves as an emissary between the Samians and King Croesus, and those episodes

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[105] Scholars have long noted the profound similarities between *Aḥiqar* and Aesop in the *Life*, leading scholars to presume that the latter is literarily dependent upon a no longer extant Greek version of *Aḥiqar*. See James M. Lindenberger, *The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983), 4-5. References to a Greek version of *Aḥiqar* can be found scattered throughout various sources, as in Clement of Alexandria (fifth century BCE), Diogenes Laertius (third century BCE), and Strabo (first century BCE-first century CE). By contrast, Ioannis Konstantakos believes it is conceivable that the author of *Life* could have alternatively drawn from an expanded Demotic or Aramaic version of *Aḥikar*. See Ioannis M. Konstantakos, "Characters and Names in the *Vita Aesopi* and in the *Tale of Ahiqar*," *Hyperboreus* 15 (2009/2010): 110-132, particularly 113-114.
Although the *Life* seems to have incorporated several sources, Niklas Holzberg argues that the text exhibits a unity, whereby the beginning has been edited with the end consciously in mind. See Niklas Holzberg et al., eds., *Der Äsop-Roman: Motivgeschichte und Erzählstruktur*, Classica Monacensia 6 (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1992), 53; and Niklas Holzberg, "Fable: Aesop, Life of Aesop," in *The Novel in the Ancient World*, ed. Gareth Schmeling, rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 633-39.
Ben Edwin Perry suggests an Egyptian origin for the *Life*. See Ben Edwin Perry, *Aesopica: A Series of Texts Relating to Aesop or Ascribed to Him or Closely Connected with the Literary Tradition That Bears His Name. Collected and Critically Edited, in Part Translated from Oriental Languages, with a Commentary and Historical Essay. Vol. 1: Greek and Latin Texts* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952), 5.
[106] See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 48-49. For the edited text of *Life G*, see Perry, *Aesopica*. For an English translation of *Life G* (although supplemented at times by *Life W*), see William Hansen, ed., *Anthology of Ancient Greek Popular Literature* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998). For *Life W*, see A. Westermann, ed., *Vita Aesopi: Ex Vratislaviensi ac partim Monacensi et Vindobonensi codicibus* (Brunswick: Westermann, 1845).
[107] Several other themes are also present within the literature. John Dillery, for instance, believes that the *Life* displays cultic element, whereby Aesop undergoes a sort of initiation "into the mysteries of poetry"; for instance, King Lycurgus sets up a statue to the Muses and Aesop. See John Dillery, "Aesop, Isis, and the Helionian Muses," *CP* 94.3 (1999): 268-280, here 280. Similarly, N. Robertson sees a cultic strand underlying the tradition, within which Aesop is depicted as loved by the Muses but hated by Apollo. See N. Robertson, "Aesop's Encounter with Isis and the Muses, and the Origins of the *Life of Aesop*," in *Poetry, Theory, Praxis: The Social Life of Myth, Word and Image in Ancient Greece. Essays in Honour of William J. Slater*, eds. E. Caspo and M. C. Miller (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2003), 247-66.

in which he travels abroad to the courts of Pharaoh Nectanebo in Egypt (chs. 101-123) and Lycurgus' court in Babylon draw heavily from the court conflict featured in *Aḥiqar*.[108]

In particular, the episode in which Aesop is sent to Babylon to Lycurgus' court and becomes the king's chamberlain follows the narrative contours of *Aḥiqar*'s Assyrian episode very closely.[109] Both episodes follow the pattern where the courtier occupies a high position in the court, is wrongly punished, and ultimately vindicated. Aesop gains prestige in the court by solving riddles. Like Aḥiqar, Aesop, is childless, and adopts a young man, Helios, to succeed him. Like Aḥiqar's adopted son, Nadin, Helios abuses his power (by consorting with the king's concubine). Like Aḥiqar, Aesop warns Helios about his misconduct, but Helios conspires against him, writes a letter to King Lycurgus' enemies, and fastens it with Aesop's seal. Lycurgus, like King Esarhaddon who features in *Aḥiqar*, discovers Aesop's alleged treason, and sends a captain of the guard to kill Aesop. However, because the guard is a friend of Aesop, he spares the chamberlain, and tells Lycurgus that Aesop is dead. Helios then assumes Aesop's role as chamberlain, in a similar vein to how Nadab assumes Aḥiqar's courtly office in *Aḥiqar*.

[108] Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 48.
Also, see Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 49. Holm interprets Aesop to be a sort of "anti-hero", who, unlike most of the other heroes within the court tales, is unable to save his own life and is ultimately killed.
[109] Tawny Holm believes that Lycurgus likely replaces Nebuchadnezzar from an earlier version of the text. See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 5; also, see John Strugnell, "Problems in the Development of the Aḥîqar Tale," in *Eretz-Israel 26 (Frank Moore Cross Volume)*, eds. Baruch A. Levine, Philip J. King, Joseph Naven, and Ephraim Stern (Jerusalem: Israel Exploitation Society, 1999), 206.
Also, cf. Cristiano Grottanelli, "Aesop in Babylon," in *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn: Politische und Kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im alten Vorderasien vom 4. bis 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, eds. Hans-Jörg Nissen and Johannes Renger; vol. 2 of *Mesopotamien und seine Nachbarn: Politische und Kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen im alten Vorderasien vom 4. bis 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, eds. Hans-Jörg Nissen and Johannes Renger, Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient 1 (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1982), 559.

The Egyptian court contest episode that follows in the *Life* also closely resembles *Aḥiqar*'s Egyptian episode. The king of Egypt, Nectanebo, challenges Lycurgus to find a wise man able to build a palace between heaven and earth (a challenge that also features within the Syriac *Aḥiqar* traditions) and answer a series of questions. Like Aḥiqar, Aesop is demonstrated to be alive again, and resumes teaching Helios until he dies of guilt. Lycurgus then sends Aesop to the Egyptian Nectanebo's court, and Aesop teaches eagles to fly up into the air with young men, a feat also accomplished in *Aḥiqar*. Aesop baffles Nectanebo through a series of riddles.[110] Pharaoh Nectanebo promises to pay ten years of tribute for his defeat to King Lycurgus.[111] The final episode of the *Life* concludes with Aesop's assassination by the Delphians.[112] Aesop's untimely death differs from *Aḥiqar* and the Jewish court conflicts, which universally conclude with the eventual vindication and success of the hero. Thus, the *Life* would have subverted the literary expectations of early readers familiar with other court tales. The *Life* (chs. 101-123), thus, clearly evidences the proliferation of the court tales into the western Mediterranean, and their continued popularity in the first century BCE.

[110] See Ioannis M. Konstantakos, "A Passage to Egypt: Aesop, the Priests of Heliopolis and the Riddle of the Year (*Vita Aesopi* 119-120)," *Trends in Classics* 3.1 (2011): 83-112. Konstantakos argues that the Egyptian episode within the *Life* may evidence some direct knowledge of Egypt, suggesting that the author lived in Egypt for a period of time.

[111] Similarly, in *Aḥiqar*, the king of Egypt promises to pay three years of tribute to the Babylonian king if he loses in a contest of wits. However, Nectanebo only ends up paying three years worth of tribute. Ioannis Konstantakos notes that this change was likely inserted to highlight Nectanebo's greed. See Ioannis M. Konstantakos, "The Miserly Monarch: Nektanebo's Tribute to Babylon in the *Vita Aesopi*," *Symbolae Osloenses* 84.1 (2010): 90-110. The depiction of Nectanebo's avarice is also in keeping with depictions of the Pharaoh from other sources. See Ioannis M. Konstantakos, "Nektanebo in the *Vita Aesopi* and in Other Narratives," *Classica et Mediavalia* 60 (2009): 99-144.

[112] See Cristiano Grottanelli, "The Ancient Novel and Biblical Narrative," *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 27.3 (1987): 7-34. The final episode appears to share some elements with the Joseph cycle (Gen 37, 39-50).

2.4.2. Court Tales Preserved by Herodotus

Several court tales also appear within the writings of Herodotus. Born in the eastern Aegean Halicarnassus, Caria, Asia Minor, Herodotus is most famous for having produced the *Histories*. The *Histories* were written in Ionian Greek, and recount the history and politics of Asia Minor, Greece, and North Africa. Although Herodotus was cautious to ascertain the veracity and significance of his accounts, folkloric material is also found throughout his works.[113] Herodotus is also well-known to have taken some 'artistic license' in the editorial crafting of his sources.[114] For instance, Herodotus employs the motif of the wise advisor who advises a ruler during grave circumstances (such as when troubles arise in the court) as a shaping mechanism within his writings. Richard Lattimore delineates between two major subtypes of this motif in Herodotus' work: the tragic warner, and the practical adviser.[115] Notably, all of the court material that appears in Herodotus' writings are found in sections that have to do with Asia Minor and Persia, suggesting that Herodotus adopted this theme from eastern sources.[116] In terms of their distinctive qualities,

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[113] See Wolf Aly, *Volksmärchen, Sage und Novelle bei Herodot und seinen Zeitgenossen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921); and J. A. K. Thomson, *The Art of the Logos* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1935). Also, see Karl Reinhardt, "Herodots Persergeschichten," in *Vermächtnis der Antike: Gesammelte Essays zur Philosophie und Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. Karl Reinhardt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 133-74 [reprinted in "Herodots Persergeschichten," in *Herodot: Eine Auswahl aus der neuren Forschung*, ed. Walter Marg (München: Beck, 1962), 320-69]. Karl Reinhardt attempts to identify the Persian tales from which Herodotus draws from.

[114] See Henry R Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (Cleveland: Western Reserve University, 1966); and Robert Drews, *The Greek Accounts of Eastern History*, Publications of the Center for Hellenic Studies (Washington: Harvard University Press, 1973), 148. For instance, Immerwahr demonstrates that Herodotus describes Asia and Greece (and their inhabitants) in a remarkably similar manner, despite the clear differences between them.

[115] See R. Lattimore, "The Wise Adviser in Herodotus," *CP* 34 (1939): 24-35. Lattimore also exhibits the debates between Croesus and Cyrus in *Histories* (1.87-90). Also see, Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 56, n. 38. Wills discusses the story of Darius' brother and courtier, Artabanus, as well as Herodotus' special court tale categories.

[116] Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 55.

Herodotus' tales are best described as historicized court tales, as they describe historical figures (either real or imagined) and their deeds, but draw upon court tale tropes to embellish them.[117] A similar strategy is employed by Josephus, which is discussed in Chapter Four.

Herodotus exhibits a special interest in Ionian folklore and history, and several of Herodotus' court tales have an Ionian genesis. These tales can be analyzed as a sub-collection within Herodotus' work and can be referred to as an "Ionian court legend".[118] Much like the Jewish court tales, the Ionian tales exhibit an ethnic tension between their featured heroes and the kings that they serve (and rival courtiers). This might be attributed to the fact that the Ionian colonists were an ethnic minority in Asia Minor, seeking to balance their relationship with their kin, the Greeks, situated on the west of the Aegean, and the Lydian and later the Persian rulers where they resided on the east of the Aegean—a situation remarkably reminiscent of what the Jews faced during the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman eras.[119] With the intellectual achievements of the Ionians in the late seventh and early sixth centuries BCE, the Ionians likely developed a sense of "intellectual superiority over the Lydians", a sentiment that finds voice within the Ionian tales.[120]

Included among the Ionian court legends are traditions about the Seven Sages of Greece (particularly those related to Solon, Bias, and Thales), who appear within the Croesus *logos* in *Histories* Book 1, in which a series of wise Greeks advise Lydian kings.

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[117] I survey a similar pair of historicized court tales preserved by Josephus (*War II.111-13 and Antiquities of the Jews XVII.* 345-348) in Chapter Four.
[118] Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 59.
[119] Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 59.
[120] Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King,* 60.

These tales lend themselves to the court tale definition outlined in the previous chapter, and take place within the Lydian royal court, and feature the wisdom of these Greek sages. By extension, these tales exhibit an ethnic awareness. The Croesus *logos* recounts the *rise* and fall of Croesus, who appears much like the eastern kings featured in the Jewish tales in terms of his *hybris*.[121] In one tale (*Histories* 1.29-33), Solon the Athenian warns Croesus, who considers himself to be the happiest man in the world, that no man is truly happy until he is dead since fortune can turn against a man at any time and render him miserable. Croesus is later defeated by the Persian king, Cyrus, and acknowledges Solon's wisdom.[122]

Though it is uncertain when the historical Croesus died, it may have been at the time of Cyrus of Persia's conquest of Lydia (546 BCE).[123] Several literary traditions, however, maintain that, following Croesus' defeat, he became Cyrus' advisor.[124] For instance, in *Histories* 1.207-208, Croesus convinces Cyrus to cross the river and route the Massagetae in their own country.[125] However, Cyrus is killed shortly thereafter by the

[121] See Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus*, 81-88.
[122] Christopher Pelling notes that "Solon's moralizing is conventional Greek wisdom, a series of proverbs which are thrown at experience and may not always match up to its complexities." See Christopher Pelling, "Talking and Learning in Herodotus' Lydian *Logos*," *Classical Antiquity* 25.1 (2006): 141-177, particularly 143.
Also, see Susan O. Shapiro, "Herodotus and Solon." *ClAnt* 15.2 (1996): 348-364. Susan Shapiro argues that Herodotus agrees with the three main precepts of Solon's advice: the gods are jealous, human happiness is unstable and, before judging whether a person was genuinely happy, one must see whether that person died well.
[123] F. Cornelius, "Kroisos," *Gymnasium 54* (1967): 346-7.
[124] See Stephanie West, "Croesus' Second Reprieve and Other Tales of the Persian Court," *ClQ* 53.2 (2003): 416-37, especially 420-21. Stephanie West maintains that the historical Croesus survived the fall of Sardis.
[125] See Christopher Pelling, "Educating Croesus: Talking and Learning in Herodotus' Lydian *Logos*," *ClAnt* 25 (2006): 141-177. Christopher Pelling argues that this episode, along with the aforementioned meeting of Solon and Croesus (1.29-33) and the scene where Cyrus places Croesus on a pyre (1.86-90), highlight the *Histories*' theme of the elusiveness of wisdom and the distortion of speech.
Also, see Wills, *The Jew in the* Court, 61-8. Wills identifies four other episodes featuring Croesus as a courtier to Persian kings, including 1) an episode where Croesus advises Cyrus how to deal with the Lydians revolting against Persia (1.155-56); 2) an episode where Croesus inquires why the Egyptian Pharaoh Psammenitus did not weep upon seeing his own daughter mistreated and his son led away to death (3.14); 3) an episode where

Massagetae.[126] Another episode (3.35-36) adopts the court conflict theme (a theme commonly found in the Jewish tales, including Daniel 3 and 6), wherein Croesus criticizes Cambyses' excessive violence.[127] Cambyses' acts of violence include, for instance, gleefully striking a boy in the heart with an arrow, and having his subjects buried alive for petty offenses. Croesus warns the king that his actions may lead to a revolt by the Persians. Enraged, Cambyses responds by attempting to shoot Croesus with his bow, but misses. Cambyses charges his attendants to have Croesus killed, but instead they hide him alive. Later Cambyses has a change of heart, and his attendants inform him that Croesus is alive, of which Cambyses is glad.[128]

In addition to the Croesus court tales, Herodotus preserves several other tales, such as the story of Democedes (*Histories* 3.125, 129-137), the famous skilled Greek physician from Croton.[129] Though Democedes seems to be an historical figure (c. sixth century BCE),

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Croesus carefully responds to King Cambyses' question regarding what people thought of him in comparison with his father (3.34); and 4) an account where Croesus criticizes Cambyses for his misgovernance, is then condemned to death, hidden away by his executioner, and reinstated at a later time (3.35-36). The present author finds the third and fourth episodes to bear the most similarity to the Jewish tales. The third episode is reminiscent of the court contests, whereby all of Cyrus' advisors are asked the same question, but the foreign courtier, Croesus, ultimately provides the best response (cf. 1 Esd 3-4). The fourth episode (3.35-36) adopts the court conflict theme (a theme also utilized in the Assyrian *Aḥiqar* episode and Daniel 3 and 6). In this tale, Croesus also employs conventional wisdom sayings to teach Cambyses, much like Aḥiqar employs proverbs to teach Nadin.

[126] Note the presence of a related episode in Xenophon's *Cyropaedeia* (composed around 370 BCE), where Cyrus and Croesus' roles are reversed, with Cyrus uttering words of wisdom to Croesus (7.4.11-13; and 8.2.15-19).

[127] See David Konstan, "Persians, Greeks and Empire," *Arethusa* 20.1 (1987): 59-73. David Konstan also draws attention to the Lydian and Persian rulers' excessive love of wealth, evidenced, for instance, by Xerxes' fascination in his ships. This love of wealth contrasts with the Greeks' focus on virtue in the *Histories* (cf. *Histories* 8.26, where Xerxes inquires about what the Greeks are doing and learns that they are watching sports as they keep the Olympic festival, yet Xerxes is more interested in the prizes to be won).

[128] Despite his relief that Croesus is alive, Cambyses puts the attendants to death. Compare this with the rewards received by the executioner that announces Aḥiqar is alive in *Aḥiqar*.

[129] Several other court tales can be found throughout the *Histories*, including the account of Zopyrus who helps King Darius (*Histories* 3.152ff). Another tale recounts how the loyal courtier, Intaphrenes, and his household are condemned to death by Darius after being accused of participating in a conspiracy (*Histories*

Herodotus' tale about him evidences fanciful embellishment. In this skill tale, Democedes is captured, and sent to Susa. Meanwhile Darius twists his foot, and summons his Egyptian physicians to heal him, but they are unable to do so. Democedes, is then summoned before Darius, and cures him, hence evidencing a sense of Greek ethnic superiority in the court. Darius gifts Democedes with golden fetters, and Darius' wives gift him with gold. Democedes is also permitted to eat at Darius' table in Susa, but is not permitted to return to Greece. Later Democedes exhibits his skill again by healing Darius' wife, Atossa, from a swelling on her breast.[130] In return, Atossa convinces Darius to send Democedes along with a scouting expedition to Hellas. This circumstance ultimately presents Democedes with an opportunity to escape and return to Croton.[131] The ethnic tension present within Democedes' tale, whereby the courtier is imprisoned and rises to power within a foreign court, recalls the same pattern found in the Joseph cycle (Genesis 41), and Daniel 2 and 4.[132] The response to this exilic life in Democedes' tale, however, contrasts markedly with the Jewish tales, wherein remaining actively engaged in exilic life is embraced and the hope for a return to the Jewish homeland is often distant and eschatological (if present at all).

3.118-19). Both tales evidence the ancient Near Eastern court theme focused upon the shrewdness of the courtier. The tale of Zopyrus, much like the Croesus tales, also exhibits a special interest in how the courtier maintains their status after moving from one court to another. See West, "Croesus' Second Reprieve," 428-433.

Another court tale, the Magophonia (Revenge on the Magi) (*Histories* 3.61-79) recounts how two Magians rebel against Cambyses of Persia, and one of them impersonates the king for seven months. Ultimately, Darius and six other Persians (including Intaphrenes), confront the Magians and slay them.

[130] Healings are a common tale type, which also feature within the Jewish court tales, including Daniel 4, *Prayer of Nabonidus*, *Genesis Apocryphon* cols. 19-20, and Tobit.

[131] Yancy Hughes Dominick notes the ambiguity regarding Atossa's actions-that is it is unclear whether Atossa's plot to help Democedes escape is endorsed or condemned. See Yancy Hughes Dominick, "Acting Other: Atossa and Instability in Herodotus," *The Classical, New Series* 57.2 (2007): 432-444.

[132] See Robert Gnuse, "From Prison to Prestige: The Hero who Helps a King in Jewish and Greek Literature," *CBQ* 72 (2010): 31-45. Gnuse argues that, while this literature does not advocate for violence, it does affirm minority groups over their foreign rulers.

2.5. Mesopotamian Court Tales

Among the ancient Near Eastern court tales, the Mesopotamian court tales have gained the greatest amount of attention in terms of their relationship to the Jewish tales. This is particularly true of the *Story and Proverbs of Aḥiqar*, due to the court tale patterns and themes the work shares with the Jewish tales.[133] While documents recounting the historical deeds of courtiers in ancient Mesopotamia are well known, there are no examples of a court tale tradition preserved in cuneiform.[134] Though the theme of the wise vizier who is disgraced and later rehabilitated is preserved within a saying of the "bilingual proverbs", it lacks the literary expansion and sophistication of the later court tale examples.[135]

2.5.1. The Story and Words of Aḥiqar

Aḥiqar has the hallmarks of the court tales *par excellence*, but lacks the apocalyptic elements found within several of the Jewish tales, such as Daniel, *4QPseudo-Daniel*, *4QFour Kingdoms*, *4QAramaic Apocalypse*, Tobit, and Greek Esther. Tobit even directly

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[133] This is, in part, due to early limited comparisons between *Aḥikar* and Daniel. See George A. Barton, "The Story of Aḥikar and the Book of Daniel," *AJSL* 16 (1899/1900): 242-247.

[134] See Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Official and Vernacular Languages: The Shifting Sands of Imperial and Cultural Identities in First-Millennium B.C. Mesopotamia," in *Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures*. 2nd ed., OIS 2; ed. Seth L. Sanders; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2007), 191-220; and Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 75-76.

[135] For the bilingual proverbs, see W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford Press, 1960), 239ff, especially 241. On the theme of the "disgrace and rehabilitation of a minister" in the bilingual proverbs, see Erica Reiner, "The Etiological Myth of the "Seven Sages"," *Orientalia* 30 (1961): 1-11, particularly 7-11.

Also, see Stephanie Dalley, "Assyrian Court Narratives in Aramaic and Egyptian: Historical Fiction," in *Proceedings of the XLVe Recontre Assyriologique Internationale, Part 1: Harvard University: Historiography in the Cuneiform World*, ed. Edited by T. Abusch, et al. (Bethesda, Maryland: CDL, 2001), 149-61. The *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* could have influenced the development of the Assyrian court tale tradition, and includes ridicule of courtiers, the confiscation of property, and the anger of the king, which all feature prevalently in the tales, such as *Aḥiqar*.

coopts and "Judaizes" the *Aḥiqar* traditions.[136] It is uncertain whether Aḥiqar was an historical figure.[137] A list of Assyrian kings and their scholars (*ummânu*), in which a figure, ᵐ*a-ḫu-wa-qa-a-ri* (Aḥiqar), is referred to as the scholar of King Esarhaddon exists and dates to about 165 BCE, but likely does not represent a reliable historical account.[138] *Aḥiqar* was

[136] On the relationship between *Aḥiqar* and Tobit, see: Armin Schmitt, "Die Achikar-Notiz bei Tobit 1,21b-22 in aramäischer (pap4QTob a ar - 4Q196) und griechischer Fassung," *BZ* 40.1 (1996): 18-38; Jonas C. Greenfield, "Ahikar in the Book of Tobit," in *'Al Kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology*, eds. Shalom M. Paul, Michael E. Stone, and Avital Pinnick, vol. 1 of *'Al Kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology*, eds. Shalom M. Paul, Michael E. Stone, and Avital Pinnick (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 195-202; Michael Weigl, "Die rettende Macht der Barmherzigkeit: Achikar im Buch Tobit," *BZ* 50.2 (2006): 212-243; Herbert Niehr, "Die Gestalt des Ahiqar im Tobit-Buch," in *Biblical Figures in Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, ed. Hermann Lichtenberger and Ulrike Mittmann-Richert, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2008 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 57-76; and Alexander A. Di Lella, "A Study of Tobit 14:10 and Its Intertextual Parallels," *CBQ* 71.3 (2012): 497-506. Although an *Aḥiqar* tradition was well-known to the author of the Book of Tobit, it was likely not precisely the version preserved at Elephantine. See, Ingo Kottsieper, "'Look, Son, What Nadab Did to Ahikaros…': The Aramaic Ahiqar Tradition and its Relationship to the Book of Tobit," in *The Dynamics of Language and Exegesis at Qumran*, ed. Devorah Dimant and Reinhard G. Kratz, FAT 35 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 145-167. Kottsieper assumes that Tobit would not have employed the Elephantine version since it evidences a polytheistic perspective. However, the present author believes that there is no reason to suggest that a Jewish editor could not have deliberately sought to adapt the text for a monotheistic context.
Indeed, prior to the discovery of the Elephantine *Aḥiqar* text, most scholars had supposed that *Aḥiqar* had been composed by a Jewish author in Hebrew. The main evidence that scholars utilized to support this Jewish original hypothesis derived from references found in Tobit, as well as parallels found within rabbinic sources. For instance, Susan Niditch points to a proverb preserved in *bSan*. 39b (Talmud) and the related proverbs preserved in the Syriac and Armenian versions of *Aḥiqar*. See Susan Niditch, "A Test Case for Formal Variants in Proverbs," *JJS* 27.2 (1976): 192-194. For a bibliography of pre-Elephantine studies on *Aḥiqar*, see Albert Marie Denis, *Introduction aux pseudépigraphes grecs d'Ancien Testament*, SVTP 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 201-214. Also see, Michael Chyutin, *Tendentious Hagiographies: Jewish Propagandist Fiction BCE* (London T & T Clark, 2011), 26-34. Michael Chyutin contends that "it seems most natural and immediate to attribute *Aḥiqar* to a Jewish author living in Elephantine" (33), noting that the Jews at Elephantine were themselves polytheistic.

[137] See James M. Lindenberger, "Ahiqar," in vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1983) 484. Lindenberger suggests that an historical "Aḥiqar" may have been responsible for editing the proverbs appended to *Aḥiqar* either during the time of Sennacherib or Esarhaddon.

[138] Simo Parpola, *Letters from Assyrian Scholars to the Kings Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal: Part II: Commentary and Appendices*, AOAT 5.2 (Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1983), 448-450. At the very least, this list demonstrates that a tradition of an Aḥiqar serving under King Esarhaddon existed by the second century BCE in Seleucid Mesopotamia.
Also, see Jacobus van Dijk, "Die Inschriftenfunde," in *XVIII. Vorläufiger Bericht über die vom Deutschen Archäologischen Institut und der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft aus Mitteln der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft unternommenen Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka*, ed. H. J. Lenzen. ADOG 8 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1963), 39-62; and Beaulieu, "Official and Vernacular Languages," 194-95. Despite this second century BCE list, there is no earlier record of a courtier named Aḥiqar who served during the reigns of Sennacherib or Esarhaddon.

evidently very popular throughout the ancient Near East and beyond, as evidenced by the presence of numerous translations, expansions, and adaptations.[139] The literary currency of *Aḥiqar* is even evident in the *Koran*, *Sura* 31, *Luqmān*, which recounts the tale of a wise man, Luqmān, who admonishes his son, and whom later Arabic commentators identified with Aḥiqar or Aesop. The oldest extant copy of *Aḥiqar* was discovered at Elephantine, Egypt, was composed in Aramaic, and dates to the fifth century BCE.[140] Though the manuscript is fragmentary, it preserves a large portion of the narrative and fourteen of what

[139] Literature composed within the *Aḥiqar* tradition persisted into the medieval period. For instance, a manuscript (c. 1600 CE), entitled 'Questions Addressed by the king of the Babylonians to the king of the Persians', depicts the 'King of the Babylonians' asking the 'King of the Persians' to explain six sayings to him, for which the King of the Persians is subsequently rewarded. S. P. Brock maintains that this text was inspired by *Aḥiqar*. See S. P. Brock, "A Piece of Wisdom Literature in Syriac," *JSS* 13.2 (1968): 212-217. For more on the legacy of the *Aḥiqar* traditions in western and eastern literature, see Simona Destefanis and Emanuela Braida, "An Outline of the Romance and the Proverbs of the Wise Ahiqar and its Modern Neo-Aramaic Version," in *Roads to Knowledge: Hermeneutical and Lexical Probes*, ed. Alessandro Monti, DOST Critical Studies 1 (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2006), 19-26. Also, see François Briquel-Chatonnet, ""Construis-moi un château dans le ciel". Remarques sur un motif de conte, d'Ahiqar à Thomas," *The Harp* 20 (2006): 55-64. Briquel-Chatonnet discusses how the theme of the castle in the skies from the Syriac version of *Aḥiqar* was later adapted within the Syriac *Acts of Thomas* (c. third century CE), where Thomas claims to have constructed a palace in the heavens for King Goudnaphar of India.

[140] For the reedited version of the Aramaic text along with a translation into English and Hebrew, see Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt,* 3.24-53. For the *editio princeps* of the Aramaic, see E. Sachau, *Arämaische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militärkolonie zu Elephantine* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1911), 147-82. Also, see A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), 204-48.
Most scholars agree that *Aḥiqar* was originally composed in Aramaic, whereas in the past many scholars suggested that *Aḥiqar* was an Akkadian (Assyrian) work, which was only later translated into Aramaic. This earlier argument was based on the observation that the setting of *Aḥiqar* is the neo-Assyrian court, the mention of the Mesopotamian god, Shamash, in four of the appended proverbs, the presence of authentically Assyrian personal names, and the use of Akkadian loan words. On a discussion of the proposed Aramaic original, see J. M. Lindenberger, "Aḥiqar," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth, vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 481. On the hypothesis of an Akkadian original, see Pierre Grelot, *Document araméens d'Égypte*, LAPO 5 (Paris: Paris Éditions du Cerf, 1972), 427-52; A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), 204-48; and Simo Parpola, "Il retroterra assiro di Ahiqar," in *Il saggio Ahiqar: Fortuna e trasformazioni di uno scritto sapienziale. Il testo piú antico e le sue versioni*, eds. Ricardo Contini and Cristiano Grottanelli, Studi biblici 148 (Brescia: Paideia, 2005), 91-112. Also, see Krappe, "Is the story of Ahikar the Wise of Indian Origin?" 280-84. Krappe espoused a third view that a Sanskrit original formed the background to *Aḥiqar*. This third view, however, has since been rejected by scholars.

was likely originally twenty-one columns.[141] Another copy of the *Aḥiqar* narrative is preserved in Demotic, and dates to the first century CE.[142] Later and expanded versions of

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[141] Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt,* 3.23. The fourteen surviving columns have been split between eleven plates. There has been disagreement on the order of the reconstruction of these plates. Likely, however, the narrative account was followed by the proverbs, as is the typical order among other court tales that incorporate sayings collections, such as the Egyptian *Instruction of Ankhsheshonq*.
Most scholars assume that the *Story* and the *Proverbs* do not share the same provenance and that at a certain point these two disparate collections were appended to one another. See Jonas C. Greenfield, "בארמית הקדומה קורים דיאלקטיים," *Lešonenu* 32 (1967-68): 359-68; E. Y. Kutscher, "Aramaic," in *Linguistics in South West Asia and North Africa*, ed. Thomas Albert Sebeok, Current Trends in Linguistics 6 (Paris: Mouton, 1970), 347-12; and Lindenberger, "Aḥiqar," 2:483-84. Greenfield thinks that the proverbs were composed in a dialect of Imperial west-Aramaic. Dissimilarly, Kutscher maintains that the proverbs represent a mixture of both western and eastern Aramaic. Lindenberger conjectures that the proverbs circulated around the Aramaic-speaking peoples of Syria during the earlier parts of the first millennium BCE, and that during the time of Sennacherib (704-681 BCE) or Esarhaddon (681-669 BCE) the proverbs were re-edited in Assyria. While an historical Aḥiqar himself may have been the editor (which would explain the connection between his name and the proverbs), it is possible that the proverbs were associated with him at a later time. The narrative may have been composed independently of the sayings with a subsequent editor later compiling both collections together. Likely, the author of the narrative would have been an Aramean scribe of the neo-Assyrian Empire or early neo-Babylonian (Chaldean) Empire, who may have also added a few proverbs that were inspired by the narrative itself. On the linguistic character of the proverbs, see Lindenberger, *The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar*, 20 and 279-304. Lindenberger contends that the Aramaic of the proverbs is closest to the last phase of oldest Imperial Aramaic and Old Aramaic, which is indicative of the beginning of the 7th century BCE.
Klaus Beyer argues for a northeast Syrian provenance of *Aḥiqar*. See Klaus Beyer, *The Aramaic Language: Its Division and Subdivisions* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 15. Ingo Kottsieper suggests that the proverbs were composed in Old Aramaic and originated in southern Syria. See Ingo Kottsieper, *Die Sprache der Aḥiqarsprüche* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 241-46. Michael Weigl thinks that the proverbs date to 12th century BCE northern Mesopotamia (and not necessarily Syria), and later in the 8th century BCE developed into either a pre-Official or Official Aramaic collection. See Michael Weigl, *Die aramäischen Achikar-Sprüche aus Elephantine und die alttestamentliche Weisheitsliteratur*, BZAW 399 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 756-60. Holm suggests that the *Story and Proverbs of Aḥiqar* were composed in the fifth-century BCE by Arameans or Aramaic speakers who had migrated to Egypt from Syro-Palestine and Mesopotamia, perhaps later combined into one document in Elephantine, Egypt. See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 85; and Tawny L. Holm, "Memories of Sennacherib in Aramaic Tradition," in *Sennacherib at the Gates of Jerusalem: Story, History and Historiography*, eds. Isaac Kalimi and Seth Richardson, CHANE 71 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 295-323.
For studies focused on the proverbs in *Aḥiqar*, see Pierre Grelot, "Les proverbs araméens d'Aḥiqar." *RB* 68 (1961): 178-94; Lindenberger, *The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar*; Kottsieper, *Die Sprache der Aḥiqarsprüche*; Michael Weigl, *Die aramäischen Achikar-Sprüche aus Elephantine*; and Max Küchler, *Frühjüdische Weisheitstraditionen: Zum Fortgang weisheitlichen Denkens im Bereich des frühjüdischen Jahweglaubens*, OBO 26 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1979), 319-411.

[142] There are at least two papyrus fragments and possibly a third. For a translation of the Demotic manuscripts, see K.-T. Zauzich, "Demotische Fragmente zum Ahikar-Roman," in *Folia Rara: Wolfgang Voigt LXV. Diem Natalem Celebranti*, ed. H. Franke et al. (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 1976), 180-185; and K.-T. Zauzich, "Demotische Fragmente aus Roemischer Zeit (= Dem Ach)," in *Frühjüdische Weisheitstraditionen: Zum Fortgang weisheitlichen Denkens im Bereich des frühjüdischen Jahweglaubens*, ed. Max Küchler, OBO 26 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1979), 333-37. The first Cairo papyrus fragment is published in G. P.

the *Aḥiqar* traditions have been preserved in Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, Karshuni, Old Church Slavonic, Ethiopic, and Sogdian.[143] Yet later translations have also been preserved in Old Turkish, Georgian, Romanian, Serbian, Russian, and neo-Syriac.[144]

I begin here by discussing the contents of the Elephantine manuscript and later literary traditions where pertinent.[145] The manuscript includes a narrative and a series of proverbs.[146] Of interest for the development of the court tales is the narrative section, which

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G. Sobhy, "Miscellanea, 2. Demotica," *JEA* 16 (1930): 3-4, pl. VII. Also, see Wilhelm Spiegelberg, "Achikar in einem demotischen Texte der römischen Kaiserzeit," *OLZ* 33 (1930): 961.

[143] See François Briquel-Chatonnet, "De l'Ahiqar araméen à l'Ahiqar syriaque: les voies de transmission d'un roman," in *Der christliche Orient und seine Umwelt. Gesammelte Studien zu Ehren Jürgen Tubachs anläßlich seines 60. Geburtstages*, ed. by Sophia G. Vashalomidze and Lutz Greisiger, Studies in Oriental Religions 56 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 51-57. For the Sogdian text, see Nicholas Sims-Williams, ed., *Biblical and Other Christian Sogdian Texts from the Turfan Collection* (Berliner Turfantexte 32; Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 107-24.

[144] For an edited version of the Armenian, Old Turkish, Syriac, and Arabic versions and their translations, along with translations of the Slavonic, Ethiopic and Aramaic, as well as the Greek Aesop text, see F. C. Conybeare, J. Rendel Harris, and Agnes Smith Lewis, *The Story of Aḥiḳar from the Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Old Turkish, Greek and Slavonic Versions*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913). Also, see Anīs Furayḥah, *Aḥīqār ḥakīm min aš-šarq al-adnā l-qadim* ("Aḥīqar, a sage from the Ancient Near East") (Bayrūt [Beirut]: Jāmiʿat Bayrūt al-Amīrikīyah [American University of Beirut], 1962), 37-64 and 115-46; and Joan Ferrer and Juan Pedro Monferrer, *Historia y ense[n]as de Ahíqar o la antigua sabiduría oriental*, Studia Semitica Series Minor 2 (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 2006). For a neo-Aramaic version of the text, see Shabo Talay, "Die Geschichte und die Sprüche des Aḥiqar im neuaramäischen Dialekt von Mlaḥsō," in *"Sprich doch mit deinen Knechten aramäisch, wir verstehen es!" 60 Beiträage zur Semitistik Festschrift für Otto Jastrow zum 60. Geburstag*, ed. W. Arnold and H. Bobzin (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 695-712. Also, see Emanuela Braida, "A Story of Ahiqar in Neo-Aramaic According to MS London Sachau 9321," *JCSSS* 14 (2014): 17-31.

Notably, the later translations of *Aḥiqar* are not uniform, but exhibit much variation. For instance, there are at least five different Syriac versions of the text, and the relationship between them is unclear. See S. P. Brock, "Notes on Some Texts in the Mingana Collection," *JSS* 14.2 (1969): 205-226.

[145] For a general introduction to and overview of *The Wisdom of Ahiqar*, see Jonas C. Greenfield, "The Wisdom of Aḥiqar," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton* (ed. John Day, R. P. Gordon and Hugh Godfrey Maturin Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 43-52.

[146] The narrative appears to serve as a framework for the sayings (like the Syriac *Aḥiqar* tradition). See Grelot, *Document araméens d'Égypte*; and Ingo Kottsieper, "Die Geschichte und die Sprüche des weisen Achiqar," in *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments: Weisheitstexte II*, eds. Günter Burkard, Ingo Kottsieper, Irene Shirun-Grumach, Heike Sternberg-el Hotabi, and Heinz J. Thissen (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1991), 320-47.

For a discussion of the significance of *Aḥiqar*, particularly the appended proverbs, for the development of early Jewish wisdom traditions, see Max Küchler, *Frühjüdische Weisheitstraditionen: Zum Fortgang weisheitlichen Denkens im Bereich des frühjüdischen Jahweglaubens*, OBO 26 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1979), 319-413.

centers around the eponymously named Aḥiqar. I refer to this section as the Assyrian *Aḥiqar* episode. The episode is a court conflict, focused upon Aḥiqar's conflict with his nephew, Nadin. Aḥiqar is a wise and skillful scribe (ספר חכים ומהיר), councilor of all of Assyria (יעת אתור כלה), keeper of the seal (וצבית עזקה), and master of good council (טבתא בעל עטתא) within the court of the Assyrian Kings Sennacherib and Esarhaddon. As bearer of the king's seal, Aḥiqar holds the highest position in the royal court next to the king, an honor also ascribed to Hebrew heroes within several Jewish tales.[147] Though Aḥiqar's ethnic identity has not been preserved within the Elephantine text, later traditions remember Aḥiqar as an Aramaean, an ethnic minority within the Assyrian court, suggesting an ethnic tension in the narrative.[148] Aḥiqar adopts and appoints his nephew, Nadin, as his successor to his courtly functions, but Nadin plots to have Aḥiqar murdered, and convinces Esarhaddon that Aḥiqar has committed treason. A 'young man', Nabusumiskun, is then commissioned to kill Aḥiqar, but Aḥiqar reminds Nabusumiskun that he had saved Nabusumiskun from the wrath of King Sennacherib through his intercession in the past. Nabusumiskun then hides Aḥiqar in his home, has another prisoner killed, and pretends that his body is that of Aḥiqar.[149] The narrative of the Elephantine text breaks off at this

[147] For instance, the signet ring is also of focus within Esther, wherein Esther and Mordecai receive King Ahasuerus' signet ring (טבעת) following the overthrow of Haman (Esther 8:8), who had charge of the signet ring previously (Esther 3:10).
[148] See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 88.
Regarding how Mesopotamian *Aḥiqar* was, see Takayoshi M. Oshima, "How "Mesopotamian" Was Ahiqar the Wise? A Search for Ahiqar in Cuneiform Texts." in *Wandering Arameans – Arameans Outside Syria: Textual and Archaeological Perspectives*, eds. Angelika Berlejung, Aren M. Maeir, and Andreas Schüle, LAS 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017), 141-67.
[149] See Saul M. Olyan, "The Literary Dynamic of Loyalty and Betrayal in the Aramaic Ahiqar Narrative," *JNES 79/2* (2020), 262-269, here 266. The text thus highlights competing loyalties, reversing the expected loyalty that Nabusumiskun would be expected to show the king and instead demonstrating his faithfulness towards Aḥiqar. This evidences the power that the courtier, Aḥiqar, holds in a seemingly powerless situation.

point. Presumably, in the missing fragments, Aḥiqar would have later returned from hiding, resumed his position in the court of King Esarhaddon, and Nadin would have been punished, a pattern which is supported by the later extant manuscripts.[150]

Later versions of *Aḥiqar* continue the narrative with a series of additional episodes in Egypt, which I refer to as the Egyptian episodes.[151] Having learned about Aḥiqar's death, the king of Egypt challenges King Esarhaddon to send a wise man to answer a series of riddles and oversee the construction of a castle between heaven and earth. Aḥiqar is revealed to be alive and is sent to Egypt.[152] In one episode, Aḥiqar trains eagles to fly with boys upon their backs, along with bricks and clay to demonstrate how building a castle between the heavens and the earth is impossible. In another Egyptian episode, a competition of wisdom takes place between the courtiers of the Assyrian and Egyptian kings. As noted earlier, competitions of wisdom feature within several court tales, including within the Jewish 1 Esdras 3-4. Once Aḥiqar returns to Assyria, he disciplines Nadin through the utterance of parables, causing Nadin to swell up and burst asunder, evidencing a current of humor present within the tale, which is a common feature of the court tales more generally.

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[150] See Lindenberger, *The Aramaic Proverbs*, 4.

[151] For a comparison of the Elephantine version of *Aḥiqar* with the later versions, see F. M. Fales, "Riflessioni sull'Ahiqar di Elefantina," *Orientis antiqui miscellanea* 1 (1994): 51-60; and Strugnell, "Problems in the Development of the Aḥîqar Tale," 204-211.
A few scholars have suggested that the Aramaic Elephantine *Aḥiqar* text contained an Egyptian episode, but this is largely speculation based upon the size and length of the missing columns. See Ingo Kottsieper, "The Aramaic Tradition: Ahikar," in *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World*, ed. Leo G. Perdue, FRLANT 219 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 109-24; Strugnell, "Problems in the Development of the Aḥîqar Tale," 204-11. There is some evidence that the first-century CE Demotic *Aḥiqar* fragment, P. Berlin P 23729, recounted some of Aḥiqar's adventures in Egypt. See Zauzich, "Demotische Fragmente," 184.

[152] See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 81 n. 159. When Aḥiqar is revealed to be alive, he is described in a similar manner to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 after having been driven into the wild. Both are dirty and dusty, have long hair that has grown out like that of beasts, nails like the claws of eagles, and discolored faces.

Notably, the proverbial material plays a greater narratival role in the later *Aḥiqar* traditions; in particular, Aḥiqar's earlier proverbs prove to be ineffectual, but his later parables relating to direct experience (including Nadin's treachery) are effectual, evidencing that Aḥiqar has grown in wisdom by the end of the narrative.[153]

2.6. Court Tales, and Pre-Exilic and Exilic Hebrew Literature

Several exilic and pre-exilic Hebrew texts broadly discuss life and the proceedings in royal court systems (as in the Deuteronomistic history, Isaiah, and Jeremiah), but only a few of these examples bear literary affinity to the themes of the later court tales. Dissimilar from the Jewish court tales, many of the Hebrew texts about courts are subsumed within broader historical narratives that span multiple generations, with little focus upon Jewish life in foreign courts. The existence of such literature attests to a much broader category of narratives about the court, which, for the most part, lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. At the very least, this broader narrative interest in royal courts, kings, and the interactions between members of the court sets a precedent for later Jewish interest in the broader court tale literary tradition that explores themes pertaining to court life further.

Nehemiah, for instance, incorporates a 'first-person' account of a Jewish courtier in Susa and his subsequent journey to and activities within Jerusalem during the fifth century BCE.[154] Nehemiah, son of Hacaliah, is the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, and inquires

[153] See Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 44-49; and Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 82.

[154] Though not frequently included within discussions of the court tales, a few notable examples have incorporated Nehemiah into such discussions. See Humphreys, "A Life-Style for Diaspora," 211-223; Sean Burt, *The Courtier and the Governor*, JAJSup 17 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); and Peter R. Bedford, "Diaspora: Homeland relations in Ezra-Nehemiah." *VT* 52.2 (2002): 147-165. Humphreys classifies Nehemiah as a court conflict. Sean Burt argues that Nehemiah draws from the genres of court tale and the

about the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. Artaxerxes sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem as the governor (פחה and תרשתא) and restorer of the district of Judah. The role of the פחה is also referenced within other Jewish court tales (cf. Dan 3:2-3, 27; and 6:7).[155] Similar to Herodotus' court tales, Nehemiah is probably best described as an example of a historicized court tale, which incorporates some of the thematic elements of the literary tales, but lacks many of the more fanciful elements associated with the Jewish tales, such as the *ira regis*, dream interpretation, miraculous vindication, etc.[156]

2.6.1. Moses in Pharaoh's Court (Exodus 7:8-9:12)

The Exodus story includes a contest between Moses and Aaron, and the magicians (חרטמים) of Egypt (7:8-9:12), who, as demonstrated above, feature prominently within the Egyptian court tales.[157] The account is representative of the broader Hebrew category of narratives about the court noted above, but is worthy of special consideration here due to the presence of the contest theme and the magician court rivals. Considering the significance of the office of the magician in the cognate Egyptian literature where

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official memorial. Bedford notes that Ezra-Nehemiah share similar themes to other late Persian and early Hellenistic literature in their attempt to demonstrate the continuity between those Jews that remain in Judea and those in the Diaspora.

[155] See Deirdre Fulton, "What Kind of Governor was Nehemiah? The Titles פֶּחָה and תִּרְשָׁתָא in MT and LXX Ezra-Nehemiah," *ZAW* 130.2 (2018): 252-267. Both פחה and תרשתא have been understood to refer to the position of "governor" and been employed in Ezra-Nehemiah to refer to Nehemiah's position. Fulton surveys the usage and development of these terms.

[156] At the very least, a historical kernel is preserved within the text, but scholars have long suggested that the chronology of Ezra-Nehemiah is difficult to disentangle. For example, there is a debate whether Nehemiah's service in Judea should be dated to the reign of Artaxerxes I (465/4-424 BCE), or Artaxerxes II (404-359 BCE). Also, many contend that Ezra and Nehemiah were not contemporaries, contrary to Nehemiah 8-10, which depicts their activities as concurrent. See H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, WBC 16 (Nashville: Word Books, 1985), xxxix-xliv; and Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary*, OTL (London: SCM Press, 1989), 139-44.

[157] See Holm, *Of Courtiers Kings*, 108-9. Holm notes the inclusion of the defeat of the Egyptian magicians shared within Exodus 7-9, the *Joseph Story* (Gen 41:8, 24), and Daniel (2:10, 27; 4:4, 6; and 5:11).

magicians featured as court heroes, the reversal of the magicians' fortunes would not have been lost on early readers familiar with the broader court tale tradition.[158] Moreover, the Hebrews' victories over these Egyptian heroes would have literarily served to bolster the status of Moses and Aaron since they effectively defeat the court heroes of Egypt. The competition in Exodus 7:8-9:12 involves a display of Moses and Aaron's miraculous abilities, which are initially matched by the mysteries (בלטיהם) of the magicians, as for instance, when the magicians transform their staffs into snakes like Aaron's (Exodus 7:8-13), change water into blood (7:14-24), and bring forth frogs (7:25-8:11). Ultimately, however, the magicians are unable to change the dust of the earth into gnats and concede that the source of Moses and Aaron's miraculous deeds is God (8:12-15). This story thus evidences an ethnic perspective, whereby the Hebrew Moses and Aaron defeat the magician courtiers of the Egyptian court, ethnic court specialists. The fact that part of Israel's inherited traditions included accounts of Moses and Aaron's miraculous competition with Egypt's court magicians provides a *topos* of inspiration for later Jewish court tales that also highlight the role of magician court rivals (Daniel 2, 4, and 5; *Genesis Apocryphon*, and Jannes and Jambres).

2.6.2. The Joseph Story (Genesis 37, 39-50)

[158] For an overview of the interpretation of Moses as a magician in antiquity, see Rivka Ulmer, *Egyptian Cultural Icons in Midrash*, Studia Judaica: Forschungen zur Wissenschaft des Judentums 52 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 107-41. Also, see Scott B. Noegel, "Moses and Magic: Notes on the Book of Exodus," *JNES* 24 (1996): 45-59; and Thomas C. Römer, "Competing Magicians in Exodus 7-9: Interpreting Magic in the Priestly Theology," in *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon*, ed. Todd E. Klutz, JSNTSup 245 (London: T. & T. Clark, 2003), 12-22. Holm aptly notes, however, that neither Moses, Aaron, nor Joseph are ever called חרטמים in the Hebrew Bible. See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 109.

Among the early Hebrew literature, the Joseph story (Gen 37, 39-50) has probably received the greatest amount of attention for its relationship to the Jewish tales, particularly Genesis 39-41 which focuses on Joseph's rise to prominence in Pharaoh's court (Gen 39-41).[159] The Joseph story is notoriously difficult to date, but is the oldest extant literary example recounting the story of a Hebrew dream interpreter, who interprets the dream of a foreign ruler while the king's other court specialists are unable to do so.[160] I include the Joseph story in Chapter Two due to its relatively early dating (perhaps fifth century BCE) in comparison with later Jewish court tales, such as Daniel 1-6.

Following Joseph's being sold into slavery in Egypt (37:19-28), the story employs the theme of the wrongfully accused and later vindicated courtier: Joseph is wrongfully accused of attempting to rape his master, Potiphar's wife, and is sent to prison. In prison, Joseph gains a reputation for being a dream interpreter, interpreting the dreams of Egyptian courtiers (the chief cupbearer [שר המשקים] and the chief baker [שר האופים]), and later

[159] Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from the Hebrew Bible follow: K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, ed., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983).
[160] See Gerhard von Rad, "Josephgeschichte und ältere Chokma," in *Congress Volume: Copenhagen, 1953* (VTSup 1, Leiden: Brill, 1953), 120-27; Jozef Vergote, *Joseph en Égypte; Genèse chap. 37-50, à la lumière des études égyptologiques récentes* (Louvain: Louvain Publications universitaires, 1959), 208-31; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37-50: A Commentry*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 24-25; and W. Lee Humphreys, *Joseph and His Family: A Literary Study*, Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 29. Von Rad considered the *Joseph Story* to be a Wisdom novella, dating to the Solomonic period. J. Vergote dated the text to the Mosaic period due to cultural parallels, which he saw with the Nineteenth Dynasty in Egypt. Claus Westermann believed that the concerns within the Joseph Story were indicative of an emerging Solomonic kingship and should be dated to that era. Some scholars date the material to a much later period, including the post-Exilic period. See Donald B. Redford, "The "Land of the Hebrews" in Gen. XL 15," *VT* 15 (1965), 529-32; Donald B. Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph*, VTSup 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 27-65 and 187-253; A. Meinhold, "Die Gattung der Josephsgeschichte und des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle I," *ZAW* 87 (1975): 306-42; and A. Meinhold, "Die Gattung der Josephsgeschichte und des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle II," *ZAW* 88 (1976): 72-93. Donald Redford dates the Joseph Story to the Saite Period (at the earliest) in Egypt. A Meinhold maintains that the *Joseph Story* is a postexilic novella, addressing Jewish life in exile.

Pharaoh's dreams. Pharaoh appoints Joseph as vizier, gives him his signet ring (טבעתו), clothes him in garments of fine linen (בגדי־שש), puts a gold chain around his neck (על־צוארו רבד הזהב), and has him ride in the chariot of his second in command—all gifts that are granted to other Jewish courtiers, such as Daniel, Esther, and Mordecai.

The similarities between the Joseph story and the Book of Daniel have long been noted by scholars. The vast number of literary and phraseological similarities shared between the Story of Joseph and Daniel suggest that the Joseph story directly influenced the composition of Daniel.[161] John J. Collins has compiled a helpful list of phrases and expressions shared by the two works: Joseph is beautiful of form and of appearance (Gen 39:6) and the four youths of Daniel 1:4 are good in appearance; the cows in Pharaoh's dream (Gen 41:1), and Daniel and his companions (1:15) are called fat; the term חרטם ('magician') is employed in both texts to refer to a rival group of courtiers who are unable to interpret the ruler's dreams; both texts employ the same root to refer to interpretation (for e.g., פתר in Gen 41:8 and פשר in Dan 5:7); both texts employ the term סריסים ("court

[161] The dominant view is that Daniel is dependent upon the *Joseph Story*. See Ludwig Rosenthal, "Die Josephgeschichte, mit den Büchen Ester und Daniel verglichen," *ZAW* 15 (1895): 278-84; L. Hartman, and A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, AB 23 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1978), 56 and 145-146; Robert Gnuse, "The Jewish Dream Interpreter in a Foreign Court: The Recurring Use of a Theme in Jewish Literature," *JSP* 47.7 (1990): 29-53; and Michael V. Fox, "Wisdom in the Joseph Story," *VT* 51.1 (2001): 26-41. Also, see Gerhard von Rad, "Josephgeschichte und ältere Chokma," 120-27 [reprinted in *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*, ed. James L. Crenshaw (New York: Ktav Publication House, 1976), 439-447]; and Matthew S. Rindge, "Jewish Identity under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41," *JBL* 129.1 (2010): 85-104. Robert Gnuse examines the relationship between the dream interpretation tradition of the Jew in the foreign court in Genesis 41, Daniel 1-6, and Archelaus' dream experience in Josephus *War* 2.111-13 and *Antiquities* 17.345-48. In the first two accounts, Joseph and Daniel are both Hebrew dream interpreters, who remain faithful to their traditions, whereas Josephus is more interested in these figures in terms of their ability to interpret dreams, thus evidencing a shift in the purpose of court themes. Michael Fox contends that the *Joseph Story* focuses on the ideals of higher wisdom, which is endowed by God, rather than upon the ethical and practical wisdom of the Wisdom Literature. Accordingly, Fox contends that the depiction of wisdom in the Joseph Story comes closest to that of Daniel. Matthew Rindge examines Daniel 2's use of Genesis 41.

officials"); both tales employ the verb פעמ to describe the distress caused by a distressful dream (Gen 40:6 and Dan 1:10); the same term (זעפים) is employed to describe the state of being downcast (Gen 40:7 and Dan 1:10); Joseph and Daniel are both described as having a divine spirit within them (Gen 41:38 and Dan 5.11, 14); both attribute their dream interpretation to God (Gen 40:8; 41:16; and Dan 2:28); both maintain that God reveals the future through dreams (Gen 41:25, 28 and Dan 2:28); and both are given a chain around the neck upon their successful interpretation of dreams (Gen 41:42 and Dan 5:29).[162] One should also note the ethnic tension present within both works: Joseph and Daniel both function as minorities within foreign royal courts; rival foreign courtiers (such as the Egyptian magicians) are included among those in competition with the Hebrew courtiers; and both Joseph and Daniel are given new names suitable to their foreign environments (Gen 41:51 and Dan 1:7).

2.6.3. Court Tales and Early Rabbinic Judaism

The production of new Jewish court tales seems to have come to an end in the first century CE, but their popularity and reception endured into the early rabbinic era. While the early Jewish court tales evidence a diversity of themes and interests, the rabbinic literature attempted to standardize them by interpreting biblical court tales in light of one another. In order to do this, the rabbis identified the theme of the "wise courtier" (whereby a Jewish hero rises to power in a foreign court) and employed it as a shaping mechanism within midrashic literature. Zvi Ron demonstrates how, for instance, the rabbis drew from

[162] Collins, *Daniel*, 39.

elements of Genesis 41 and Daniel to supplement their interpretations of the Book of Esther.[163] For example, *b. Meg.* 13b adds some details to the story of Esther that are absent from the biblical account (based upon the narratives associated with Joseph and Daniel), such as a cryptic message that foretells the plot against the king by the chamberlains (Bigthan and Teresh) and the inability of other courtiers to interpret this message. However, *b. Meg* 13b notes that Mordecai, who is fluent in seventy languages, is able to decrypt the message. On one hand, the rabbinic attempt to normalize the court tales served to flatten their differences, yet it also exhibited a fresh sense of creativity in the literature, further evidencing the ability of the court tales to be adapted for new literary purposes.

2.7. Conclusion

The above survey serves to demonstrate the diversity of the court tale traditions throughout the ancient Mediterranean and Near East, and to evidence that the court tales remained popular during the Persian and Greco-Roman eras. The production of new court tales in the Mediterranean region appears to have come to an end in the first-century CE, though the production of court tales appears to have continued in Persia and India into the medieval era. Court themes also continued to develop and influence early Jewish and Christian thought throughout the Mediterranean into the first millennium CE.[164] While the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean tales were demonstrated to share an interest in the inner workings of royal courts and the deeds of courtiers, they also exhibit a vast diversity

[163] See Zvi Ron, "The "Wise Courtier" in Rabbinic Literature," *JBQ* 39.3 (2011): 169-174.
[164] See, for instance, David Stern, *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 19-21. Stern discusses the 'King-Mashal', wherein the protagonist features as the king and other characters serve as members of the royal court.

of different themes, such as court conflicts, court contests, the vindication of the courtier, and historicized tales. While the Jewish tales may not borrow from all of the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales directly (with the exception of *Aḥiqar*), the Jewish tales do adopt many of the literary patterns discussed in this chapter and contribute their own unique themes to the broader court tale literary tradition. Another special feature of the court tales surveyed in this chapter is that considerations of historicity are usually secondary within the texts. This was found to be the case, for instance, with Aḥiqar. As demonstrated above, it is difficult to verify whether Aḥiqar was an historical figure. Instead, the display of the courtier's special skill(s) and wisdom are of utmost concern within the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales. This feature is also present within the Jewish tales, as with Daniel, Esther, Patireza, etc. Even within historicized tales (such as the *Story of Democedes*), the historical narrative was found to exercise "artistic license" in favor of highlighting the more fanciful elements associated with court life and the courtier's skills. The Jewish tales also borrow from much of the language of the ancient Near Eastern tales, including references to dreams, the types of rewards received for displays of skill in the court (gold and fine linens), the courtiers from other traditions (i.e., the Egyptian magicians), and symbols of authority (such as the king, as well as the king's seal and signet ring).

While the ancient Near Eastern literature evidences the shared patterns and themes detailed above, they also exhibit a diversity of localized interests, often strongly influenced by their socio-cultural contexts. The Egyptian texts, for instance, are less preoccupied by foreign kings, and more interested in the domestic foreign court and often dueling court

magicians; the Persian texts are more interested in religious and ideological tensions present among the courtiers within the court; and *Aḥiqar* is preoccupied with conflicting loyalties (e.g., Nadin's betrayal of his adoptive father, Aḥiqar). In other words, these court tale patterns are not just hollow literary entertainment, but serve as vehicles for diverse ideological interests and concerns, which are specific to their cultural communities.

It should be unsurprising, then, that the early Jewish tales also contribute their own unique innovations to the broader Mediterranean and Near Eastern court tale traditions and imbue their court tales with their own ideological peculiarities. Dissimilar from the Near Eastern tales, the divine features more prominently within the Jewish tales, with the courtiers typically ascribing their wisdom and skill to the God of Israel. Moreover, the literary setting of the Jewish tales is almost always exilic, and, correspondingly, the assertation of the hero's distinct ethnic identity is much more significant in these texts, serving to highlight the importance of the Jewish courtier's unique identity in exile. In the Jewish tales, the king is also foreign, and is often depicted humorously like a buffoon, which serves to highlight the superiority of the Jewish courtier's unique status. In Chapters Three and Four, I survey the proliferation of these distinctive elements within the Jewish court tales, particularly their employment of themes of punishment, exile, and restoration, as developed in Chapter One.

CHAPTER THREE

COURT TALES PRESERVED AT QUMRAN

3.1. Introduction

In Chapter One, I demonstrated how several scholars have attempted to analyze the literary structures and features of the early Jewish court tales. Previous studies, however, were limited in their analyses since they did not have access to several court tales preserved among the DSS that were unpublished at the time. This former lack of literary evidence hindered earlier analyses from being able to account for the Second Temple literary framework of the Jewish court tales. In Chapter One, I noted that one of the chief functions of these tales was to serve to emphasize Judean victory in exile. Previous studies have not focused upon this role of the court tales in a sustained manner. In Chapter Two, I began to contextualize the Jewish court tales preserved among the literature of the ancient Near East and Mediterranean. I also outlined the early Jewish adaptation and transmission of the *Story of Aḥiqar* and the Joseph Story (Gen 37, 39-50). While the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales evidenced literary diversity, they were nevertheless found to be unified in their focus upon the lives, vicissitudes and successes of courtiers within the king's court. Though the early Jewish court tales share this focus on the successes of Israelites within the courts of foreign kings, they also focus on the successes of the God of Israel in the foreign court, while the focus on the successes of the deities of the courtiers was largely absent from the ancient Near Eastern tales.

The discovery of the DSS, and in particular the Aramaic Scrolls, has served to expand the extant Jewish court tales that recount the victories of Israelites in the courts of foreign kings, and, with their discovery, it is now possible to provide a more detailed account of the breadth and diversity of this literature during the Second Temple period than was possible in previous studies. Accordingly, it is necessary now to examine this collection of early Jewish court tales in order to understand their distinctive structures and themes, as well as to discover how their structures and themes might relate to those of the tales analysed in Chapter Two. In the present chapter, I focus upon those court tales preserved among the Aramaic Scrolls found at Qumran. Through this overview, it will become clear that, though the Aramaic court tales exhibit much diversity from the ancient Near Eastern tales and from one another, they also share a number of common structural and thematic features, as well as language (words and phrases). In particular, all of the early Jewish court tales employ at least one of two major themes (and sometimes both themes): 1) the theme of the conflict of the courtier; or 2) the theme of the courtier's superior skill. These similarities suggest a family resemblance among the Aramaic court tales, which were likely composed by associated scribal circles during the early Hellenistic period.[165]

Many of the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean tales employ these themes of court conflict and court skill to highlight the victories of the courtier. While the Jewish court tales employ these themes to emphasize the victories of the courtiers in the foreign

[165] Daniel A. Machiela and Andrew B. Perrin, "Tobit and the *Genesis Apocryphon*: Toward a Family Portrait," *JBL* 133.1 (2014): 111-132, and Daniel A. Machiela, "The Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls: Coherence and Context in the Library of Qumran" in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran and the Concept of a Library*, eds. S. White Crawford and C. Wassen, STDJ 116 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 250-53.
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court, they also emphasize that the courtier's success is a result of the favour that they hold with the God of Israel. Recognizing such differences between the ancient Near Eastern and Jewish court tales helps to establish the point that, while Judean scribes readily employed well-established ancient Near Eastern court tale themes, they adapted these themes for new and different purposes. Thus, this chapter has the following three goals: 1) to provide a general overview of the Aramaic court tales preserved among the DSS; 2) to highlight the major structural and thematic features of these texts; and 3) to demonstrate how these texts have employed these structures and themes to highlight the victories of the Israelite courtier and the God of Israel in the foreign court. This examination of the structural and literary features of the Aramaic court tales will also provide a literary context for the analysis of those other early Jewish court tales not preserved among the Aramaic Scrolls, which are examined in Chapter Four.

Below, I survey the individual Aramaic tales in two sections: 1) I begin with an examination of those texts typically associated with Daniel: the book of Daniel, *4QPseudo-Daniel*$^{a\text{-}b}$, *4QPseudo-Daniel*^{c}, *4QFour Kingdoms*, *4QAramaic Apocalypse*, and *4QPrayer of Nabonidus*. 2) I then examine those other Aramaic works that have not been as readily associated with Daniel, yet nevertheless contain at least one of the two major court tale themes noted above: *4QJews in the Persian Court*, the *Genesis Apocryphon* cols. 19-20, and Tobit. Following this survey, I offer some analysis of the function of the overarching themes and concerns exhibited by this literature and discuss some of the common language and expressions employed by these texts. This analysis will be accompanied by charts at the end of this chapter, which list the major literary features of these tales. I conclude by

suggesting that the language and themes shared by these Aramaic court tales suggest that the scribal circles responsible for these tales held a particular worldview, which they exhibit within these stories.

3.2. Ancient Texts Associated with Daniel

An abundance of Second Temple period literature attributed to the Jewish courtier, Daniel, attests to his popularity during the Second Temple period. The Masoretic Text of Daniel is only one version of the book, which was evidently carefully selected, collected and compiled from a larger group of Danielic traditions that circulated during the Persian and Hellenistic periods.[166] An alternative version and collection of the book of Daniel has also been preserved in Greek, and includes a number of additional tales that have not been preserved within the Masoretic collection, including: Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, and the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Children. In addition to these two different versions of the book of Daniel, several other non-canonical Danielic compositions have been preserved among the Aramaic DSS, including: *4QPseudo-Daniel*$^{a\text{-}b}$ (4Q243-244), and *4QPseudo-Daniel*^{c} (4Q245). Moreover, while *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* (4Q242), *4QFour Kingdoms*$^{a\text{-}b}$ (4Q552-553) and *4QAramaic Apocalypse* (4Q246) may not necessarily feature Daniel, these texts nevertheless seem to be closely related to the Danielic corpus. Other Danielic literary collections can be found in later sources, such as in the *Vita Danielis* preserved within the *Lives of the Prophets*, further attesting to Daniel's enduring popularity

[166] On the process of the intentional collection and compilation of the book of Daniel, particularly Daniel 1-6, see Holm, *Of Courtiers and King*, 1-576. On the diversity of Danielic traditions that circulated during the Persian and Hellenistic periods, see Carol A. Newsom, with Brennan W. Breed, *Daniel*, OTL (Louisville/Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 2.

during the latter part of the Second Temple period.[167] In this chapter, I provide a broad overview of Daniel 1-6 and the non-canonical Danielic compositions preserved among the Aramaic Scrolls, while the Greek additions and the *Vita Danielis*, which were not found among the DSS, are treated in Chapter Four.[168] In this section, I begin with a brief overview of Daniel 1-6, since this work has been most readily identified by scholars as a collection of court tales, and since it is our most complete and extensive collection of court tales preserved among the DSS. I then proceed to introduce those other Aramaic court tales that have been associated with the courtier Daniel.

3.2.1. Daniel 1-6

Though the book of Daniel is well-known due to its later canonical status, it only preserves a selection of the traditions that once circulated about Daniel during the Second Temple period. I include a discussion of Daniel 1-6 in this chapter because it was discovered among the DSS and due to its fourth century BCE compositional date, a date which is comparable to several other works considered in this chapter. Fragments representing eight or nine manuscripts of the book of Daniel were discovered at Qumran, and all twelve chapters of Daniel are attested among the DSS, evidencing the work's

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[167] D. R. A. Hare dates *Lives of the Prophets* to the first quarter of the first century A.D. See D. R. A. Hare, "The Lives of the Prophets," in *OTP*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 2 of *OTP*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc.), 379-384.

[168] While Józef T. Milik suggested that the fragmentary Aramaic 4Q551 was a counterpart to the story of Susanna, it has since been demonstrated that the text shares stronger affinities with Judges 19:15-23 and Genesis 19:4-7. Accordingly, none of the Greek additions to Daniel have been found at Qumran. See Józef T. Milik, "Daniel et Susanne à Qumrân?" in *De la Tôrah au Messie: études d'exégèse et d'herméneutique bibliques offertes à Henri Cazelles pour ses 25 années d'enseignement à l'Institut catholique de Paris, Octobre 1979*, eds. Maurice Carrez, Joseph Doré and Pierre Grelot (Paris: Desclée, 1981), 337-59; and Puech, DJD XXXVII, 48.

popularity: 1Q71-72, 4Q112-116, 4Q116[a], and 6Q7pap.[169] These manuscripts paleographically date to a period between the late 2nd century BCE to the first half of the 1st century CE, which serves as a *terminus ante quem* for the work. While John J. Collins dates the final glosses of the contents of the texts prior to the rededication of the Second Temple (165 BCE), the contents of the collection, particularly the court tales of Daniel 2-6, evince an earlier date.[170]

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[169] Though Daniel 12 is not attested among the manuscripts of the book of Daniel listed here, it is attested in 4Q174 *Florilegium*. See Eugene C. Ulrich, "The Text of Daniel in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, VTSup 83.2 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 573-85, particularly 575. For the critical edition of 1Q71-72, see Dominique Barthélemy, "Daniel (i)," in *Qumran Cave I*, eds. D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, DJD I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 150; and Dominique Barthélemy, "Daniel (ii)," in *Qumran Cave I*, eds. D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, DJD I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 151. Eugene Ulrich published a preliminary edition of 4Q112-115. See Eugene C. Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran: Part 1: A Preliminary Edition of 4 QDan[a]," *BASOR* 268 (1987): 17-37; Eugene C. Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran: Part 1: A Preliminary Edition of 4 QDan[b] and 4 QDan[c]," *BASOR* 274 (1989): 3-26. Stephen Pfann published a preliminary edition of 4Q116. See Stephen J. Pfann, "4QDaniel[d] (4Q115): A Preliminary Edition with Critical Notes," *RevQ* 17.65 (1996): 37-71. For the critical edition of 4Q112-116, see Eugene Ulrich, "Daniel," in *Psalms to Chronicles*, eds. Eugene Ulrich, Frank Moore Cross, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Peter W. Flint, Sarianna Metso, Catherine M. Murphy, Curt Niccum, Patrick W. Skehan, Emanuel Tov, and Julio Trebolle Barrera, DJD XVI (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 239-89. For the critical edition of 6Q7pap, see Maurice Baillet, "Daniel (Pl. XXIII)," in *Les 'Petites Grottes' de Qumrân*, eds. M. Baillet, J. T. Milik, and R. de Vaux, DJD III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 114-16.
Puech identified a small fragment containing Dan 2:39-40, which he argues is a distinct and separate Daniel manuscript. If Puech is correct that the fragment comes from a separate manuscript, this fragment would constitute the ninth copy of Daniel found among the DSS. See Émile Puech, "Un nouveau manuscrit de Daniel: 4QDn[f] = 4Q116[a]," in *Is There a Text in This Cave? Studies in the Textuality of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of George J. Brooke*, eds. Ariel Feldman, Maria Cioată, and Charlotte Hempel, STDJ 119 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 132-3.
For a general introduction on Daniel at Qumran, see Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The Formation and Re-Formation of Daniel in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 1 of *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, Tex.: Baylor, 2006), 101-30; and John J. Collins, "The Book of Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Hebrew Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. Nóra Dávid, Armin Lange, Kristin De Troyer, and Shani Tzoref, FRLANT 239 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 203-18.

[170] See John J. Collins, *Daniel*, 35-8. While Collins suggests that the final glosses in the text date to 165 BCE, he suggests that an earlier form of the collection of Daniel 1-6 would have had an earlier dating, which he maintains was still in the Hellenistic period. Collins also notes that Daniel 3:31-6:28 may have previously circulated independently and likely dates to the fourth or third century BCE. By contrast, Reinhard Kratz contends that the Aramaic collection dates earlier than the Persian period. Reinhard Gregor Kratz, *Translatio Imperii: Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Danielerzählungen und ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld*, WMANT 63 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 134-48.

Two major observations have led a number of scholars to posit a rather complex theory of redactional development in regards to the book of Daniel: 1) the Book of Daniel employs two languages (Hebrew in Dan 1-2:4a and 8-12 and Aramaic in Dan 2:4b-7), and 2) a generic shift occurs between the tales of Daniel 1-6, which recounts the deeds of Daniel and his three friends in foreign royal courts, and Daniel 7-12, which recounts Daniel's visionary experiences. Collins has proposed a fivefold theory of development for the Hebrew and Aramaic version of the book of Daniel.[171] According to Collins' view, the book of Daniel developed in the following manner: 1) the tales of Daniel 2-6 originally circulated as separate tales; 2) an initial Danielic collection was gathered and included Daniel 3:31-6:29; 3) the Aramaic court tales of Daniel 2-6 were collected and Daniel 1 served as their introduction; 4) Daniel 7 was composed in Aramaic and probably circulated along with Daniel 1-6 as an Aramaic book; and 5) the Hebrew chapters (Daniel 8-12) were added to the collection between 167-164 BCE, and Daniel 1 was translated into Hebrew.[172] It is the earlier collection of Aramaic tales (Daniel 2-6), which focuses upon the trials and triumphs of Daniel and his three friends in the courts of foreign kings, that shall form the basis of the analysis here. The goal of this section is to provide a general overview of the

[171] Collins, *Daniel*, 24-38. Collins notes that the Greek recensions of Daniel likely underwent additional redactional activity than the five steps listed here. Also, see Newsom, *Daniel*, 6-12.
One of the most significant early proponents of the theory that the book of Daniel was the literary product of a gradual growth process was Johannes Meinhold. See Johannes Meinhold, *Die Composition des Buches Daniel* (Greifswald: Julius Abel, 1884), 1-91. Gustav Hölschen was another particularly influential early proponent of this view. See Gustav Hölschen, "Die Entstehung des Buches Daniel," *ThStK* 92 (1919): 113-38.
[172] In defense of the thesis that the Aramaic chapters of Daniel once constituted a distinct collection, see Rainer Albertz, *Der Gott des Daniel: Untersuchungen zu Daniel 4-6 in der Septuagintafassung sowie zu Komposition und Theologie des aramäischen Danielbuches*, Stuttgart Bibelstudien 131 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988), 170-93; and Reinhard Gregor Kratz, *Translatio Imperi: Untersuchungen zu den aramäischen Danielerzählungen und ihrem theologiegeschichtlichen Umfeld*, WMANT 63 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 6-42.

five different court tales preserved in Daniel 2-6, which focus upon the structural and thematic elements present within the courtly interactions that feature within these texts. Since Daniel 1 seems to be a later addition that served as an introduction to Daniel 2-6, it will be treated in Chapter Four, while Daniel 7-12 shall be included in my discussion on the relationship between court tales and apocalyptic in Chapter Five. While much of what is introduced in the section on Daniel 1-6 has been previously noted by scholars, the examination of the literary themes here will provide a foundation for the discussion of the themes that appear within other court tales discussed below, particularly those less familiar and less complete texts.

3.2.1.1. Daniel 2

Daniel 2 takes place within the court of King Nebuchadnezzar, and focusses upon Daniel's ability to interpret dreams.[173] Nebuchadnezzar is disturbed by a bad dream (2:1) and seeks the guidance of his court ministers (sorcerers, enchanters, magicians, and Chaldeans) to recount his dream and interpret it for him (2:5). The court ministers are unable to fulfill the king's request (2:10-11), so Nebuchadnezzar commands that all the wise men in his empire be put to death (2:12). Daniel requests more time, and then recounts the contents of the dream and its interpretation to the king after they are revealed in a vision of the night (2:17-45). Nebuchadnezzar does obeisance to Daniel, gives him gifts (2:46),

[173] Carol Newsom has identified *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* and Daniel 4, along with Daniel 5, 3 and 2, as a cluster of Jewish narratives about King Nabonidus. Newsom speculates that a series of tales situated in the court of Nabonidus served as sources for Daniel 2-4. Newsom also includes Daniel 5 among this collection of Nabonidus narratives since Belshazzar was a son of Nabonidus. See Carol Newsom, "Why Nabonidus? Excavating Traditions from Qumran, the Hebrew Bible, and Neo-Babylonian Sources," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts*, eds. Sarianna Metso, Hindy Najman, and Eileen Schuller, STDJ 92 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), 57-79.

makes him ruler over the province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon (2:48), and appoints Daniel's three Judean friends over the administration of the province of Babylon (2:49). That the account depicts not only the success of Daniel but also the victory of his God is evident when Nebuchadnezzar extols Daniel's God for having revealed the dream and its interpretation to Daniel, which serves to demonstrate that Daniel's display of superior skill positively impacts the broader Judean community. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges that Daniel's God is "God of gods and Lord of Kings and a revealer of mysteries" (2:47).[174] Thus, while Nebuchadnezzar had sought to kill Daniel and his companions (as well as the other wise men of Babylon) (2:12-13), God successfully prevents this by revealing Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation to Daniel, which serves to demonstrate that the God of Israel holds power over the affairs of the foreign court.

Nebuchadnezzar's vision depicts a succession of four kingdoms, which are portrayed as a series of metals of decreasing value and clay, followed by a final everlasting kingdom, which serves to highlight the account's interest in eschatological matters. Imagery depicting a succession of four kingdoms is derived from traditional sources. This theme also features in Daniel 7, *4QFour Kingdoms*, and elsewhere.[175] Court tales were

[174] All translations in this chapter are those of the author, unless otherwise noted.

[175] In the dream in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar beholds a great statue composed of metals of declining value: a head of gold, arms of silver, middle and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay (2:31-3). A stone then strikes the feet of the statue, and the metals of the statue are destroyed (2:34-5). Daniel explains to the king that the four metals represent four kingdoms of declining power, followed by a fifth eternal kingdom of God (2:36-45). See John Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 92-98. Collins notes that the dream of Daniel 2 employs traditional motifs of two kinds. The statue within the dream is composed of metals of decreasing value, and a similar succession can be found in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, 106-201, which in turn may have employed the imagery from a traditional eastern source. Even in Hesiod's work, it is implied that something better will follow the era of the declining metals. The

commonly collected alongside of other literary forms, such as visions, fables, and proverbs in the ancient Near East, often with the court tale serving as a framework for other forms of literature; for example, as noted in Chapter Two, both *Ankhsheshonq* and the *Story of Aḥiqar* employ court tale frameworks to introduce proverbial collections.[176] In the current form of Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar's vision is integral to the account, and serves to demonstrate how early Judean scribes freely combined court tale themes with other motifs.[177] The inclusion of the four kingdoms paradigm here also reinforces the depiction of God as victorious over the court by highlighting that the world's empires (the four metals) are merely temporary institutions. God's coming kingdom, unlike these four world empires, will be indestructible and eternal, that is superior to all those that came before. God's victory as described within this vision is a political one, which culminates in a new and eternal kingdom different from the current foreign kingdom. This differs markedly from the more validating sort of victory achieved through Daniel's display of skill in the framework of Daniel 2, which does not reject the current foreign ruler outright, and instead

second complex of ideas are those schemas that include four kingdoms, followed by a fifth kingdom of definitive character. For instance, Aemilius Sura, a Roman chronicler, refers to the rule of four different peoples, followed by the definitive rule of the Romans. Collins thinks that this account may also be of eastern provenance, having been adapted to support the definitive rule of the Romans. Similarly, *Sibylline Oracle* 4:49-101 also depicts four kingdoms and ten generations. However, the fifth and final kingdom, which represents Rome here, is not depicted as a lasting empire, and was likely added later. The Persian *Zand-ī Vohuman Yasn* or *Bahman Yasht* also includes a sequence of four metal branches that represent four periods. A sequence of four periods depicted as metals is also found in *Dēnkard* 9.8. Both *Dēnkard* and the *Bahman Yasht* seem to draw from Avestan tradition. The Hellenistic era Babylonian *Dynastic Prophecy* may also describe a sequence of four kingdoms, but Collins aptly notes that its fragmentary nature casts doubt on whether the work exhibits a four-kingdom paradigm. In its present form, the court tale of Daniel 2 serves as a literary framework that introduces the vision of the statue and its interpretation.

[176] See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 45-183.

[177] Lawrence Wills, however, suggests that Daniel 2 exhibits redactional activity and that the vision derived from an entirely different context than the court tale itself. See Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 81-83.

demonstrates that God is already sovereign over the foreign empire and results in that empire's acknowledgment of God's power.

3.2.1.2. Daniel 4

I now turn to Daniel 4 since it also focuses on Daniel's ability to interpret a dream in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar and employs a similar structural pattern to Daniel 2, which emphasizes that Daniel's skill is superior to that of the Babylonian courtiers. The court conflict accounts of Daniel 3 and 6 will be treated below. In Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar is again disturbed by a dream (4:2), and seeks the guidance of his court ministers, "the wise men of Babylon", so that they might interpret his dream (4:3). However, the court ministers are unable to fulfill the King's request (4:4). Only Nebuchadnezzar's Judean courtier, Daniel, is finally able to interpret the dream for the king (4:16-25). In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he beholds a great tree, which shelters the world, but an angel cries out that the tree is to be cut down. Daniel then warns Nebuchadnezzar against his arrogance, but later Nebuchadnezzar boasts: "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built to be a royal house by the strength of my power and for the honor of my majesty?" (4:27). Due to his arrogance, Nebuchadnezzar is then driven away from mankind and becomes bestial (4:29). However, upon humbling himself, Nebuchadnezzar's reason returns to him, and he is restored to his former position (4:33).[178] While Daniel 4

[178] Hector Avalaos demonstrates how Nebuchadnezzar's bestial state is rooted in the Mesopotamian myth of the (earthly) man who becomes wild due to a curse by a deity. See Hector Avalos, "Nebuchadnezzar's Affliction: New Mesopotamian Parallels for Daniel 4," *JBL* 133.3 (2014): 497-507; and Christopher Hays, "Chirps from the Dust: The Affliction of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:30 in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context," *JBL* 126.2 (2007): 305-325. Hays notes that the animalist imagery employed in Daniel 4:30 to describe Nebuchadnezzar's descent into madness was commonly employed in the ancient Near East to describe underworld figures, as well as those whom those figures of the underworld afflicted. Also see,

does not mention that Daniel is promoted or receives any monetary reward, King Nebuchadnezzar does bless, praise and honour Daniel's god (4:34). This shift from Nebuchadnezzar's earlier boastful attitude to his humiliation and subsequent praise of Daniel's God serves to demonstrate that despite the seeming stature of the foreign king, it is the Most High who truly maintains sovereignty over the foreign court and thus obtains a validating victory through the acknowledgment given by the formerly boastful foreign king.

Daniel 2 and 4 share some particularly close structural and thematic affinities. The similarities between Daniel 2 and 4 cannot be taken as merely coincidental, and suggest intentionality, as has been noted by John J. Collins and Carol Newsom.[179] Both accounts focus on Daniel's ability to interpret King Nebuchadnezzar's disturbing dreams, a task which the other non-Judean court ministers are unable to accomplish. Daniel's skills, however, are attributed to the God of Israel (2:27-28; and 4:5), and result in Nebuchadnezzar's explicit acknowledgment that Daniel's God is sovereign. In Daniel 4,

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Matthias Henze, *The Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar: The Ancient Near Eastern Origins and Early History of Interpretation of Daniel 4*, JSJSup 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 3. Scholars generally agree that Daniel 4 has artfully woven several different traditions together. Ernst Haag suggests that two different traditions underlie the account: 1) Nebuchadnezzar's dream and interpretation by Daniel, and 2) Nebuchadnezzar's deposition from kingship. See Haag, *Die Errettung Daniels aus der Löwengrube*, 14-25. Alternatively, Lawrence Wills distinguishes three sources that underlie Daniel 4: 1) Nebuchadnezzar's dream and interpretation, 2) Daniel's pronouncement in 4:22-27; and 3) Nebuchadnezzar's confession in OG 4:30a-34. See Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 87-121. Daniel 4 thus provides another example where the Judean scribes freely wove court tale themes together with other motifs.

[179] Collins, *Daniel*, 220; and Newsom, *Daniel*, 133. Several scholars have remarked on the literary relationship between the Joseph cycle (Gen 37, 39-50) and Daniel 1-6. Michael Segal has argued convincingly that the relationship between Daniel 2 and Genesis 41 is best understood to be a result of the book of Daniel's literary dependence upon Genesis. Segal further suggests that an earlier stratum of Daniel 2 portrayed Daniel as a "second" Joseph and closely paralleled Genesis 41 and Daniel 5. See Michael Segal, "Joseph to Daniel: The Literary Development of the Narrative in Daniel 2," *VT* 59.1 (2009): 123-149. Collins has demonstrated that the parallels between the Joseph cycle and Daniel 1-6 even extend to specific phrases and expressions. See Collins, *Daniel*, 39-40.

Nebuchadnezzar even goes so far as to actively bless, praise and honor the King of heaven "because all of his deeds are true, and his ways are just and because he is able to humble those who walk in pride" (4:34). Thus, the display of Daniel's skills in these texts ultimately serve to demonstrate the power of his God. As Matthias Henze aptly notes: "the stories in Daniel differ from other court tales in that in the end it is not the protagonist who is praised by the monarch, but *his God*."[180] This principle difference from the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales is not merely indicative of Daniel alone, but is rather representative of the Judean tales as a whole, which nearly universally emphasize that the courtier's success in the court derives from the power of the God of Israel.

That Daniel 2 and 4 employ similar structures and themes should be attributed to the fact that they employ the traditional ancient Near Eastern theme of the courtier's ability to interpret dreams. This theme was also employed by an earlier Israelite work, the Joseph Story (Gen 37, 39-49), which was outlined in Chapter Two, and, in particular, by Genesis 41, Joseph's interpretation of the Pharaoh's dreams. Daniel 2 and 4 share a particularly close resemblance to the structural and thematic similarities with this account. All three stories focus upon the ability of the Israelite courtier to interpret the dreams of a foreign ruler. The verb employed in Genesis 41 to describe Joseph's skill פתר ("to interpret") is etymologically cognate with the root פשר ("to interpret") employed in Daniel 2 and 4. In Genesis 41, the Pharaoh is disturbed by a troubling dream (41:1-8). The Pharaoh calls his magicians and wise men, and tells them the dream, but they are unable to interpret it (41:8). Only the Israelite courtier, Joseph, is finally able to interpret the dreams for the Pharaoh

[180] Matthias Henze, "The Narrative Frame of Daniel: A Literary Assessment," *JSJ* 32.1 (2001): 6-24, 21.

(41:25-32) and to advise the Pharaoh regarding how he should respond to the dream (41:33-36). Joseph's skill is then praised by the Pharaoh, and he is put in charge of the Pharaoh's household, given the Pharaoh's signet ring, arrayed with fine garments, dressed in a gold chain around his neck, and permitted to ride in the chariot of the second in command (41:40-43). Ultimately, however, the Pharaoh acknowledges that the true source of Joseph's skill is his God (41:38-9; and cf. 41:16). Thus, the demonstration of the superior skill of the heroes in all three of these skills serves to demonstrate the power of God. The chart below serves to highlight the basic structural similarities shared between the tales of Genesis 41, Daniel 2 and 4:[181]

Event	Genesis 41	Daniel 2	Daniel 4
i) a foreign ruler is disturbed by a problem in the court (here by a bad dream)	vv. 1-8	v. 1	v. 2
ii) none of the foreign court ministers are able to resolve the problem (here: interpret the dream)	v. 8	vv. 10-11	vv. 3-4
iii) only an Israelite exile is able to (solve the problem (here: interpret the dream)	vv. 25-32	vv. 36-45	vv. 16-25
iv) the Israelite is rewarded	vv. 40-43	vv. 46-49	

[181] For a discussion of the structural similarities shared between Genesis 41, and Daniel 2 and 4, see Gnuse, "The Jewish Dream Interpreter in a Foreign Court," 39-42

v) the king acknowledges the sovereignty of the God of the Israelite interpreter	vv. 38-39	v. 47	v. 34

In addition to the strong affinities shared between Joseph and Daniel, Daniel 4's depiction of Nebuchadnezzar's madness bears particularly close literary similarities to *4QPrayer of Nabonidus*, which is treated in my discussion of that text below.

3.2.1.3. Daniel 5

Daniel 5 also focuses on Daniel's miraculous deeds, in particular his ability to read and interpret the strange writing on the wall of King Belshazzar's palace. The tale begins with King Belshazzar, who holds a great feast and drinks from the Jerusalem Temple vessels, which the reader is reminded were taken by Nebuchadnezzar after his victory over Jerusalem and its temple (5:2; cf. 587 BCE). Thus, the specific reference to the vessels serves to recall Nebuchadnezzar's and Babylon's apparent victory over Jerusalem and the Judeans, as well as to emphasize Belshazzar's sacrilege in drinking from the Temple vessels.[182] Belshazzar is also referred to as the son of Nebuchadnezzar, but in fact Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus. The elasticity of time and genealogy within the text remind the reader that historical accuracy is secondary to literary structure and theme within the Jewish court tales.[183]

[182] Collins, *Daniel*, 245.
[183] David M. Valeta, "Court or Jester Tales? Resistance and Social Reality in Daniel 1-6," *PRSt* 32.3 (2005): 318.

The fingers of a hand appear and write upon the plaster of the wall, which terrifies Belshazzar (5:5-6). The king then summons his court ministers, “the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the diviners”, to read the writing upon the wall (5:7). However, the ministers are unable to read the message or interpret it (5:8). The queen then reminds Belshazzar about Daniel, emphasizing that Daniel has “a spirit of the holy gods within him”, “enlightenment, understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of gods”, as well as “an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding interpretation of dreams, the ability to solve riddles and loosen problems” (5:10-12), which serves to emphasize that Daniel’s abilities have a divine quality.[184] Daniel reminds Belshazzar how the God Most High humbled Nebuchadnezzar when he became proud, and informs Belshazzar that similarly he has not humbled himself before the Most High, who is sovereign. Instead, Belshazzar has behaved arrogantly by drinking from the temple vessels and worshiping “gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone” (5:23). Daniel reveals that it was God who sent the message to Belshazzar and reads and interprets the message for Belshazzar (5:17-28). Belshazzar then rewards Daniel by having him clothed in purple, giving him a golden chain and authority over a third of the kingdom (5:29). Although Daniel has informed Belshazzar about his arrogance, Belshazzar does not acknowledge the God of Israel, and that very night Belshazzar is killed (5:30). Thus, the God of Israel utilizes the very occasion of Belshazzar’s desecration of the Temple vessels (items that recall Babylon’s defeat of

[184] Collins aptly remarks that the problem in Daniel 5 is not resolved through Daniel’s own ingenuity but rather through the supernatural favor that Daniel receives from God. See Collins, *Daniel*, 249.
On the role of the queen in Daniel 5, see Tawny L. Holm, “Royal Women Sages in Aramaic Literature: The Unnamed Queen in Daniel 5 and Saritrah in the “Revolt of Babylon.”” in *From Mari to Jerusalem: Assyriological and Biblical Studies in Honor of Jack Murad Sasson*, eds. Annalisa Azzoni, Alexandra Kleinerman, Douglas A. Knight, and David I. Owen (University Park: Eisenbrauns, 2020), 151-74.

Jerusalem), the God of Israel demonstrates that, despite the apparent victory of Babylon over Jerusalem, the Most High is sovereign in the foreign royal court.

Of focus in Daniel 5, as in Daniel 2 and 4, is Daniel's courtly skill. Similarly, the framework of Daniel 5 shares the same general structure to Daniel 2 and 4: 1) a foreign ruler is disturbed by a problem in the court; 2) none of the foreign court ministers are able to resolve the problem for the ruler; 3) only an Israelite exile is ultimately able to solve the problem; 4) the Israelite is rewarded for their display of skill; and 5) the king acknowledges the sovereignty of the God of the Israelite interpreter. However, dissimilar from Daniel 2 and 4 which focus upon Daniel's ability to interpret (פשר) dreams, Daniel 5 focuses upon Daniel's ability to read and interpret (פשר) the message on the wall, which is made evident when Belshazzar emphasizes that his wise men and enchanters were unable to read and interpret the message but that Daniel is known to possess the skill of interpretation (5:15-16). Daniel here employs a "punning hermeneutic."[185] Just as Neo-Assyrian scholars would introduce their interpretations of astrological omens using the phrase *anniu piširšu* ("this is the interpretation"), Daniel employs *dĕnâ pĕšar-millĕtāʾ* ("this is its interpretation").[186] This strategy further suggests the work's focus on the wisdom and skill of the courtier.

As discussed in Chapter Two, another court tale that focusses upon the courtier's ability to read mysterious writing can be found in the third episode of the Egyptian *Setne Khamwas II*, which employs a similar structure to the tale of Daniel 5. In this episode, the

[185] Scott B. Noegel, *Nocturnal Ciphers: The Allusive Language of Dreams in the Ancient Near East*, AOS 89 (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2007), 24-26.
[186] Newsom, *Daniel*, 177.

Egyptian Pharaoh is threatened by a Nubian sorcerer, who challenges the Pharaoh to find a courtier who can read his sealed document without breaking the seal. While none of the Pharaoh's other courtiers, including Setne, are able to accomplish this task, Setne's son, Si-Osire, is not only able to read the document but also to explain its contents. Si-Osire is then rewarded for the display of his skill, in this instance by being offered burnt offerings and libations. While Daniel 5 and *Setne Khamwas II* likely do not exhibit any direct literary relationship, their shared focus upon the courtier's ability to read and interpret mysterious writing serves to demonstrate that this was not a unique court theme or structural pattern in Daniel.

What is unique in Daniel 5, however, is the tale's emphasis that Daniel's abilities derive from the Most High, while the display of Si-Osire's powers simply results in his own praise. Although Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges and honors Daniel's God after his display of skill in Daniel 2 and 4, Belshazzar makes no such acknowledgment, even though Daniel reminds Belshazzar about the humiliation and subsequent restoration that his father, Nebuchadnezzar, experienced due to his hubris (5:18-22). However, Belshazzar may be afforded a shred of dignity in his fulfillment of his promised reward for interpreting the writing (5:17).[187] Whereas Nebuchadnezzar is permitted to continue ruling after he acknowledges the sovereignty of the Most High in Daniel 4, Belshazzar is instead killed. Though Daniel receives reward for the display of his skills that are superior to those of other foreign courtiers in Daniel 2, 4 and 5, the demonstration of his abilities ultimately serves to demonstrate God's power over the foreign court. Thus, a common precept

[187] Newsom, *Daniel*, 178.

emerges among Daniel 2, 4 and 5: those foreign rulers who acknowledge God's sovereignty are permitted to rule, while those who do not acknowledge God's sovereignty and worship false idols or exalt themselves above the God Most High (as Belshazzar does by drinking from the Temple vessels) will ultimately be humbled and removed from power.

3.2.1.4. Daniel 3

Daniel 3 recounts a court conflict, which is set within the court of King Nebuchadnezzar. The account focuses upon the trials of Daniel's three friends: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Nebuchadnezzar sets up a golden statue in the plain of Dura, and makes a decree before his "satraps, prefects, governors, counselors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the officials of the province" (3:2) that all should bow down and worship the statue (3:1-2). Those who fail to comply with this command are to be thrown into a fiery furnace (3:4-6). Whether Nebuchadnezzar actually ever had such an statue of gold constructed is not the purpose of the account; rather, the tale emphasizes Nebuchadnezzar's power—that he could have an enormous gold structure erected, that he had the authority to summon the leaders of the empire, and that he enacted horrible punishments for disobedience.[188]

Certain Chaldeans denounce the Jews before the king, noting that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are unwilling to worship the golden statue (3:8-12).[189]

[188] Daniel Smith-Christopher, "Daniel," in *The New Interpreters Bible*, vol. VII of *The New Interpreters Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 62.
[189] The episode seems to feature what Lawrence Wills calls the "ethnic perspective" (i.e., that is the ethnic identities of the three Judean friends and their rivals, the Chaldeans, is a focus within Daniel 3). See, Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 68.

Consequently, these three Judean courtiers are thrown into a furnace (3:13-23), but they are subsequently rescued by one who has "the appearance of a Son of God" (3:25). The king then commands the Jewish courtiers to come out of the furnace (3:26), and proclaims the Judeans innocent in their resolve to worship their God alone (3:28). Nebuchadnezzar then causes the Judean courtiers to prosper in the province of Babylon (3:30).

In Daniel 3, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's resolve to worship the God of Israel, and their subsequent protection by God, serves to demonstrate that the God Most High holds power over the court. This purpose is implicit in the courtiers' statement to Nebuchadnezzar prior to being thrown into the furnace: "If our God, whom we serve, is able to rescue us from the furnace of burning fire, and from your hand, o king, let him deliver us." (3:17). The text then makes it explicit that the courtiers' success impinges upon God's direct intervention, stressing that the fire in the furnace "had no authority over their bodies" (3:27). Instead, the three friends are rescued by one who has the appearance of a god (3:25), which serves to vindicate their refusal to worship the golden statue and demonstrate that God exerts power over the edicts of the king. A second pronouncement is made by Nebuchadnezzar at the end of the tale, stipulating that any who should blaspheme the God of the Judean courtiers should be killed and their homes destroyed (3:29). The account thus begins and ends with a pronouncement uttered by the king. While the first pronouncement is set up in favour of idolatry and essentially contradicts the Judeans' worship of the God of Israel alone, the three friends' resistance towards this pronouncement and their protection by the God of Israel result in the second pronouncement, which serves as a victory for the Judeans since it favours their worship of the Most High and the God of

Israel since his significance has now been established by the foreign king. In this way, the victory in this tale not only benefits Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, but also benefits all those who worship the God of Israel since they are now permitted to worship their god without fear. Hence, the implication here is that this victory is communal and shared by all Judeans.

3.2.1.5. Daniel 6

Daniel 6 describes a court conflict, which is set within the court of King Darius. At the suggestion of the "chiefs of the kingdom, prefects, satraps, counselors and governors", who are jealous of Daniel's favor before the king, Darius issues an irrevocable decree that he should be the exclusive object of worship for thirty days (6:6-9). Nevertheless, Daniel continues to pray three times a day to his God (6:10), and is discovered by his rival courtiers, who report his activities to the king (6:11-15). Daniel is then thrown into a den of lions (6:16), but is found unharmed the following day (6:20), having been rescued by an angel of God (6:22). Daniel is brought up out of the den (6:23), and his accusers, along with their wives and children, are thrown into the den of lions where they are killed immediately (6:24). King Darius then makes a second decree that "In every dominion of my kingdom, men should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel" (6:27), and Daniel prospers during the reign of Kings Darius and Cyrus (6:29).[190] Daniel 6 thus exhibits an implicit danger, whereby Judeans, such as Daniel, who remain faithful to the God of Israel

[190] Polaski discusses how Daniel 5 and 6 celebrate the power of writing. According to Polaski, the two tales are unwilling to do away with foreign world empires altogether, and so the foreign ruler is ultimately left in his position of power at the end of each tale. Nevertheless, these foreign kings are also left with a Jewish advisor by their side. See Donald C. Polaski, "*Mene*, *Mene*, *Tekel*, *Parsin:* Writing and Resistance in Daniel 5 and 6," *JBL* 123.4 (2004): 649-669.

and uphold his laws over the idolatrous laws of the king may be put at risk of death, but yet will ultimately experience vindication through the agency of the Most High.

Both Daniel 3 and 6 employ the court conflict theme, which focuses upon the successful courtiers who are punished by the king at the behest of conniving court adversaries who set-up the hero with malicious intent, and the subsequent reinstatement of the hero within the court. Moreover, both Daniel 3 and 6 follow a similar literary structure whereby: 1) the courtier(s) already enjoy(s) success within the royal court; 2) rival courtier(s) plot against the courtier(s); 3) the courtier(s) is/are condemned to death; 4) the courtier(s) survive(s) and is/are vindicated; 5) the rival courtier(s) is/are then punished; and 6) the hero(es) is/are rehabilitated within the court and prosper(s) within the kingdom once again.[191] As we discovered in Chapter Two, the Assyrian episode of the *Story of Aḥiqar* preserved among the Elephantine Papyri, the Egyptian *Story of Ankhsheshonq*, and several other ancient Near Eastern court tales also conform to this same structural pattern. While the presence of the court conflict theme within the ancient Near Eastern court tales does not necessarily imply that Daniel 3 or 6 share any direct literary relationship with these works, it does demonstrate that the scribal circles responsible for Daniel 3 and 6 were at least familiar with the literary theme and structural pattern of the court conflict. The chart below serves to highlight the basic structural similarities shared between Daniel 3, 6 and the Assyrian Episode from the *Story of Aḥiqar*:

[191] This theme of court conflict corresponds with Humphreys' classification of "tale of court conflict." See Humphreys, "A Life-Style for Diaspora," 211-223.

Event	*Story of Aḥiqar* – Assyrian Episode	Daniel 3	Daniel 6
i) the hero occupies a significant ministerial position within the royal court	col. 1, ll. 2-3 (Elephantine version)	v. 12	vv. 1-4
ii) rival courtier(s) wrongfully denounce the hero	col. 1, ll. 22-30 (partially preserved in the Elephantine version, and attested in later sources, such as in the Syriac version)	v. 8	vv. 11-15
iii) the hero is condemned to death	col. 2, ll. 36-45 (Elephantine version)	vv. 13-23	vv. 16-17
iv) the hero survives his death penalty	col. 4, l. 54-col. 5, l. 78 (Elephantine version)[192]	vv. 24-26	vv. 19-23
v) the hero is pronounced innocent	preserved in later recensions, such as the Syriac	v. 28	v. 22
vi) the rival courtier(s) is punished	preserved in later recensions, such as the Syriac	v. 29	v. 24

[192] Unfortunately, the Elephantine *Aḥiqar* manuscript breaks off shortly after the explanation of Nabusumiskun's plan for Aḥiqar's survival is explained, but it seems most plausible that the pronouncement of Aḥiqar's innocence, Nadin's punishment, and Aḥiqar's rehabilitation within the court would have been included within the Elephantine recension, as in later *Aḥiqar* traditions, such as the Syriac version. For a discussion of the *Story of Aḥiqar* and its development, see Chapter Two. For a translation of the Syriac version, see Conybeare, Harris, and Lewis, *The Story of Aḥiḳar*, 99-127.

vii) the hero prospers again within the kingdom	preserved in later recensions, such as the Syriac	v. 30	v. 29

Daniel 3 and 6 differ markedly from the *Story of Aḥiqar* in their own adaptation of the court tale theme, focusing not only upon the vindication of the courtiers, but also upon the power of their deity. Whereas the focus of the Assyrian Episode of the *Story of Aḥiqar* is upon the well-being and rehabilitation of the courtier, Daniel 3 and 6 also focus upon the role of the God of Israel in exile, setting up a dichotomy between wrongful worship (of idols in Dan 3 and of the king in Dan 6), and proper worship of the God of Israel. Both Nebuchadnezzar and Darius issue injunctions promoting idolatrous worship, which conflicts with the divine law of the Israelite courtiers, so that the courtiers are forced to choose between the laws of the king and the laws of God.[193] The courtiers' transgression of the king's idolatrous decrees and the courtiers' subsequent vindication serves to demonstrate that the sole worship of the God of Israel is superior to the idolatry imposed by the king. God's laws are also demonstrated to be superior to those of the foreign empire, over which God ultimately exercises power by rescuing faithful courtiers from peril and rendering the king unable to fulfill his threats of punishment against the courtiers for disobeying his imperial laws. Moreover, the vindication of the courtiers and their protection by the God of Israel results in the king issuing a new pronouncement, which acknowledges the power of the God of the courtiers and require the proper reverence for the Most High

[193] For instance, Exodus 20:3 forbids the worship of other gods: "You shall have no other gods before me".

(Nebuchadnezzar forbids the blaspheming of the God of the Israelite courtiers in Dan 3:29, and Darius orders that Daniel's God should be feared and worshiped in every dominion of his kingdom in Dan 6:27-28). The focus, then, is not only that Daniel and his friends are accused and vindicated, but also that their vindication demonstrates that the entire legal system of the foreign court is fundamentally flawed. Thus, the courtiers of Daniel 3 and 6 achieve victory through their disobedience of the kings' idolatrous decrees and their reliance upon the favor of the God of Israel, and the God of Israel ultimately triumphs over the foreign king through ensuring that the king's Judean courtiers are able to uphold his divine laws and by preventing the foreign ruler from harming the courtiers for doing so.

3.2.2. Analysis of Daniel 2-6

Two major thematic patterns emerge among the tales that concern the vicissitudes of Daniel and his three friends in the foreign court in Daniel 2-6: 1) Daniel 2, 4 and 5 all focus upon the miraculous deeds of the courtier and, in particular, his ability to interpret dreams (Daniel 2 and 4) and strange writing (Daniel 5). 2) Daniel 3 and 6 are court conflicts and focus upon the denouncement and punishment of the courtier that is brought about through the trickery of his rivals, and the courtier's subsequent vindication and rehabilitation. These two themes—the court conflict and the miraculous skills of the courtier—also appear throughout the other court tales preserved among the Aramaic Scrolls, as will be demonstrated below.

As demonstrated in Chapter Two, both of these themes are also employed within the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales, where they serve to highlight the

successes of the courtier. Though the success of the Judean courtier is certainly a focus within the skill tales of Daniel 2, 4 and 5, it is stressed that Daniel's skills are derived directly from his God (cf. Dan 2:30; 4:5; and 5:11-12), while the skills of the courtiers of the ancient Near Eastern materials are exercised through their own agency. Similarly, in the court conflicts, Daniel and his three friends only miraculously survive the death penalties of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius because God delivers them (cf. Dan 3:28; and 6:22-23), while the courtiers of the ancient Near Eastern material survive and are reinstated through their own machinations. In this way, the successes of the courtiers in Daniel 2-6 serve to highlight God's power and victory over the foreign court.

Not only is the Most High's power made known through the victories of the Judean courtiers, but also through the rule of the foreign kings. Daniel 2-6 demonstrates that those foreign rulers who worship idols or impose idolatry (such as Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius) are punished, while those kings who humble themselves before the Most High, repent, and confess the sovereignty of the God of Israel are permitted to rule, as Nebuchadnezzar does in Daniel 4. On the other hand, Belshazzar who exhibits hubris and does not humble himself before God is killed (Dan 5). In other words, Daniel 2-6 insists that all foreign rulers must learn the precept that Daniel insists Nebuchadnezzar must learn in Daniel 4:22: "The Most High rules over the kingdom of men, and he will give it to whomever he wishes."

3.2.3. Daniel 1

Although Daniel 1 is not persevered in Aramaic, it was found at Qumran and so should be considered in this chapter.[194] Daniel 1 serves as an introductory tale set in the royal court of King Nebuchadnezzar. As noted above, Daniel 1 was probably originally composed in Aramaic, and served as an introduction to the court tales of Daniel 2-6, and later to the Aramaic collection of Daniel 1-7, only later having been translated into Hebrew to serve as an *inclusio* with Daniel 8-12.[195] In its current position in the Danielic collection, the tale serves to introduce several of the court themes found throughout Daniel 1-6. In this account, Daniel and his three friends (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego), who at this time are in their youth, are informed that they are to be allotted daily royal rations. This poses a problem for the Judean youths, who are concerned with keeping the food laws established by the God of Israel. Thus, they abstain from the royal rations, and eat only vegetables and drink water. Through miraculous intervention (1:9), the youths, in spite of their reduced diet, establish themselves as healthier than the other courtiers, and are permitted to continue to abstain from the royal (non-kosher) rations. God also causes the four men to excel in knowledge, skill and wisdom (1:17). The victory of the Judeans, accordingly, is a divine one, and serves to highlight both the steadfastness of the Judean youths in court, and God's continued protection over those who trust in him, even though they live in exile among

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[194] Daniel 1 has been preserved in 1QDan[a], and 4QDan[a]. 1QDan[a] can be found in Dominique Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, *Qumran Cave 1*, DJD I (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), 150-52. 4QDan[a] can be found in Ulrich, "Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran: Part 1: A Preliminary Edition of 4 QDan[a]," 17-37.

[195] See Albertz, *Der Gott des Daniel*, 170-93; and Kratz, *Translatio Imperii*, 6-42. Also, see George Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 17-8. Nickelsburg suggests that Daniel 1 was composed by the collector of Daniel 2-6. Also, see Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*, 79-81. Wills argues that Daniel 1, much like the tales of Daniel 2-6, was in fact derived from an earlier independent "court legend", which focused on Daniel's steadfastness to the laws of God (in spite of the consequences).

their conquerors, though the king is not led to proclaim the sovereignty of the God of Israel in this account as he is in Daniel 2-4 and 6.[196]

3.2.4. Pseudo-Daniel^{a-c} (4Q243-244, 4Q245)

In an article from 1956, J. T. Milik published fragments from three manuscripts that mention the name of Daniel: *4QPseudoDaniel^{a}* (4Q243), *4QPseudoDaniel^{b}* (4Q244), and *4QPseudoDaniel^{c}* (4Q245).[197] These extremely fragmentary manuscripts have since been reedited for the *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* series by John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint.[198] The first two of these manuscripts have overlapping sections (4Q243 frag. 13 and 4Q244, frg. 12) and are clearly copies of the same text. Though *4QPseudoDaniel^{c}* shares some similar themes with *4QPseudoDaniel^{a-b}*, they do not share any overlapping sections and likely belong to different literary works.[199] Moreover, as John J. Collins has noted, the list of priests found in *4QPseudoDaniel^{c}*, frg. 1, cols. i and ii is particularly difficult to reconcile with the timeline of biblical history presented in *4QPseudoDaniel^{a-b}*, which further seems to suggest that the two texts are not copies of the same literary work.[200] Accordingly, I treat *4QPseudoDaniel^{a-b}* and *4QPseudoDaniel^{c}* separately below.

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[196] Collins notes that there is no confession here because the king "is not aware of the full circumstances." Collins, *Daniel*, 145-6.
[197] J. T. Milik, "“Prière de Nabonide” et autres écrits d’un cycle de Daniel: fragments araméens de Qumrân 4," *RB* 63 (1956): 407-415.
[198] John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, "Pseudo-Daniel," in *Cave 4. XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3*, eds. George Brooke et al., in consultation with James VanderKam, DJD XXII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), 95-164. This is the edition that shall be followed in this dissertation.
[199] Though Milik noted the tensions present in assuming that *4QPseudoDaniel^{c}* was part of the same text as *4QPseudoDaniel^{a-b}*, he nevertheless proposed that they were part of the same literary work. See Milik, "‘Prière de Nabonide,’" 411-5.
[200] Collins, "The Book of Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 203-18, here 211. Also, see Stuckenbruck, "The Formation and Re-Formation of Daniel," 116-7. Stuckenbruck also notes the difficulties in attempting to reconcile *4QPseudo-Daniel^{a-b}* and *4QPseudo-Daniel^{c}*, but suggests that both preserve elements from both Danielic and Enochic traditions.

3.2.4.1. Pseudo-Daniel^{a-b} (4Q243-244)

The paleographic dating of *Pseudo-Daniel^{a-b}* "requires only a date before the turn of the era," but the composition of the text should likely be situated between the second century BCE and the arrival of Pompey (63 BCE).[201] Though the precise structure and outline of the account is now lost, *4QPseudoDaniel^{a-b}*'s royal court setting is evident, and several court tale themes and tropes can be detected throughout its remaining fragments. In this account, Daniel serves within an eastern court (4Q244, frg. 4, 1) under the auspices of Belshazzar (4Q243, frg. 2).[202] Fellow courtiers and ethnic minorities also appear within the

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[201] Collins and Flint, "Pseudo-Daniel," 137-8.

[202] Loren T. Stuckenbruck has argued that the fragments of *4QPseudo-Daniel^{a-b}* should be categorized as Danielic in character for the following reasons: a) the name Daniel appears five times (4Q243 frgs. 1-3, 5-6; 4Q244 frgs. 1, 4; cf. Daniel 2-6); b) the setting of the account is the court of a foreign king (4Q243 frgs. 1-3, 5-6; 4Q244 frgs. 1-4; cf. Daniel 2-6); c) Belshazzar is mentioned (4Q243 frg. 2; cf. Dan 5:1-2, 9, 22, 29-30); d) the fragments of the text include eschatological prophecy (4Q243 frgs. 16, 24-6, 33; cf. Dan 7:15-27; 8:25; 9:24-27; 11:40-12:3); and e) *4QPseudo-Daniel^{a-b}* blames the Exile on the sins of Israel (4Q243 frg. 13 + 4Q244 frg. 12; cf. Dan 9:4-19). Though these features are shared by both the book of Daniel and *4QPseudo-Daniel^{a-b}*, there is not enough evidence to suggest that a direct literary relationship exists between the texts, but rather that *4QPseudo-Daniel^{a-b}* preserves certain Danielic elements. Stuckenbruck also notes how certain thematic and literary elements present within *4QPseudo-Daniel^{a-b}*, such as its mention of Enoch and its construction of early biblical history, suggest Enochic influence upon the text. See Stuckenbruck, "The Formation and Re-Formation of Daniel," 113-5. Also, see Collins, "The Book of Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 213. J. T. Milik notes that *4QPseudo-Daniel^{a-b}*, like the book of Daniel, employ the phrase "seventy-years" and feature a four-kingdom paradigm. Whether *4QPseudo-Daniel^{a-b}* indeed presumes a four-kingdom paradigm, however, is less certain, and relies heavily upon the reconstruction of קד from the phrase הׄיא[מלכותא קדׄ]ישתא (4Q243, frg. 16). This phrase could be either reconstructed as "it is the fir[st] kingdom" or "it is the ho[ly] kingdom". Milik reconstructs קדמיתא ("first") here, while Collins prefers קדישתא ("holy"). See Milik, "'Prière de Nabonide,'" 415; and Collins, "The Book of Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 212. Milik, followed by Émile Puech and García Martínez, suggested that *4QPseudo-Daniel^{a-b}* and *4Q Pseudo-Daniel^{c}* directly elaborate upon the book of Daniel. See Émile Puech, *Les données Qumraniennes et Classsiques*, vol. II of *La croyance des Esséniens en la vie future: Immortalité, resurrection, vie éternelle? histoire d'une croyance dans le judaïsme ancien*, Études bibliques, Nov. sér. 22 (Paris: Gabalda, 1993), 568-70; Émile Puech, "Messianism, Resurrection, and Eschatology at Qumran and in the New Testament," in *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 10 (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 247-8; and Florentino García Martínez, "4QPseudo Daniel Aramaic and the Pseudo-Danielic Literature," in *Qumran and Apocalyptic: Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran*, STDJ 9 (Leiden/New York: Brill, 1992), 137-49.
It is noteworthy that *Pseudo-Daniel^{a-b}* likely relates to the cluster of Danielic texts that focus upon the reign of King Nabonidus, which was described in the footnotes above. See Newsom, "Why Nabonidus?" 57-79.

text (cf. 4Q244, frgs. 1-3, 1: "before the nobles of the King and the Assyrians"), and Daniel is requested to demonstrate the proficiency of his courtly skill(s) (4Q243, frg. 1, 1), as is common among those court tales that have the skill of the courtier as their focus (cf. Gen 40-41; Dan 2, 4 and 5; and the Egyptian Episode of the *Story of Aḥiqar*). Due to the fragmentary nature of the text, one cannot be certain which skill (for e.g., dream interpretation, riddle solving, etc.) Daniel is requested to exercise, but the work does mention that something is read, which may signify that Daniel's ability to read and interpret strange texts is a focus (cf. Dan 5): "it] was found writt[en") (4Q243, frg. 6). Similar to the court tales of Daniel 2-6, "the Kingdom of the peoples [i.e., non-Israelites]" (מלכות עממׄ]יא) (frg. 4Q243, 16, 3) and their kings (ומלכי עממיא) (4Q243, 24, 4), will ultimately yield to the superior power of God's kingdom: "that is his ho[ly] kingdom" (4Q243, 16, 4). However, dissimilar from the court tales of Daniel 3-6, this cessation of power seems to occur within an eschatological scenario in *4QPseudoDaniel*$^{a\text{-}b}$, rather than within the immediate setting of the foreign imperial court.

Indeed, *4QPseudoDaniel*$^{a\text{-}b}$, like Daniel 2, also includes several additional apocalyptic themes and images, which have been fused together with the aforementioned themes and tropes indicative of the court tales. For instance, the text presents its readers with an overview of history and recounts events from the primeval era (for e.g., see 4Q243, frg. 9; and 4Q244, frg. 8), Israel's history (e.g., 4Q243, frg. 13 and 4Q244, frg. 12), and continues into the eschatological era (4Q243, frg. 16).[203] Moreover, the text's discussion

[203] Lorenzo DiTommaso contends that Daniel 7-12's apocalyptic view of history differs from the traditional sin-punishment, Deuteronomistic view of history in 4QPseudo-Daniel$^{a\text{-}b}$. Lorenzo DiTommaso, "4QPseudo-Daniel$^{a\text{-}b}$ (4Q243-4Q244) and the Book of Daniel," *DSD* 12 (2005): 101-33, particularly 119.

of the eschatological era asserts that "[with] his mighty [h]and, he will rescue th[em]" (4Q243, frg. 16, 2) and that "after] this, those call[ed] will be gathered" (4Q243, 24, 2). These assertions demonstrate that, dissimilar from the court material preserved in Daniel 2-6, the ultimate vindication and victory of the Israelites living under foreign rule may not be obtained within the immediate context of the court as in Daniel 3-6, but instead in a later eschatological era.

In sum, while the fragmentary state of *4QPseudoDaniel*$^{a\text{-}b}$ prevents one from drawing precise conclusions about several of its details, it is evident that the text's focus on Daniel's skills in the foreign court, along with the text's use of other court tale themes common to Daniel 2-6, provides a context for the eschatological message of the text, which has been fused together within the context of Daniel's court activities. This relationship between the court tales and apocalyptic literature, particularly in relation to Daniel 7, will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

3.2.4.2. Pseudo-Daniel^{c} *(4Q245)*

The paleographic dating of *Pseudo-Daniel*^{c} is Herodian, and, with its seeming reference to the Hasmonean High Priest Simon (ca. 142-134 BCE), the document can be dated no earlier than 142 BCE.[204] The remaining fragments of *Pseudo-Daniel*^{c} are terse, and little indicative of the early Jewish court tales is readily discernible within the extant

[204] See John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, "Pseudo-Daniel," DJD XXII, 155-8. The preceding letters before שמעון ("Simon") are 'תן', and so the name יונתן ("Jonathan") is reconstructed by Collins and Flint. It is likely that the high priest Simon referenced here is the Maccabean Simon because there are no other high priests with the name 'Simon' that would have had the letters 'תן' before their name. However, it is notable that there were also high priests with the name 'Simon' who were Oniads, so an Oniad high priest is also possible.

text; however, the fact that the courtier, Daniel, features prominently within the work is cause enough to include the work in the analysis here. The eschatological outlook of *Pseudo-Daniel*^{c} is rather pronounced. Daniel is given a document to read (frg. 1 col i, 4), which contains a list of priests from Levi until the Hasmonean priests, Jonathan (ca. 153-143 BCE) and Simon (ca. 142-134 BCE). Similar to the case with *Pseudo-Daniel*$^{a\text{-}b}$, the question arises whether Daniel's ability to read or interpret enigmatic writings may also be a focus in *Pseudo-Daniel*^{c} (cf. Dan 5). Following the list of priests is a list of Judahite kings, beginning with David (l. 11) and continuing until at least Ahaziah and Joash (l. 12). Since *Pseudo-Daniel*^{c} is concerned with Hasmonean era priests, its list of kings may have also included kings from the later Hasmonean dynasty.[205] Presuming that Daniel serves during the Babylonian or Persian periods in *Pseudo-Daniel*^{c} (as he does in the works above), then these lists of priests (and perhaps kings) presumably have an eschatological quality, which predicts the service of figures that are to serve in a future time after Daniel. Frg. 2, l. 1 discusses the extermination of wickedness, "and the return of the holy ones" (1. 5).[206] Thus, *Pseudo-Daniel*^{c} serves as another example of a Second Temple period literary work associated with Daniel, who was known both for his duties in the court and his visionary

[205] The first Maccabee to declare himself "king" was Judah Aristobulus I (104-103 BCE), and the priestly list within *4QPseudo-Daniel*^{c} breaks off some years earlier with Simon (142-134 BCE), so it is unclear whether either list would have continued all the way up to Aristobulus or if they would have concluded with priests and kings that functioned in these roles prior to 133 BCE.

[206] The relevant phrase here is קדׄיש[י]א ויתוׄבון. Collins and Flint read קדׄיש[ת]א, suggesting that a *tav* better fills the missing space between the *shin* and the *aleph*, rather than a *yod*. Furthermore, they conjecture that in this way *4Q245* conforms more closely to the reference of a מלכותא קדׄ]ישתא ("holy kingdom") in 4Q243. However, there is no reason to suspect that a *yod* could not have filled the missing space here instead, even if a larger gap preceded the *aleph* in the text. Both l. 4 and l. 5 include third person plural verbs (יקומון and ויתוׄבון). Thus, one would expect a plural noun here, such as Milik's קדׄיש[י]א, rather than the singular noun proposed by Collins and Flint. Accordingly, I adopt Milik's simpler reading: "the holy ones, then they returned." See John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, "Pseudo-Daniel," DJD XXII 162-3; and J. T. Milik, ""Prière de Nabonide"," 414.

activity. However, if *Pseudo-Daniel*^{c} once included an account about Daniel's deeds in the foreign court or other themes indicative of the court tales, that material is unfortunately now lost. What is clear, however, is that *Pseudo-Daniel*^{c} demonstrates an acute interest in eschatological matters as revealed during the days of Daniel, promising a victorious future when wickedness shall come to an end (frg. 2, 2) and the holy ones shall return from exile (frg. 2, 5). This perspective differs markedly from that of the court tales of Daniel 3-6, which focus upon the justice experienced by Judean courtiers within the Diaspora and the sovereignty of God over the foreign court. Daniel 7, which will be treated in Chapter Five, similarly foretells a future eschatological period when the foreign kingdoms of the earth will come to an end and a new and everlasting kingdom shall be established.

3.2.5. 4QFour Kingdoms (4Q552-3)

The so-called *4QFour Kingdoms* text has been preserved in two very fragmentary Aramaic manuscripts (4Q552-553). The text was initially published by Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise in 1992 and by Klaus Beyer in 1994.[207] A critical edition of the text has since been published in the *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* series in 2008 by Émile Puech.[208] Émile Puech dates the fragments paleographically to the first half of the first

[207] See Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (Rockport: Element, 1992), 71-74; and Klaus Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer: Ergänzungsband* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 108-9. Note that the text is listed as 4Q547 in Eisenman and Wise's publication.

[208] Émil Puech, "Les Quatre Royaumes," in *Textes araméens, deuxième partie: 4Q550-575, 580-582: Cave 4. XXVII*, ed. Émil Puech, DJD XXXVII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), 57-90. This is the edition that will be followed in this dissertation.

century BCE, with "le deuxième quart de préférence."[209] However, the contents of the document evince an earlier provenance.

While it is uncertain whether Daniel or another figure features as the hero of *4QFour Kingdoms*, since the hero's name has not been preserved within the text, 4Q*Four Kingdoms* does share a number of thematic similarities with the book of Daniel, and in particular with the court tales of Daniel 2-6.[210] A court setting is clearly presumed within at least a portion of the text, as is evidenced by a conversation that takes place with a king in 4Q552, frgs. 1 i + 2, l. 8-onwards: "And the king said to me…" The presence of an episode involving an unnamed visionary who sees a series of four trees, which represent four world kingdoms, may suggest that *4QFour Kingdoms* employs the theme of the courtier's skill, focusing upon his ability to interpret dreams.[211] In the arboreal vision of *4QFour Kingdoms*, the visionary asks the trees to identify themselves. The first tree is identified as Babylon and is described as ruling over Persia: "You are he, who rules over Persia!" (4Q552, frg. 1 ii, 6; also, cf.: 4Q553, frgs. 3 + 2 ii +4, l. 4-5).[212] Visions commonly

[209] Puech, DJD XXXVII, 73-4.
[210] Puech's reconstruction of Daniel's name (in frg. 1 I + 2, l. 6) should thus be regarded as speculation at best and may not accurately reflect the correct identification of the visionary within the text. Puech, "Les Quatre Royaumes," DJD XXXVII, 61.
[211] Peter W. Flint has suggested that the use of the tree symbolism present in 4Q552-553 may be derived from Daniel 4 where Nebuchadnezzar is depicted as a tree. However, Loren Stuckenbruck has noted that a stronger parallel can be found in Ezek 31:1-14 and 17:1-24. See Peter W. Flint, "The Daniel Tradition at Qumran," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, vol. 2 of *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. J. J. Collins, and P. W. Flint, VTSup 83 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 329-67; and Stuckenbruck, "The Formation and Re-Formation of Daniel in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 120.
[212] Though the identification of the second and third kingdoms is no longer extant within the text, Puech reconstructs their identities as "Media" (מדי) and "Greece" (יואן), and similarly reconstructs the verb "rule over" (שליט) to indicate the respective dominions of these empires, which gives the sense that the visionary systematically approaches each tree to learn about their earthly dominion. See Puech, DJD XXXVII, 64-67 and 78-80. For an overview of proposals regarding the identification of the four trees, see Andrew B. Perrin, "Expressions of Empire and Four Kingdoms Patterns in the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Four Kingdom*

feature within court tales and apocalyptic literature, and, as noted above, the traditional four kingdom paradigm features within Daniel 2 and 7, as well as within other apocalyptic sources.[213] Variety was common with regards to the identification of the four kingdoms, but it is probably safe to presume that a final definitive kingdom (whether the fourth or a special fifth in the vision) is set up by God and serves to demonstrate the God of Israel's future political victory over all nations, as in other uses of this motif (cf. Dan 2 and 7). Although Assyria often features as the first kingdom in adaptations of the motif, Babylon features as the first kingdom in both *4QFour Kingdoms* and Daniel, which further suggests a relationship between the two works.[214] This relationship, however, need not necessarily be one of dependence between the two works; more likely, both texts simply draw from a common literary milieu.[215]

In the context of *4QFour Kingdoms*, it is unclear whether the recipient of the vision is the courtier (cf. Daniel 7-12 and *Genesis Apocryphon* col. 19) or the king (cf. Daniel 2 and 4). As might be expected, the account also suggests that an interpretation is required for the vision(s): "And I sa[i]d "Behold, I will see, and I will understand!"" (4Q553, frgs. 3 + 2 ii + 4, l.3). If the king is the recipient of the dream and the courtier is the interpreter,

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Motifs Before and Beyond the Book of Daniel, eds. Andrew B. Perrin and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Themes in Biblical Narrative 28 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2021), 96-120, here 103.

[213] See Andrew B. Perrin, *The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Revelation in the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls*, JAJSup 19 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

[214] On the typical identification of Assyria as the first kingdom, see Collins, *Daniel*, 166-70.

[215] No scholarly consensus currently exists regarding the precise relationship between the *4QFour Kingdoms* and the book of Daniel. Albert L. A. Hogeterp assumes that *4QFour Kingdoms* interprets and elaborates upon Danielic themes. See Albert L. A. Hogeterp, "Daniel and the Qumran Daniel Cycle: Observations on 4QFour Kingdoms[a-b] (4Q552-553)," in *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, ed. Mladen Popovic, JSJSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 173-91. Also see, Collins, "The Book of Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 203-18, here 215-6. By contrast, Loren Stuckenbruck rightly cautions that assuming 4Q552-3 depends upon the book of Daniel goes beyond what is reasonably observable within the text. Stuckenbruck, "The Formation and Re-Formation of Daniel," 101-30, see 120.

4QFour Kingdoms likely employed the court skill theme. Due to the fragmentary nature of *4QFour Kingdoms*, the identity of the dream recipient is now lost, so we must be content to recognize that the extant visionary content here could fit either a court tale or an apocalyptic context, which serves to demonstrate that some overlap exists between features employed within court tales and apocalyptic literature.

Since it is unclear whether *4QFour Kingdoms* employs a court skill theme, it is difficult to postulate whether the text envisions a divine victory within the immediate context of the court where God is acknowledged before the king. Of relevance in this discussion is the appearance of the phrase "the Most High God" (4Q552, frg. 6, 10), which is commonly employed by the court tales and serves to emphasize the God of Israel's exalted status above all other powers. If this phrase were uttered by the king here, it could have served as the expected conclusion to the courtier's display of skill in the court, presumably his interpretation of the arboreal vision, and would highlight that the foreign king acknowledges the exalted status of the God of Israel (cf. Dan 3:26 and 4:31). However, given the fragmentary nature of the text, the phrase could also have been uttered by another figure (for instance by the courtier or by an angelic interpreter). At the very least, the vision of the four trees suggests that *4QFour Kingdoms* envisions an eschatological victory.

3.2.6. 4QAramaic Apocalypse (4Q246)

Only one relatively large fragment of *4QAramaic Apocalypse* (4Q246) has survived. Puech published the critical edition of the text for the *Discoveries in the Judaean*

Desert series in 1996 under the name of "4QApocryphe de Daniel ar."[216] The text, however, is better known as the *Aramaic Apocalypse* or the Son of God text. Milik dated the text paleographically to the last third of the first century BCE, with Puech preferring a date of ca. 25 BCE.[217]

4QAramaic Apocalypse's royal court setting and thematic similarities to Daniel 2-6 make this work worthy of analysis here. Similar to Daniel 2, 7, and *4QFour Kingdoms*, 4Q246 contains a vision that portrays a succession of world kingdoms, as well as an interpretation of a vision (cf. col. i, l. 3 "your vision" [חזוך]), which occupies most of the remaining fragment of 4Q246. The vision foretells that "a distress will come upon the earth" (col. i, l. 3) "and great massacres in the province" (l. 5). The vision of 4Q246 refers to "]the king of Assyria[and E]gypt" (col. 1, l. 6), and maintains that all will one day serve the Most High (col. i, l. 8). The vision comes to a crescendo with the appearance of a figure called "Son of God" (ברה די אל) "and Son of the Most High" (ובר עליון) (col. ii. 1). The account concludes with the rising of the people of God (col. ii, l. 4), the establishment of an eternal kingdom (col. ii, l. 5) and an eternal dominion (col. ii, l. 9), and every province coming to worship the Great God (col. ii, l. 7). Accordingly, the vision depicts the future political victory of the Most High.

What is unclear within *4QAramaic Apocalypse*, however, is who receives the vision (a foreign king like Nebuchadnezzar, a courtier like Daniel, etc.) and who interprets the

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[216] Émil Puech, "4QApocryphe de Daniel ar," in *Qumran Cave 4.XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3*, eds. George Brooks, John Collins, Peter Flint, Jonas Greenfield, Erik Larson, Carol Newsom, Émil Puech, Lawrence H. Schiffman, Michael Stone, and Julio Trebolle Barrera in consultation with James Vanderkam, DJD XXII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 165-184. This is the edition that is followed in this dissertation.
[217] Puech, "4QApocryphe de Daniel ar," DJD XXII, 166.

vision (a courtier, an *angelus interpres*, etc.). The ramifications of this ambiguity are essentially the same as those described above with regards to *4QFour Kingdoms*—if the king is the visionary and the courtier is the interpreter here, then *4QAramaic Apocalypse* most likely employs the court skill theme and would also bear a particularly close resemblance to Daniel 2 and 4. If the reverse holds true, then the account may bear a closer resemblance to Daniel 7. Of significance in attempting to identify the visionary and interpreter in this context is the phrase "he fell before the throne" (col. i, l. 1), which may suggest that it is the courtier that falls before the throne of the king, whose vision he is to interpret, and that the vision occurs in the context of a skill tale.[218] If 4Q246 has indeed employed the court dream interpretation theme, then the text presumably concluded with a validating victory for the deity, and serves as another example of a text that has blended court tale and apocalyptic themes together.

In addition to *4QAramaic Apocalypse*'s employment of court tale and apocalyptic themes that are reminiscent of Daniel 2-7, 4Q246 also utilizes several phrases and themes that are particular to the book of Daniel, which has led to much scholarly speculation regarding the relationship between the two works. Collins notes that the phrases shared between the two works are not commonly attested (at least according to our knowledge)

[218] Milik understood the throne in 4Q246 col. i 1 to be the divine throne. Stuckenbruck suggests that it is a seer that receives the vision in 4Q246. Stuckenbruck, "Formation and Re-formation of Daniel," 117-20. By contrast, Puech states that "Cependant,, le personage assis sur le trône peut ne pas être Dieu, mais un roi devant quit tombe une autre personne." Puech also notes that the word מ]לכא ("the [k]ing") can be reconstructed in col. i 2 and suggests that the courtier who appears before the throne very well could be Daniel. Puech, DJD XXII, 167-71, particularly 171 (quotation). Similarly, Collins understands the vision to be that of the king, who has a human interpreter. Collins, *Daniel*, 77-9. Holm also suggests that it is the courtier that falls before the king's throne, but does not dismiss the possibility that the throne could be God's. Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 351-357.

among the literature of this period, and thus conjectures that there must have been a direct literary correspondence between the two works, hypothesizing that 4Q246 is dependent upon Daniel and composed after the Maccabean period.[219] That the two works are literarily related need not necessarily entail that the courtier in *4QAramaic Apocalypse* should be identified as Daniel.[220] Nevertheless, the relationship between *4QAramaic Apocalypse* and Daniel does serve to help explain 4Q246's blending of court tale and apocalyptic motifs since Daniel includes both sorts of literature. In sum, similar to Daniel 2 and *4QFour Kingdoms*, 4Q246 provides yet another example of a work that has fused court tale and apocalyptic elements together into a single work. Additional examples of works that blend court tale and apocalyptic themes will be encountered below. In Chapter Five, I further discuss the relationship between court tales and apocalyptic literature.

3.2.7. 4QPrayer of Nabonidus (4Q242)

In 1956, J. T. Milik published three fragments from the first column of *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* and a fourth fragment from another column.[221] An additional fragment was

[219] Collins, "The Book of Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls," 214. By contrast, Puech aptly proposed that a more general relationship exists between the two works, with Daniel and 4Q246 having developed out of the same milieu. See Puech, "4QApocryphe de Daniel ar," 183.

[220] Several scholars have proposed that the courtier of 4Q246 is Daniel. For instance, see Puech, "4QApocyphe de Daniel ar," DJD XXII, 181; and Frank Moore Cross, "The Structure of the Apocalypse of 'Son of God' (4Q246)," in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov*, eds. Shalom M. Paul, et al., VTSup 94 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 151-58. However, since Daniel's name is not preserved within 4Q246 and there are no specific details within the account that serve to help identify the hero as Daniel, the hero could instead be identified as any number of known Israelite courtiers (Daniel, Joseph, Mordecai, Patireza, Bagasraw, etc.) or as one that is hitherto unknown. Accordingly, I agree with Collins who notes that the identification of the courtier in 4Q246 is problematic. Thus, it is best that the courtier's identity remain an open question. See John J. Collins, "New Light on the Book of Daniel from the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Perspectives in the Study of the Old Testament and Early Judaism: A Symposium in Honour of Adam S. van der Woude on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, VTSup (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 180-96, particularly 189.

[221] Milik, ""Prière de Nabonide" et autres écrits d'un cycle de Daniel," 407-15.

later published by Rudolf Meyer.[222] An alternative arrangement of the fragments, with fewer lacunae, was then proposed by Frank Moore Cross.[223] Collins, who has since edited the critical edition of the text for the *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* series, prefers Cross' arrangement, but notes that "the alternative is not impossible."[224] The semi-cursive script employed in the fragments dates paleographically between 75-50 BCE, but the account itself adapts ancient traditions about the sojourn of the Babylonian King Nabonidus, the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (556-39 BCE), to Teiman, Arabia.[225]

The royal court setting of *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* is evident; moreover, its employment of the skill theme and apparent literary relationship with Daniel 4 make 4Q242

[222] Rudolf Meyer, *Das Gebet des Nabonid. Eine in den Qumran-Handschriften wiedererentdeckte Weisheitserzählung*, Sitzungsberichte der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-Historische Klasse 107, Heft 3 (Berlin: Akademie, 1962), 1-112.

[223] Frank Moore Cross, "Fragments of the Prayer of Nabonidus," *IEJ* 34.4 (1984): 260-264. This alternative placement has since been critiqued by García Martínez, who has demonstrated that this reconstruction leads to several problematic readings. See García Martínez, "The Prayer of Nabonidus: A New Synthesis," in *Qumran and Apocalyptic: Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran*, ed. Florentino García Martínez, STDJ 9 (Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1992), 116-36.

[224] John Collins, "4QPrayer of Nabonidus ar," in *Qumran Cave 4.XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3*, eds. George Brooke, John Collins, Torlief Elgvin, Peter Flint, Jonas Greenfield, Erik Larson, Carol Newsom, Émile Puech, Lawrence Schiffman, Michael Stone, and Julio Trebolle Barrera; in consultation with James VanderKam, DJD XXII (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 83-93, quote from 84. This is the edition that shall be followed in this dissertation. Note that another edition and translation of *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* was published by Émile Puech in the same year. See Émile Puech, "La prière de Nabonide (4Q242)," in *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin McNamara*, eds. Kevin J. Cathcart and Michael Maher, JSOTSup 230 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 208-28.

[225] On the paleographical dating, see Collins, DJD XXII, 85. André Lemaire contends that the selection of Nabonidus as the monarch in 4Q242 suggests the text's Mesopotamian providence since that name never appears within the Bible. Lemaire also notes that the use of the name 'Nabonidus', along with the use of other Mesopotamian names in the *Book of Giants*, suggests that there was contact between the exilic Jews and late cuneiform cultures. See André Lemaire, "Nabonide et Gilgamesh: L'araméen en Mésopotamie et à Qoumrân," in *Aramaica Qumranica: Proceedings of the Conference on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran in Aix-en-Provence 30 June-2 July 2008*, eds. Katell Berthelot and Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, STDJ 94, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010, 125-44. Similarly, Reinhard Kratz understands 4Q242 to be an example of Babylonian material that was collected at Qumran. See Reinhard G. Kratz, "Nabonid in Qumran," in *Babylon: Wissenskultur in Orient und Okzident*, eds. Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, Margarete van Ess and Joachim Marzahn, Topoi: Berlin Studies of the Ancient World 1 (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2011), 253-270.

worthy of note. Though the first line of frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3 includes the title of the work "The Words of the Pra[y]er which Nabonidus, King of [Baby]lon, [the Great]King, prayed", which suggests that a prayer must have comprised a large part of the work, the prayer itself is no longer extant.[226] What does remain, however, are the narrative portions of the text, the literary setting of which is situated within the court of King Nabonidus in Teiman and likely served as a sort of contextualizing framework for the prayer (cf. Dan 3:24-25 OG). According to *4QPrayer of Nabonidus*, Nabonidus is smitten "by an evil affliction" (frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3, ll. 1-2).[227] In l. 2, the work switches from the third to the first-person perspective of Nabonidus himself, which is a common literary convention among the Aramaic Scrolls that serves to lend a sense of authenticity to the author's account and blur the distinction between the author and the content.[228] After having been smitten by the evil affliction for

[226] Andrew Perrin has demonstrated that the incipit of 4Q245 employs an introductory formula that is commonly employed by the Aramaic Scrolls, though it has been individualized by the author here. See Andrew Perrin, "Capturing the Voices of Pseudepigraphic Personae: On the Form and Function of Incipits in the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls," *DSS* 20 (2013): 98-123, particularly 115-7.
[227] Scholars have noted the similarities between 4Q242 and the book of Job, which both focus upon the afflictions of a figure that is ultimately healed by God and learns something in the process. For Fohrer, the key difference between the two works is in the reason for the characters' affliction. In 4Q242, Nabonidus is afflicted due to his ignorance towards the one true God, while Job's affliction serves to test his character. See Georg Fohrer, "4QPrNab, 11QTgJob und die Hioblegende," *ZAW* 75.1 (1963): 93-97. Also, see M. Delcor, "Le Testament de Job, la prière de Nabonide et les traditions targoumiques," in *Bibel und Qumran. Beiträge zur Erforschung der Bezeihungen swischen Bibel- und Qumranwissenschaft. Hans Bardkte zum 22. 9. 1966*, ed. S. Wagner (Berlin: Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft, 1968), 57-74.
[228] Loren Stuckenbruck remarks on the prevalence of the use of the first-person among the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls, but notes that the use of the first person for a relatively unknown figure, such as Nabonidus, is unusual. By contrast, many other Aramaic Scrolls compositions, such as the *Genesis Apocryphon* employ the first-person voice of the patriarchs. For instance, Nebuchadnezzar recounts his own humiliating madness and subsequent acknowledgement of the sovereignty of the Most High in Dan 4:34-37. See Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "Pseudepigraphy and First Person Discourse in the Dead Sea Documents: From the Aramaic Texts to Writings of the *Yaḥad*," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Culture: Proceedings of the International Conference Held at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (July 6-8, 2008)*, eds. Adolfo D. Roitman, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and Shani Tzoref, STDJ 93 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011), 295-326, particularly 319-20.

seven years, Nabonidus is healed by God (l. 3), and his sins are forgiven (l. 4).[229] Nabonidus then recounts how a Judean diviner from among the exiles (frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3, l. 4), whose name is no longer extant in 4Q242, came to him and instructed that he should: "Pro[cla]im and write to give honour and great[ness] to the name of G[od, the Most High" (ll.4-5).[230] That the diviner is referred to as יהודי ("Judean") (frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3 l. 4) is significant, since the term was uncommon in the literature of this period, and thus emphasizes the diviner's

[229] The phrase in l. 4 וחטאי שבק לה גזר has been the cause of much scholarly contention. While most scholars agree that the first two words should be translated as "and my sins he forgave", there is no consensus on the second two words (לה גזר). A. Dupont-Sommer believes that the subject of the verb שבק ("he forgave") is גזר ("diviner") and takes לה as a *dativus ethicus*, which leads to the translation: "he remitted himself my sin". See A. Dupont-Sommer, "Exorcismes et guérisons dans les écrits de Qoumrân," in *Congress Volume: Oxford 1959*, eds. G. W. Anderson, et al., VTSup 7; Leiden: Brill, 1960), 246-61. However, Dupont-Sommer's translation gives the sense that the action benefits the diviner instead of the king, which would make little sense in the context of 4Q242. Alternatively, Pierre Grelot, followed by Collins, treat the phrase וחטאי שבק לה as a single unit. In this instance, לה is understood to refer back to חטאי, and so the sentence is translated: "and as for my sin, he remitted it." Furthermore, Grelot and Collins reconstruct א]להא ("God") in l. 3, and take this to be the subject of the verb שבק in l. 4, meaning that God forgives Nabonidus' sins, which makes better sense in this context. See Pierre Grelot, "La prière de Nabonide (4 Q Or Nab)," *RevQ* 9 (1978): 483-95; Collins, "4QPrayer of Nabonidus ar," DJD XXII, 88-9; and John J. Collins, "Prayer of Nabonidus," in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*, vol. 2 of *Outside the Bible: Ancient Jewish Writings Related to Scripture*, eds. Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2013), 1604-6. Another advantage of the latter reading proposed by Grelot, which is en route to becoming the scholarly consensus, is that it conforms to the early Jewish principle that God alone can forgive sins. See Daniel Johansson, "'Who Can Forgive Sins but God Alone?' Human and Angelic Agents, and Divine forgiveness in Early Judaism," *JSNT* 35.4 (2011): 351-474, particularly 356-60.
Susan Ackermann astutely notes that 4Q242 exhibits irony in Nabonidus' affliction by an evil skin disease (שחנא באישא) by the Most High since the god, Sin, whom the historical Nabonidus was known to have worshiped, was associated with the ability to protect adherents from skin diseases. This irony then heightens the text's polemical stance against idolatry. See Susan Ackerman, "The Prayer of Nabonidus, Elijah on Mount Carmel, and the Development of Monotheism in Israel," in *The Echoes of Many Texts: Reflections on Jewish and Christian Traditions: Essays in Honor of Lou H. Silberman*, eds. William G. Dever and J. Edward Wright, Brown Judaic Studies/Program in Judaic Studies 313 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 51-65, especially 60.

[230] The hero is referred to as a גזר ("diviner") in frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3, a class of court specialists who are known from other court tales (cf. Dan 2:27; 4;4; 5:7, 11). Dupont-Sommer previously translated this term "exorcist"; however, since the root גזר means "to cut", the translation "diviner", that is one who examines livers (via cutting), seems to be the preferable translation here. See Dupont-Sommer, "Exorcismes et guérisons dans les écrits de Qoumrân," 256-8.
Collins notes that after Nabonidus is healed, he would have been left wondering why he was healed. Collins suggests that it would have been at this point that the diviner would have appeared to give Nabonidus the answer, which then results in Nabonidus' worship of the true God. Collins, "Prayer of Nabonidus," 1604. Though Collins' suggestion is certainly plausible, it must nevertheless remain only speculative due to the fragmentary nature of 4Q242.

ethnic identity as fundamentally different from that of the foreign king. Moreover, the Judean's success in directing the king towards the proper worship of the God of Israel is made evident by Nabonidus' writings, which recount what has befallen the king (ll. 6-9). Included within this account is a description of Nabonidus' former idolatry, and how he had formerly worshiped "gods of silver and gold, [bronze, iron,] wood, stone, clay" (ll. 7-8). Frg. 4, l. 1 also asserts that "]apart from them, I was made strong again", which must certainly be a reference to how Nabonidus had to first abandon his false idols before he could experience healing, as is common among the Aramaic tales.[231] The reference to the king's peace returning to him in l. 2 suggests that, after Nabonidus' act of repentance and healing, he is once again permitted to resume his duties as king of Babylon.[232] Though no longer extant, the work would have almost certainly included an acknowledgment on the part of Nabonidus that the God of the Judean diviner is sovereign, which would have been

[231] The phrase אחלמת is particularly significant in this fragment and has led several scholars to speculate that 4Q242 included a dream vision. Milik took this as a reference to a dream, and Meyer similarly understands this to be the case. See Meyer, *Das Gebet des Nabonid*, 28. The a*phel* form that could be employed in אחלמת would be unusual and would have a causative sense ("to consult an interpreter of dreams or a dreamer"). However, the root חלמ also has another meaning: "to have good humors, to be well". See Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature: with an Index of Scriptural Quotations* (London: Luzac/New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), 471. The *aphel* form also appears in Syriac and has the sense of "to heal". See Klaus Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer: samt den Inschriften aus Palästina, dem Testament Levis aus der Kairoer Genisa, der Fastenrolle und den alten talmudischen Zitaten: aramaitische Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung, Deutung, Grammatik/Wörterbuch, deutsch-aramäische Wortliste, Register* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 580. Beyer, along with Fitzmyer and Harrington and Collins, interpret אחלמת as an *aphel* passive: "I was healed/made strong." See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Daniel J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts: Second Century B.C.-Second Century A.D.*, BibOr 34 (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978), 4-5; and Collins, "4QPrayer of Nabonidus ar," DJD XXII, 92. Since there is no other indication of a dream occurring in 4Q242, it seems highly unlikely that אחלמת would refer to a dream. Instead, it seems much more plausible that the verb takes on its secondary sense here and refers to Nabonidus' health, which makes sense from both a literary and philological standpoint.

[232] The phrase "The peace of [my]repose [will return to me.]" (l. 2) recalls the motif of insomnia that is often experienced by kings prior to the resolution of several court tales (cf.: 1 Esd 3-4 and Esth 6).

the focus of the work.[233] Regardless of whether the presence of such a statement can be verified, a dichotomy between the wrongful worship of idols and the proper worship of the Most High is implicit within the text. This dichotomy also serves to highlight the victory of the Most High over the foreign court in so far as God's affliction and healing of Nabonidus lead the king to reject his false idols and learn about the proper reverence of the Most High, which he must learn from the Judean diviner.

In order to gain a deeper appreciation of how carefully the narrative of 4Q242 has been shaped to conform to court tale motifs, I turn now to the literary milieu from which *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* emerged. King Nabonidus, who is well-known from a number of ancient sources, gained particular notoriety in antiquity due to his self-imposed exile from Babylon to Teiman in Arabia, from which he did not return for several years for uncertain reasons.[234] While Nabonidus' exile is known from the historiographical Nabonidus Chronicle, as well as from his own account from the Harran (H2) Inscription, the enigmatic nature and purpose of his absence provided a sort of lacuna in his life story, which ancient

[233] See Collins, *Daniel*, 217; and Flint, "The Daniel Tradition at Qumran," 59. Nabonidus' (now missing) acknowledgement of the true sovereignty of God would conform to other Jewish court tales that culminate in the king's acknowledgment of the Most High's power and would serve as a stark contrast with Nabonidus' former idolatrous worship. Unfortunately, however, such a statement is no longer extant in 4Q242. Carol Newsom suggests that a division between those exilic Jews who supported Nabonidus and those who supported Cyrus would have inevitably emerged following the period of Cyrus' conquest of Babylon. Newsom speculates that a body of Nabonidus literature (which expressed both positions of acceptance and rejection of his reign) inevitably emerged during this period. For Newsom, the healing of Nabonidus in 4Q242 serves as an example of the propagandistic discourse that would have ratified support for Nabonidus by depicting him as a foreign ruler that accepted the sovereignty of the Most High. See Newsom, "Why Nabonidus?" 64-6. On the depiction of foreign rulers and their relationship to the Most High, see John J. Collins, "The King Has Become a Jew," in *Seers, Sibyls and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism*, ed. John J. Collins, JSJSup 54 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 167-77, particularly 170-2.

[234] On sources relating to the rule of Nabonidus, see Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus King of Babylon 556-539 B.C.*, YNER 10 (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1989), 1-65.

authors attempted to address.[235] According to the Verse Account of Nabonidus, a pro-Persian account that is preserved on the tablet British Museum 38,299 and explains Nabonidus' absence, Nabonidus suffered from a mental illness and came into conflict with the Babylonian clergy due to his preference for the Moon god, Sin, over the traditional Babylonian gods.[236] The explanation given for Nabonidus' absence in the Verse Account, however, is hostile and betrays its pro-Persian sentiment, which is particularly evident in the work's utilization of Nabonidus' absence to demonstrate that Cyrus II of Persia, who conquered the Neo-Babylonian empire, was a superior ruler to Nabonidus.

Similarly, *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* employs the mystery of Nabonidus' exile in Teiman as the literary setting for its own message—that is to highlight the sovereignty of the Most High over the foreign court—explaining that Nabonidus' absence was a result of his madness, which was caused due to his idolatry (cf. frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3, ll. 7-9).[237] Both the Verse Account and 4Q242 were composed by ethnic communities different from that of

[235] For a translation of the Nabonidus Chronicle, see T. G. Pinches, "On a Cuneiform Inscription Relating to the Capture of Babylon by Cyrus and the Events which Preceded and Led Up to It," *TSBA* 7 (1882): 139-76; and James Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 305-7. For a transliteration and translation of the H2 inscription, see C. J. Gadd, "The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus," *Anatolian Studies* 8 (1958): 35-92.
Beaulieu suggests that the historical Nabonidus went to Arabia as a conqueror, where he set up his permanent residence in Teiman during his stay in Arabia. Beaulieu postulates that Nabonidus was delayed in Teiman for ten years because he was met with considerable opposition and because of his religious views. While Nabonidus had worshiped the moon god, Sin, his son Belshazzar promoted the traditional Babylonian gods. Beaulieu notes that Nabonidus may have feared political opposition in Babylon for his unconventional views, and perhaps chosen Arabia as a residence due "the importance of the moon god there". See Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus King of Babylon 556-539 BC*¸YNER 10 (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1989), 169-185.
[236] For a translation of the Verse Account, see Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 313-5.
[237] It is noteworthy that the historical Belshazzar, who is featured in Daniel 5, was the firstborn son of Nabonidus, and served as king (that is as Nabonidus' co-regent) in Babylon, while Nabonidus journeyed to Teiman. Accordingly, the tales of Daniel 5 and *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* share a similar historical background during the period when Nabonidus went into exile, with one tale taking place in Babylon in Mesopotamia and the other taking place in Teiman, Arabia.

Nabonidus—the Verse Account by Persians, who conquered the neo-Babylonian empire, and 4Q242 by subject Judeans. Moreover, both the Verse Account and 4Q242 depict Nabonidus' absence to be a result of his improper worship—for his neglect of the traditional god, Marduk, (and his priests) according to the Verse Account. What is particularly distinctive in 4Q245 from other ancient accounts about Nabonidus' exile, however, is the work's depiction of Nabonidus' miraculous healing. The healing account follows the essential pattern of the skill tale theme from Daniel 2, 4 and 5, as well as *Pseudo-Daniel*$^{a\text{-}b}$, *4QFour Kingdoms* and *4QAramaic Apocalypse*, *4QPrayer of Nabonidus*, whereby: 1) King Nabonidus is disturbed by a problem (an evil affliction); 2) he remains in this state for seven years; 3) until he is healed by God; and 4) turns away from his false idols and presumably acknowledges the sovereignty of the Most High. 4Q242 is thus a skill tale with a focus upon healing rather than the interpretation of dreams or writing. While the precise means of Nabonidus' healing is no longer extant in 4Q242, one would expect that it occurs through the agency of the Judean diviner who was notably absent from the other accounts of Nabonidus' exile noted above, just as Daniel serves as the agent of interpretation in Daniel 2, 4 and 5. Regardless of the precise means by which Nabonidus is healed, the miraculous display of skill in the court is ultimately attributed to the deity in the Jewish court tales (dissimilar from the ancient Near Eastern tales) and results in his reverence, which is similarly suggested in 4Q242 by Nabonidus' turning away from his idols. This theme of the courtier's ability to heal will be encountered again in *Genesis Apocryphon*, col. 20 and Tobit where Tobiah learns how to heal his father from blindness and exorcise the demon, Asmodeus.

The healing theme may also be suggested in Daniel 4's account of Nebuchadnezzar's madness. Prior to the publication of 4Q242, scholars had long speculated that the explanatory accounts of Nabonidus' exile to Teiman and his madness underlay the account of Nebuchadnezzar's madness in Daniel 4, with the historically infamous Nebuchadnezzar replacing the less well-known Nabonidus as the afflicted king.[238] Since the publication of 4Q242, a majority of scholars have come to accept that the depiction of Nebuchadnezzar's madness in Daniel 4 is related to Nabonidus' exile.[239] Key to this association is that both 4Q242 and Daniel 4 feature a Judean exile that plays a pivotal role in the rehabilitation of the king and that both associate seven years with the king's exile, while the other ancient Near Eastern traditions attribute ten years to the exile.[240] Of

[238] This proposal was made early on by P. Reissler and F. Hommel. See P. Reissler, *Das Buch Daniel*, Kurzgefasster wissenschaftlicher Kommentar zu den Heiligen Schriften des alten Testaments 3/3/2 (Stuttgart: Roth, 1899), 43; and F. Hommel, "Die Abfassungszeit des Buches Daniel und der Wahrsinn Nabonids," *Theologisches Literaturblatt* 23 (1902): 145-50.

[239] For instance, Peter Flint has stated that "the *Prayer of Nabonidus*… which does not mention Daniel but is clearly related to parts of the canonical book of Daniel. See Flint, "The Daniel Tradition at Qumran," 55. Similarly, David Freedman has compared the 4Q242 and Daniel 4. See David Noel Freedman, "The Prayer of Nabonidus," *BASOR* 145 (1957): 31-32 [reprinted in *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation: Selected Writings of David Noel Freedman*, ed. John R. Huddlestun (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 50-52.]. Ernst Haag attributes the parallels shared by Daniel 4 and 4Q242 to the second level of redaction in Daniel and suggests that Daniel influenced the prayer. See Haag, *Die Errettung Daniels*, 1-139. Haag and Werner Dommershausen suggest that 4Q242 corrected the story of Daniel in light of Nabonidus traditions, a proposal which Collins finds implausible. See Werner Dommershausen, *Nabonid im Buche Daniel* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 1964), 85; and Collins, *Daniel*, 218. Walter Baumgartner had previously disputed the references to Nabonidus in Daniel 4, but has since accepted that Daniel 4 is likely based on traditions about Nabonidus. See Walter Baumgartner, *Zum Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt: Ausgewälte Aufsätze* (Leiden: Brill, 1959), 330. Carol Newsom further suggests that 4Q242, as well as proto-Daniel 4 (an earlier redactional layer of Daniel 4), utilized the Harran inscription of Nabonidus, which employs the *narû* style of composition. See Newsom, "Why Nabonidus?," 67-70. Paul-Alain Beaulieu describes the *narû* style of composition as "fictional accounts of the deeds of famous kings allegedly inscribed on steles (*narûs*) to instruct present and future generations." See Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Nabonidus the Mad King: A Reconsideration of His Steles from Harran and Babylon," in *Representations of Political Power*, eds. M. Heinz and M. H. Feldman (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 137-166.

[240] A few scholars have suggested some additional similarities between 4Q242 and Daniel. For instance, Frank Moore Cross reconstructs a reference to Nabonidus becoming bestial in 4Q245 frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, and 3 l. 3. See Cross, "Fragments of the Prayer of Nabonidus," 263. Meyer, rather unconvincingly, attempts to reconstruct a dream vision about a cosmic tree in 4Q242. See Meyer, *Das Gebet*, 42-51.

particular note here, however, is the nature of Nebuchadnezzar's madness in Daniel 4, which is not merely a result of his being driven away from civilization but is the result of an affliction. Nebuchadnezzar's affliction here is evident since netherworld creatures were typically depicted with animalistic features in the ancient Near East, as were those who were afflicted by them.[241] Implicit then in Nebuchadnezzar's return to Babylon in Daniel 4 is that the Most High not only heals Nebuchadnezzar from madness but from an affliction. Both accounts therefore demonstrate the Most High's authority and victory over all afflictions (even if potentially derived from other supernatural powers), which results in the foreign king's rejection of false gods and their acknowledgement of the sovereignty of the God of Israel. As Collins aptly notes, however, the similarities between Daniel 4 and 4Q242 need not indicate "that the author of Daniel 4 necessarily had the Prayer before him, or even that the Prayer, as we have it, is older than Daniel 4. The point is that the Prayer preserves some old features of the tradition [about Nabonidus' exile] that are lost in the biblical story."[242]

3.2.8. 4QpapApocalypse ar (4Q489)

This text has been preserved in eight terse fragments, which were published by Maurice Baillet in 1982.[243] The semi-cursive script employed by the work suggests a paleographical date of around 50 CE.[244] Baillet suggested that the appearance of the word וחזוׄתה ("and his/her/its appearance" or "and you saw him/her/it") in frg. 1 l.1 may be related

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[241] See Hays, "Chirps from the Dust," 305-325.
[242] Collins, "4QPrayer of Nabonidus ar," DJD XXII, 86.
[243] Maurice Baillet, "Un apocalyptique en araméen," in *Qumran Cave 4.III: 4Q482-4Q520*, ed. Maurice Baillet, DJD VII (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 10-11.
[244] Baillet, "Un apocalyptique en araméen," DJD VII, 10.

to the appearance of the same word in Daniel 4:8, or 1 Enoch 14:18. Similarly, Baillet suggested that the appearance of ו֯חזי֯תה ("and his/her/its appearance" or "and you saw him/her/it") in frg. 1 l.2 may be related to Daniel 2:41 or 1 Enoch 25:3, 46:4 and 52:4. While the work's possible relationship to Daniel 2 and 4 may lead to some interesting speculation about the possible courtly context of 4Q489, the work is far too fragmentary to conclude with any certainty that the work is related to Daniel or Enoch.[245]

3.3. Other Aramaic Court Tales

The texts analyzed above have provided a sense of the shape, themes and motifs present among the Aramaic court tales related to the figure Daniel. I now turn to those Aramaic texts that exhibit court tale themes and are seemingly not directly related to the book of Daniel: *4QJews in the Persian Court* (4Q550), the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1Q20), and the book of Tobit. Though these three texts do not feature Daniel, they do share several similar motifs, tropes and themes with the tales surveyed above.

3.3.1. 4QTales of the Persian Court (4Q550)

In 1956, Jean Starcky identified a group of Aramaic fragments among his allotment from Qumran as "les restes d'un texte *pseudo-historique* se situant à l'époque perse rappellent Esther ou Daniel".[246] Józef T. Milk distinguished five manuscripts, 4Q550^{a-e}, among these fragments, and added a sixth, 4Q550^{f}, to Starcky's initial grouping, which he believed belonged to the same work. Milik denominated the fragments 4Qpr(oto-)Esth(er)

[245] See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 357.
[246] Jean Starcky, "Le travail d'édition des fragments manuscrits de Qumrân," *RB* 63 (1956): 66.

ar(améen) and published a preliminary edition of them in 1992.[247] Émile Puech has since edited the critical edition of these texts for the *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* series.[248] The fragments of 4Q550^{a-f} exhibit paleographical discrepancies from one another. According to Michael Wechsler, 4Q550^{a-e} evidence a "late Hasmonean or early Herodian formal to semiformal hand", while the script of 4Q550^{f} instead exhibits what Milik calls a "beau style official hérodien".[249] Puech understands 4Q550^{f} to be a different composition from 4Q550^{a-e}, and re-catalogues the manuscript as 4Q583.[250] Puech also reorganized and renumbered Milik's remaining five copies of the text (4Q550^{a-e}): 4Q550, frgs. 1-10. This dissertation follows Puech's reorganization of the fragments, and similarly understands 4Q583 to be a separate composition from the narrative of 4Q550.[251]

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[247] J. T. Milik, "Les modèles araméens du livre d'Esther dans la grotte 4 de Qumrân," *RevQ* 15.3 (1992): 321-406. Klaus Beyer also published a version of the fragments in 1994 with the title "Die Urkunde des Dareios." See Klaus Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer*, 113-117.

[248] See Émile Puech, "4QJuifs a la cour perse ar (Pl. 1-11)," in *Textes araméens, deuxième partie: 4Q550-575, 580-587: Cave 4. XXVII*, DJD XXXVII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), 1-46. This is the edition that shall be followed in this dissertation. Divergent readings of the text will be noted as they arise. Also, see Émile Puech, "4QProphetiee ar (Pl. XXII)," in *Textes araméens, deuxième partie: 4Q550-575, 580-587: Cave 4. XXVII*, DJD XXXVII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), 447-452 (for 4Q583).

[249] See Michael G. Wechsler, "Two Para-Biblical Novellae from Qumran Cave 4: A Reevaluation of 4Q550," *DSD* 7.2 (2000): 130-72, here 143; and Milik, "Les modèles," 384.

[250] Puech, "4QJuifs a la cour perse," DJD XXXVII, 3.

[251] In addition to these paleographical issues, 4Q583 and 4Q550 exhibit acute ideological differences. 4Q583 focuses upon Mount Zion as the place where "all the lowly among [his] people shall hide themselves" during a time when "evil comes from the north". The Zion-centric attitude of 4Q583 differs markedly from the worldview of 4Q550^{a-e}, which does not preserve any explicit reference to Jerusalem, Judea, nor the Jewish homeland, and, instead, depicts the eastern Diaspora as a setting where Judeans can experience prosperity. Due to these paleographical and ideological differences between 4Q550^{a-e} and 4Q550^{f}, most scholars have aptly concluded that these texts belong to different literary works. For instance, see Michael G. Wechsler, "Two Para-Biblical Novellae from Qumran Cave 4: A Reevaluation of 4Q550," *DSD* 7.2 (2000): 130-72, here 143; and Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 62. Also, see Florentino García Martínez, "Las fronteras de lo Biblico," *ScrTh* 23 (1991): 759-84 and Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 2 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, eds. Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1096-1103. Though Martínez and Tigchelaar include 4Q550^{f} along with their transcription and translation of 4Q550^{a-e}, they do not give it the appellation "4QPrEsther ar" as they do for 4Q550^{a-e}. Thus, Martínez and Tigchelaar seemingly only include 4Q550^{f} alongside of 4Q550^{a-e} out of convention (following Milik's earlier grouping of the manuscripts).

4Q550 appears to preserve at least two episodes: 1) a tale about a hitherto unknown courtier named Patireza (4Q550, frgs. 1-4), and 2) a tale about another otherwise unknown courtier, Bagasraw (4Q550, frgs. 5-10).[252] What is unclear, however, is whether these episodes are representative of a single, overarching narrative (perhaps with a structure akin to the interrelated stories of Esther and Haman from the book of Esther), or whether they are selections from a more clearly segmented cycle of tales (perhaps akin to the collection of tales about Daniel and his three friends preserved in Daniel 1-6).[253] What makes this issue particularly difficult to resolve is that the names of the two heroes of the respective episodes, Patireza and Bagasraw, never appear together within the same fragment. Nevertheless, the work does make several references to Patireza's son; for instance, frg. 2, 3 states "O king, Patireza has a son", and elsewhere Patireza is referred to as a father (frg. 1.1 and frg. 4.2).[254] Whether Bagasraw should be identified as Patireza's son is uncertain, but, if Patireza and Bagasraw were father and son, this would comport with the concern for patrilineal relationships and the theme of the succession of the courtier by his heir found within other court tales, such as the Assyrian episode in the *Story of Aḥiqar*.[255] Due to the

[252] Unfortunately, significant portions of 4Q550 are no longer extant, which leads one to speculate whether the work formerly included additional episodes about other courtiers (who may have also been related to Patireza and Bagasraw).

[253] Scholars had formerly been divided on this issue; for instance, Wechsler reorganized the fragments of 4Q550, including 4Q583 (Milik's 4Q550[f]) into three different compositions. However, most scholars, including Puech, now treat the work as a single unified narrative. See Wechsler, "Two Para-Biblical Novellae," 130-72; and Puech, "4QJuifs a la cour perse ar (Pl. 1-11)," DJD XXXVII, 1-46.

[254] Unfortunately, a lacuna follows after the text of frg. 2, 3, so that the possible reference to Patireza's son's name is no longer preserved here. While Puech reconstructs the missing contents of the lacuna and explicitly identifies Bagasraw as Patireza's son, his reconstruction is speculative at best and can neither be confirmed nor rejected. See Puech, "4QJuifs a la cour perse ar (Pl. 1-11)," DJD XXXVII, 17.

[255] As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the *Story of Aḥiqar* was particularly popular throughout the ancient Near East and influenced many subsequent literary works. Accordingly, it is unsurprising to find that 4Q550 exhibits certain themes that feature prevalently within *Aḥiqar*. While such similarities need not necessarily indicate that the authors or compilers of 4Q550 composed their account with a version of *Aḥiqar* sitting before them, it likely attests to the pervading influence of *Aḥiqar* upon the early Jewish court tale traditions.

apparent relationship between Patireza and Bagasraw, I treat the contents of 4Q550 as two episodes that may belong to a single narrative work, which I shall refer to as: 1) the *Tale of Patireza* (4Q550, frgs. 1-4), and 2) the *Tale of Bagasraw* (4Q550, frgs. 5-10).

3.3.1.1. The Tale of Patireza (4Q550, Frgs. 1-4)

The framework of the *Tale of Patireza* takes place within the court of an unnamed successor of the Persian emperor Darius (frg. 1.5), who gives an account of Patireza's deeds to his son: "[And they o]beyed Patireza, your father, in…" (frg. 1.1).[256] Patireza is said to have commanded great honour within the court (frg. 1.1), presumably in the time of Darius (frg. l1.5-6). A scroll is read before Darius' successor: "a scroll was found sealed with seven seals by the signet ring of Darius his father… it was opened, read and found written within that…" (frg. l1.5-6).[257] Patireza, however, seems now to be in need of a successor or replacement. Patireza's fidelity in his service to the king is also recalled (frgs. 2.2 and 4.3), which suggests Patireza's esteemed career within the court. That Patireza's son is recalled before the king (frg. 2.3) and is to acquire a house, property, and the occupation of his father (frg. 2.6-7), which presumably refers to Patireza's ministerial position in the king's

[256] While it seems reasonably certain that Patireza served during the time of Darius (cf. frg. 1.5-6), it is unclear to which Darius the text refers. Thus, the account may situate Patireza's courtly service between 522-486 BCE (Darius I), 423-405 BCE (Darius II), or 335-330 BCE (Darius III). Patireza, who commands great honour within the court (frg. 1.1), Puech understands Darius' successor to be Xerxes I (ruled 486-465 BCE), which would suggest that Patireza serves during the time of Xerxes I's father, Darius the Great (Darius I). See Puech, "4QJuifs a la cour perse ar (Pl. 1-11)," DJD XXXVII, 17.

[257] The reference here to the reading of a scroll before the king may invoke the court tale motif of the foreign king who is read to during a period of sleeplessness (cf. 1 Esd 2-3 and Esth 6). However, no explicit reference to insomnia or wakefulness has been preserved within 4Q550 frg. 1; thus, this proposition must remain at the level of speculation.

court, suggests Patireza's son has been recognized as the most suitable candidate to assume Patireza's role within the court.

In frg. 4.1, however, a high official (perhaps Patireza or Bagasraw?) is told to alert the authority: "… the high official of the king that you might tell the authority (לשרו̊יתא)…".[258] This phrase may suggest the employment of one of the following motifs found among other early Jewish court tales: 1) A courtier warns an authority about a conspiracy against the king. This motif is found in Esther 2:21-23 when Mordecai warns Esther about the eunuchs' plot to commit regicide. 2) A rival high official alerts a figure in a position of authority about the deeds of the protagonist in the process of making an accusation against the protagonist (cf. Dan 3 and 6). 3) A high official alerts a figure in a position of authority, such as the king, about the successes of the courtier (cf. Dan 5:10-12).[259] While it is uncertain to what the phrase in frg. 4.1 specifically refers, 4Q550 4.3 recalls Patireza's service to the king in a positive manner, which suggests that it is Patireza's deeds that are the focus in frg. 4.1. This suggests that option 1), with its focus upon the well-being of the king, and option 2), which focuses upon accusing the protagonist, are

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[258] The term לשרו̊יתא has been understood and translated variously. The reading of the letters לשרתא within the fragment are quite certain; however, some small marks appear above the ת and the א at the end of the word and seem to constitute scribal erasures. Accordingly, I follow Puech in my translation here, and read לשר<רו>תא ("to the authority"). See Puech, "4QJuifs a la cour perse ar (Pl. 1-11)," DJD XXXVII, 22. By contrast, Crawford translated the word as "princess," and Eisenman and Wise translate the word as "prince". See Sidnie White Crawford, "4QTales of the Persian Court (4Q550[a-e]) and its Relation to the Biblical Royal Courtier Tales, Especially Esther, Daniel and Joseph," in *The Bible as Book: The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries*, eds. Edward D. Herbert and Emmanuel Tov (London: British Library/New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll, 2002), 131; and Robert H. Eisenman and Michael Wise, *Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered: The First Complete Translation and Interpretation of 50 Key Documents Withheld for over 35 Years* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992).

[259] Puech understands "the authority" to refer to the king and/or his ministers in 4Q550 frg. 4.1, which would corroborate well with this third option that Patireza's successes are made known before the king. See Puech, "4QJuifs a la cour perse ar (Pl. 1-11)," *DJD XXXVII*, 22-3.

unlikely in this context. More likely, then, is the third option, which focuses upon the positive depiction of the courtier's deeds. Thus, I suggest that frg. 4.4 may describe how Patireza's deeds are recalled before the Persian king. That Patireza is rewarded shortly after this phrase by being clothed in purple (frg. 4.5) and receiving (the governance of?) "a third of the kin[gdom" (frg. 4.6) strengthen my suggestion, since these were the typical sorts of rewards for courtiers who displayed superior skill within the royal court (cf. Dan 2:48-9 and 5:29).[260]

While the court tale setting of the *Tale of Patireza* is evident, the shape of the particular court themes that it employs is somewhat more difficult to ascertain, due to the fragmentary state of the text. One significant motif that emerges within 4Q550 is the work's concern for the suitable succession of Patireza in his duties in the court. While this theme does not appear within the Danielic material, it does feature within the Assyrian Episode of the *Story of Aḥiqar* and is also suggested in the book of Tobit. In the Assyrian Episode, which employs the court conflict theme, Aḥiqar seeks a suitable heir and adopts Nadin, who ultimately betrays Aḥiqar and becomes his adversary. By contrast, the succession in 4Q550 appears to end on a more positive note, with Patireza's son inheriting his father's role and possessions (frg. 2.6-7). Thus, while the motif of the succession of courtiers appears within the context of a conflict in *Aḥiqar*, a conflict does not seem to be the focus

[260] Receiving a purple garment is a typical reward for the courtiers in the Jewish court tales (cf.: Joseph in Gen. 41:42; Mordecai in Esth 6:8 and 8:15; Daniel in Dan 5:29; and the promise that the courtier who offers the wisest answer shall be clothed in purple in 1 Esd 3:6). Receiving administrative rights over a portion of the foreign king's kingdom is also a common motif among the court tales. For instance, Daniel is said to be one of three officials who oversees the kingdom for Darius in Dan 6:3; Esther is offered up to half of the king's kingdom in Esth 5:3; and Joseph is granted authority over the land of Egypt and is permitted to ride in the chariot of the Pharaoh's second-in-command in Gen 41:37-45.

of the *Tale of Patireza*. Rather, Patireza's deeds in the court of King Darius are an explicit focus within frg. 1. Such a focus upon the courtier's former deeds is a common motif among those tales that employ the skill theme (cf. Dan 4:8 and 5:11-12). Moreover, the courtier's reception of rewards in 4Q550 frg. 4.5-6 would be the expected outcome for the demonstration of a courtier's skill in a skill tale (cf. Dan 2:46-9; 5:29; and the Egyptian Episode of *Aḥiqar*). Thus, the *Patireza Tale* evidently invokes a skill theme; however, the identity of which particular skill (dream interpretation, writing interpretation, healing, etc.) is employed within this text remains uncertain due to the fragmentary nature of the text.

Several hints within *4QTale of Patireza* suggest that the work contains at least two episodes occur within the narrative. Frg. 1 suggests a narrative transition between Patireza's son, who is referred to in the second person singular in ll. 1-6, and Patireza himself, who seems to be the subject of the scroll that has been sealed with seven seals and is read before Darius' successor in frg. 1.[261] Moreover, Patireza's son is ostensibly the focal protagonist in frg. 2.6-7, which suggests that he inherits his father's position and possessions, while frg. 4 seems to feature Patireza who also receives rewards. Since it is quite evident that 4Q550 features at least two different tales (the *Tale of* Patireza and the *Tale of Bagasraw*), it should not be surprising to detect traces of additional episodes. What seems to be suggested by the evidence above then is that the seven-sealed scroll is a memorandum (cf.

[261] While the reading of mysterious writing features among several court tales (cf. Dan 5, 12:1-4, *4QPseudo-Daniel*[a-b, c], and the third episode of *Setne II*), there is nothing preserved in 4Q*Tales of Jews in the Persian Court*, frgs. 1-4 to suggest with any certainty that the writing here is esoteric in nature. Writing bearing multiple seals were certainly not uncommon during the Persian period, as is evidenced by the discovery of a contract bearing seven seals that was found among the Wadi Daliyeh Papyri. The document was composed during the reign of King Darius III, and Jan Dušek dates the text to March 19, 335 BCE. See Jan Dušek, *Les manuscrits araméens du Wadi Daliyeh et la Samarie vers 450-332 av.J.-C.*, CHANE 30 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), 115-129 and 699.

the memorandum of Mordecai's deeds in Esther 6), and that its contents contain an account about the life and deeds of Patireza that constitute at least a portion of the remainder of the contents of frgs. 1-4. In other words, the tale about Patireza's son likely serves as a narrative framework for the account of his father, Patireza, in frgs. 1-4 (and perhaps for 4Q550 as a whole). In summary, 4Q550, frgs. 1-4 appears to constitute an amalgam of two tales: 1) a framework narrative that focuses upon the deeds of Patireza's son and concludes with his inheritance of his father's position and possessions; and 2) an account about Patireza's skill that is recounted when the scroll with seven seals is read before the king in frgs. 1-4.

As a whole, frgs. 1-4 clearly end on a note of success. While many of the Jewish skill tales include an acknowledgement on behalf of the king of the sovereignty of the Most High, no such statement has been preserved in frgs. 1-4. Accordingly, it is difficult to assess the sort of victory achieved by the deity in this account, but, at the very least, the work recounts the prosperity and successes achieved by Judeans in the foreign court through multiple generations. That the courtiers within this account should be identified as Judean seems probable based on the following two reasons: 1) one courtier (presumably Bagasraw) is referred to as "a Judean man from among the nobles of the k[ing" (גבר יהודי מן רברבני מ]לכא) in 4Q550 frg. 5 + 5a.2-3; and 2) all of the other court tales preserved at Qumran identify their protagonists as members of one of the tribes of Israel (or as one of the patriarchs of Israel). Thus, this depiction of the success enjoyed by the Judeans in the foreign court in the *Tale of Patireza* would have certainly served as a valuable victory narrative against critics who may have attempted to disparage the subject Judeans.

3.3.1.2. The Tale of Bagasraw (4Q550, Frgs. 5-10)

4Q550, frgs 5-10 recount a conflict between Bagasraw and Bagoshi within the royal court. A penitential prayer, which focuses upon the sins of the forefathers, features within frg. 5 + 5a.[262] That frg. 5 + 5a.2-3 refers to a courtier (presumably Bagasraw) as “a Judean man from among the nobles of the k[ing” (גבר יהודי מן רברבני מ[לכא) emphasizes the unique ethnic identity of the hero and hints that there may be an ethnic dimension to the ensuing feud between Bagasraw and Bagoshi, since the term “Judean” (יהודי) was uncommon in the literature of this period.[263] Frg. 6 focuses on the conflict between Bagasraw and his adversary, Bagoshi. It is unclear from the extant fragments what series of events led to the conflict, but it is clear that Bagasraw ultimately emerges victorious from the feud, while Bagoshi is punished via death, as is the common punishment for adversaries of the courtiers in the Jewish court conflict tales (cf. Dan 3, 6, and the Mordecai and Haman conflict in the Book of Esther). It is noteworthy that, dissimilar from Daniel 3 and 6 which feature a group

[262] It is not infrequent for penitential prayers, such as the confession of sin before God in frg. 5 + 5a, to be included alongside of, or within Second Temple court tales and court tale collections (cf.: Dan 9, Tob 3, and Add Esth C). Perhaps the prayer of frg. 5 + 5a is uttered by Bagasraw (or by another courtier, who appeared in a now lost portion of the text) and constituted a plea by the courtier to be vindicated before his opponent.
[263] Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise note that 4Q550 likely exhibits one of the earliest usages of the term יהודי. See Eisenman and Wise, *Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*, 99.
Milik also identifies a second ethnic identifying word “Cuthite” (כותי) in 4Q550^{d}, col. 1, 5, which would presumably apply to Bagoshi. Milik has been followed in this reading by García Martínez. See Milik, “Les modèles araméens,” 337; and Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 2, 1098-99. Crawford similarly translated the corresponding line: “that a Cuthite man is responsible”. Furthermore, Crawford speculated that the term “Cuthite” is employed euphemistically for Samaritan here. See Sidnie White Crawford, “Has *Esther* Been Found at Qumran? *4Qproto-Esther* and the *Esther* corpus,” *RevQ* 17 (1996): 316. If Milik were correct in his reconstruction of “Cuthite” (כותי), 4Q550 would explicitly evidence heightened ethnic tensions or what Lawrence Wills terms the “ethnic perspective” (i.e., that the different ethnic identities of Bagasraw and Bagoshi is integral to their conflict). See Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 68. However, it seems unlikely that a Cuthite adversary appears within the account of 4Q550. The identification of “Cuthite” (כותי) in 4Q550^{d}, col. 1, 5 is dubious. Only the *kaf*, *vav* and *tav* of the word are clearly visible in the fragment, and a lacuna follows these three letters. The word כות makes little sense on its own, so Puech alternatively suggests reading “like him” (כותה) and “like you” (כותך). Puech’s reading is the more straightforward one, so I follow his reading here, add a prenominal *kaf* to the end of the word and read: “for a man like him to respond…” Crawford has also since rejected her earlier reading of “Cuthite” (כותי) in favor of reading “like you”. See Crawford, “4QTales of the Persian Court (4Q550^{a-e}),” 126-127.

of generic rival courtiers, Bagasraw's feud is with a personal enemy, Bagoshi. In this way, 4Q550 bears some resemblance to the Elephantine Assyrian *Aḥiqar* episode and Mordecai's conflict with Haman in Esther, which both feature a courtier's feud with his rival and the courtier's subsequent vindication. Bagasraw is then rewarded by the king and receives Bagoshi's possessions (frg. 6 + 6a + 6b + 6c). The victory experienced by Bagasraw in his conflict with Bagoshi is also intimately linked with the victory of the God of Israel, as is evident from the king's following assertion that the Most High holds ultimate authority over the earth: "The Most High, whom you fear and serve, rules over [the entire eart]h, and all is within his reach to do as he wills with it" (frg. 7 + 7a.1; cf. Dan 4:34-35 and 5:25-27). Moreover, Bagasraw is also to enjoy continued welfare, and "any man who speaks an [ev]il word against Bagasraw, the p[rophet of God, will be ki]lled" (frg. 7 + 7a.2).[264] In other words, the tale concludes with the king conferring special privileges upon the Judeans and their God.

3.3.1.3. Analysis of 4QTales of the Persian Court (4Q550)

As demonstrated above, *4QTales of the Persian Court* employs both the skill theme (*Tale of Patireza*) and the conflict theme (*Tale of Bagasraw*), which serve to highlight the victory of the Most High and the Judean courtier(s). This victory, however, is not one that ultimately undermines the *status quo* of Persian rule, nor does it result in the

[264] As demonstrated above, the issuing of royal decrees preventing future threats against the Israelite courtier are commonplace among the Jewish court tales following the vindication of the courtier. Some such prohibitions focus upon the welfare of the people of the Most High. For instance, upon the defeat and death of Mordecai's rival, Haman, the king permits the Jews to defend themselves and kill any who should attempt to attack them (Esth 8). Some other court tales, however, feature royal pronouncements that focus on how inhabitants of the kingdom are to reverence the God of Israel properly (cf.: Dan 3:29 and 6:25-27).

reestablishment of autonomous Judean rule. Instead, by the end of the text, the daily tasks and administrative responsibilities of the Judean courtier(s) remain essentially unchanged.[265] However, the king, and by extension his empire, experiences a profound paradigm shift towards the Most High and the subject Judeans—the king now acknowledges that the God of Israel is sovereign (frg. 7 + 7a.1) and issues a special pronouncement that protects Bagasraw from further threat of harm (frg. 7 + 7a.2). Judeans are now able to worship the God of Israel in a manner that is relatively free from fear of reprisal, while pious Judeans can prosper and even achieve positions of authority within the Persian imperial administrative system. Most of the Jewish court tales also conclude

[265] Much like the courtiers from several of the court tales surveyed above, Patireza and Bagasraw have foreign names, which serve to demonstrate how immersed the courtiers are within their Persian setting. On the Iranian provenance of the principal characters' names (Patireza, Bagasraw and Bagoshi), see Shaul Shaked, "Qumran: Some Iranian Connections," in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield*, eds. Ziony Zevit, Seymour Gitin and Michael Sokoloff (Winona Lake, In.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 278. Some court tales reference both the courtier's foreign and Hebrew names. Examples of other Israelite courtiers with foreign names, include: Esther (Hadassah), Mordecai (whose Hebrew name is not preserved within the book of Esther), Belteshazzar (Daniel), Shadrach (Hananiah), Meshach (Mishael), Abednego (Azariah), and Zaphenath-paneah (Joseph). Daniel 1:7 even includes an account of when Daniel and his three friends receive their foreign names.
Wechsler's attempt to equate the names of certain characters from 4Q550 with specific historical personages is speculative and perhaps somewhat overly optimistic. See Wechsler, "Two Para-Biblical Novellae," 130-172. Nevertheless, evidence from the administrative documents from Elephantine and Babylonian administrative texts from the Persian period at the very least demonstrate that Judean inhabitants of the Persian empire adopted names that were etymologically related to 'Patireza' and 'Bagasraw' during the Persian period. The employment of the names 'Patireza' and 'Bagasraw' would have thus served to lend a sense of verisimilitude to the tales of 4Q550. The names בגסרו ("Bagasraw") (A6.12:1; A6:84; and A69:6), בגוהי ("Bagavahya") (A4.9:1; A4.8:1; and A4.7:1), and בגו.שת ("Bagoshet") (C3.8IIIB:9) are found among the Elephantine papyri. See Porten and Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*; and Bezalel Porten and Jerome A. Lund, *Aramaic Documents from Egypt: A Key-Word-in-Context Concordance*, Publications of the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 330-1. The etymologically related Bagazuštu (J6:1, 26 [3]; and BaAr 6 56:2, 5 [1], 4 [2]) and Paṭ(i)-Esu (BaA 6 1:3) are found among the exilic Judean documents from Babylonia. See Francis Joannès and André Lemaire, "Contrats babyloniens d'époque achéménidé du Bît-abi Râm avec une épigraphe araméenne," *RA* 90.1 (1996): 41-60; and Claus Ambros, *Mesopotamische Baurituale aus dem 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr*, with a contribution from Aaron Schmitt; Babylonische Archive 6 (Dresden: ISLET, 2004), 1-322. Also see Laurie E. Pearce and Cornelia Wunsch, *Documents of Judean Exiles and West Semites in Babylonia in the Collection of David Sofer*, Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology 28 (Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press, 2014), 264 and 288.

with the courtier who continues to function within the foreign court, and several of these tales, such as Daniel 2, also feature a coming promised overhaul of the current imperial system and the establishment of a new, holy empire in an eschatological age to come. While the penitential prayer of frg. 5 + 5a may hint at an eschatological restoration, 4Q550 does not preserve any explicit references to such an era.

The significance of the victory experienced by the courtiers in 4Q550 in the Diaspora is not limited to Patireza and Bagasraw alone, but can also serve to teach and inform the intended audience of the literary work about their own place in a society under foreign rule. From the outset of 4Q550, Patireza is established as an exemplary figure, who will be difficult to replace (frgs. 1.1; 2.2; and 4.3). As a result, Patireza's son is informed about his father's righteousness and is to learn from his deeds (frg. 1), which eventuates in him becoming a suitable successor to Patireza. Similarly, the king learns to revere the God of Israel through Bagasraw's vindication before Bagoshi. Thus, this collection of tales exhibits a didactic quality, whereby Judeans ought to learn from the exemplars within 4Q550, just as Patireza's son learns from the example of his father and the king learns to reverence the Most High from Bagasraw.[266] In this way, 4Q550 demonstrates that while some Judeans, such as Bagasraw, may experience adversity under foreign rule, they will ultimately be vindicated, and that those Judeans who live in an upright manner, serve and fear the Most High (cf. frg. 7 + 7a.1) may prosper in the Diaspora, just as Patireza and his

[266] Crawford remarks on 4Q550's purpose of teaching correct behavior within the court of the foreign king, and wonders whether the text's didactic and entertaining style leant to its popularity in antiquity. See Crawford, "4QTales of the Persian Court," 135.

son have prospered (frg. 2.6-7). Such success, moreover, is attainable in spite of the sins of the forefathers (cf. 4Q550, frg. 5 + 5a).[267]

Several themes and motifs present within *4QTales of the Persian Court*, particularly the conflict theme, are also prevalent within the book of Esther. Accordingly, J.T. Milik, followed by several other scholars, supposed that a direct literary relationship exists between 4Q550 and Esther. However, the general literary parallels between 4Q550 and Esther can just as easily be identified between 4Q550 and several other early court tales, which has subsequently led a majority of scholars to problematize and reject Milik's thesis.[268] As John J. Collins and Deborah Green have aptly noted scholars ought not be

[267] The petition and reference to the sins of the forefathers in frg. 5 + 5a c exhibits a Deuteronomistic perspective, whereby disobedience towards God's covenant brings success and disobedience brings failure. By extension, this view suggests that for 4Q550, living in the Diaspora is a result of the disobedience of the forefathers. Nevertheless, 4Q550 emphasizes that, in spite of the disobedience of the forefathers, Judeans can still prosper on a personal level in their daily affairs under foreign rule.

[268] Milik suggested that the fragments of 4Q550 were an Aramaic source for the later Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Armenian versions of the book of Esther. Milik attempted to reconstruct earlier forms of the names of several major figures from the book of Esther within 4Q550, such as אסתר (Esther) (4Q550[d], col. IV, l. 5), המן (Haman) (4Q550[c], l. 2), זרש (Zeresh) (4Q550[c], l. 1), and יאיר (Yair) (4Q550[b], l. 3). This proposal that 4Q550 served as a source for Esther initially garnered much excitement, since the book of Esther had not been previously identified among the DSS. See J. T. Milik, "Les modèles araméens du livre d'Esther," 321-406. A few successive scholars have adopted or adapted Milik's thesis. For instance, see Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, vol. 2, 1096-1103. Such attempts to identify "pre-Esther" elements within 4Q550 rely heavily upon reconstruction and speculation. Accordingly, one ought to be cautious not to presume that a specific genetic relationship exists between 4Q550 and Esther. For scholars who problematized or rejected Milik's initial proposal, see Wechsler, "Two Para-Biblical Novellae from Qumran Cave 4," 131. Michael G. Wechsler problematized Milik's thesis, and suggested that 4Q550 represented "three independent, non-successive works". Among these works, Wechsler identified a "4QAramaic Ezra-Nehemiah Sequel" (Milik's 4Q550[d-e]) and "4QAramaic Esther Prequel" (4Q550[b-c, a]). Wechsler understands these works to be representative examples of Lawrence Wills' "Jew in the Foreign Court" genre and maintains that the texts in some sense supplement Ezra-Nehemiah and Esther respectively, while Wechsler thinks that 4Q550[f] belonged to an entirely different tradition. Also, see Crawford, "Has *Esther* Been Found at Qumran?" 307-325, 324 (for the quotation below); and Crawford, "4QTales of the Persian Court," 121-137. Sidnie White Crawford, who maintains the textual unity of 4Q550[a-e], demonstrated that the fragments of 4Q550 did not serve as a direct source or model for either the Hebrew or Greek editions of Esther. Moreover, Crawford further nuanced Milik's work, and suggested that 4Q550 was "part of a cycle of tales about the Persian court", from which a Hebrew proto-Esther was likely derived and, in turn, influenced the composition of Esther 1-8. Also, see Shemaryahu Talmon, "Was the Book of Esther Known at Qumran?" *DSD* 2.3 (1995): 254; and Edward Cook, "The Tale of Bagasraw," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, eds. Michael Wise,

overly hasty to associate otherwise unknown texts found at Qumran, such as 4Q550, with other well-known biblical traditions; rather, the relationship between 4Q550 and Esther is best understood to be at the generic level—that is, both texts partake of a broader Jewish court tale tradition.[269]

3.3.2. The Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20), Cols. 19-20

The *Genesis Apocryphon* (henceforward *GA*) was one of the first seven texts discovered among the DSS. In 1955, J. T. Milik edited and published eight fragments of the scroll, which he named *Apocalypse de Lamech*, in the first volume of the *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* series.[270] A preliminary edition of the work was published by Nahman Avigad and Yigael Yadin in 1956, who renamed the text מגילה חיצונית לבראשית (*A Genesis Apocryphon*).[271] In 1984, Klaus Beyer produced a transcription, along with a German translation, and, in 1994, Beyer updated a few readings from the text's earlier columns and incorporated col. 12 into the work.[272] Jonas Greenfield and Elisha Qimron published col. 12 in 1992, which was followed by the preliminary publication of the rest of

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Martin Abegg, Jr. and Edward Cook (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996), 437-39. Cook renamed 4Q550 "The Tale of Bagasraw", which served to help disassociate the work from Milik's Proto-Esther designation.

[269] See John J. Collins and Deborah A. Green, "The Tales from the Persian Court (4Q550[a-e])," in *Antikes Judentum und frühes Christentum: Fetschrift für Hartmut Stegemann zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. Bernd Kollmann, Wolfgang Reinbold and Annette Steudel, BZNW 97 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 39-50.

[270] D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, "'Apocalypse de Lamech' (Pl. XVII)," in *Qumran Cave 1*, DJD I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 86.

[271] Nahman Avigad and Yigael Yadin, מגילה חיצונית לבראשית. ממגילות מדבר יהודה (*A Genesis Apocryphon: A Scroll from the wilderness of Judea. Description and contents of the Scroll, Facsimiles, Transcription and Translation of Columns II, XIX-XXII*) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press and Heikhal ha-Sefer, 1956).

[272] See Klaus Beyer, "1QGenAp: Das Genesis-Apokryphon," in *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer samt den Inschriften aus Palästina, dem Testament Levis aus der Kairo Genisa, der Fastenrolle und den alten talmudischen Zitaten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 165-186; and Klaus Beyer, "1QGenAp: Das Genesis-Apokryphon," in *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer samt den Inschriften aus Palästina, dem Testament Levis aus der Kairo Genisa, der Fastenrolle und den alten talmudischen Zitaten Ergänzungsband* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 68-70.

the previously unpublished fragments—cols. 1, 3, 4-8, 10-11 and 13-17—by M. Morgenstern, E. Qimron and D. Sivan in 1995.[273] More recently, a critical transcription and translation of the entire text has been edited by Daniel Machiela.[274] Having taken the original manuscript of 1Q20, early photographs and previous publications of the scroll into account, Machiela's edition offers superior readings and reconstructions of the text. An updated edition has also since been completed by Daniel Machiela and James VanderKam.[275] I primarily follow Machiela's 2009 edition of 1Q20 in this dissertation, along with reference to Machiela and VanderKam's 2018 edition where noted. While the dating of 1Q20 has been contentious, a date in the mid-second century BCE seems likely.[276]

[273] See Jonas C. Greenfield and E. Qimron, "The Genesis Apocryphon Col. XII," in *Studies in Qumran Aramaic*, Abr-Nahrain Supplement 3, ed. T. Muraoka (Louvain: Peeters, 1992), 70-77; and Matthew Morgenstern, E. Qimron, and D. Sivan, "The Hitherto Unpublished Columns of the Genesis Apocryphon," appendix by G. Bearman and S. Spiro, *AbrN* 33 (1995): 30-54.

[274] Daniel Machiela, *The Dead Sea Apocryphon (1Q20): A New Text and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13-17*, STDJ 79 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009).
Daniel Machiela and James C. VanderKam, "The Genesis Apocryphon," in *Genesis Apocryphon and Related Texts*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Text with English Translations 8A (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck]/Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2018), 42 and 94-5

[275] Daniel Machiela and James C. VanderKam, "The Genesis Apocryphon," in *Genesis Apocryphon and Related Texts*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Text with English Translations 8A (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck]/Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2018).

[276] James Kugel contends that 1Q20 borrowed from Jubilees and was written later (probably in the first century BCE), whereas the manuscripts of Jubilees date to at least the end of the second century BCE). See James L. Kugel, *A Walk through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of Its Creation*, JSJSup 156 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), 305-342. The fifth chapter in Kugel's *A walk through Jubilees* is based upon: James L. Kugel, "Which is Older, the Book of *Jubilees* or the *Genesis Apocryphon*?" in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Culture: Proceedings of the International Conference Held at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (July 6-8, 2008)*, eds. Adolfo D. Roitman, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and Shani Tzoref, STDJ 93 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 257-294. By contrast, Machiela notes the Egyptian influence upon *GA*, and suggests that the scribal circle responsible for the work had some connection with pro-Ptolemaic priestly circles. See Machiela, *The Dead Sea Apocryphon*, 134-42; and Daniel Machiela, "Some Egyptian Elements in the Genesis Apocryphon: Evidence of a Ptolemaic Social Location?" *AS* 8 (2010): 47-69. Michael Segal also attributes an earlier dating to *GA*. See Michael Segal, "The Literary Relationship between the Genesis Apocryphon and Jubilees: The Chronology of Abram and Sarai's Descent to Egypt," *AS* 8.1-2 (2010), 71-88. Given the similarity of the Aramaic employed by *GA* to other Aramaic Scrolls from Qumran that date to the second century BCE, dating *GA* to the second century BCE is more compelling than assigning the work a later date.

The narrative of *GA* is literarily dependent upon the book of Genesis, particularly chapters 6-15, retelling, expanding upon, and supplementing portions of the biblical account. In spite of its dependence upon Genesis, *GA* exhibits its own unique set of concerns and literary particularities, which at times overlap with those of Genesis and at other times do not. As Moshe Bernstein has suggested, as a whole *QA* might be best classified as a multigeneric text, a designation that helps to address the work's diverse literary qualities and the smaller units within the work, which often exhibit a more complex use of a variety of different literary forms.[277]

This is evidently the case in *GA* cols. 19-20, which draw from the court vision interpretation and healing themes, and 're-present' the story of Abram's sojourn in Egypt from Genesis 12 as a court tale, focusing upon Abram's interactions with the Pharaoh of Zoan and his courtiers within the Egyptian royal court.[278] In this way, *GA* and the book of

[277] See Moshe Bernstein, "The Genre(s) of the *Genesis Apocryphon*," in *Aramaica Qumranica: Proceedings of the Conference on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran at Aix-en-Provence (June 30-July 2, 2008)*, eds. Katell Berthelot and Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, STDJ 94 (Leiden: Boston, 2010), 317-43. Also, see Moshe Bernstein, "The Genre(s) of the Genesis Apocryphon," in *Genesis and Its Interpretation*, vol. 1. of *Reading and Re-Reading Scripture at Qumran*, STDJ 107 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 217-238. Other scholars have attributed diverse generic identities to 1Q20 based upon their disparate understandings of how precisely *GA* utilizes Genesis. Avigad and Yadin describe the work as "apocryphal". See Avigad and Yadin, *A Genesis Apocryphon*, 38. Matthew Black and Otto Eissfeldt refer to the work as a targum. See Matthew Black, "The Recovery of the Language of Jesus," *NTS* 3 (1956-57), 305-13; Matthew Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins: Studies in the Jewish Background of the New Testament* (London: Nelson, 1961), 193; and Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction, including the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and also the Works of Similar Type from Qumran* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 697. Solomon Zeitlin believes that the work corresponds most closely with the midrashim. See Solomon Zeitlin, "The Dead Sea Scrolls: 1. The Lamech Scroll – A Medieval Midrash: 2. The Copper Scrolls: 3. Was Kando the Owner of the Scrolls?" *JQR* [New Series] 47:3 (1957), 245-68. On the designation of 1Q20 as rewritten Bible, see Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies*, Studia Post-Biblica 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1961): 95 (2nd Rev. Ed., 1973). On the designation of 1Q20 as parabiblical literature, see H. Louis Ginsberg, Review of J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave 1* (1966), *TS* 28 (1967): 574-77.

[278] *GA* cols. 19-22 retells the story of Abram from Genesis 12-15. The beginning of col. 19 is fragmentary, but, as Joseph Fitzmyer notes, the nearly completely lost *GA* 19.1-6 would have presumably corresponded to Genesis 12:1-7. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave 1 (1Q20): A Complete Commentary*, 3rd ed., BibOr 18/B (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2004), 179. In contrast to *GA* cols. 19-

Tobit, which shall be discussed below, are unique among the Aramaic tales examined here, since, unlike the tales surveyed above which could essentially function as self-contained accounts that focus primarily upon the heroes' interactions within the court, *GA* and Tobit draw upon the court themes and integrate them with a diversity of other themes into a broader narrative. In the case of *GA* 19-20, these themes help to reshape Abram and depict him as a famous royal courtier, much like Daniel.

According to *GA* 19.10-11, Abram and Sarai journey to Egypt due to a famine (cf. Gen 12:10), but, before entering Egypt, Abram receives a dream vision from the Most High (19.14), an event which is entirely absent from Genesis 12.[279] In the dream, Abram sees a cedar tree and a date palm on a mountain (19.14-15). Men come by to cut down and uproot the cedar, but the date palm prevents them from doing so (19.16-17). Abram then awakens, and explains to Sarai that the Egyptians will seek to kill him because of her beauty, so he instructs Sarai to tell the Egyptians that he is her brother, which protects him from being killed (19.18-21). Abram is then visited by three Egyptian nobles of the Pharaoh's court,

20, Jubilees, a work that, similar to *GA* 're-presents' the narrative of Genesis (and portions of Exodus), does little to elaborate upon the account of Abram's sojourn in Egypt from Genesis 12 (cf. Jub. 13:11-15). For a discussion of the role of Abram in Jubilees, see Jacques T. A. G. M. VanRuiten, *Abraham in the Book of Jubilees: The Rewriting of Genesis 11:26-25:10 in the Book of Jubilees 11:14-:23:8*, JSJSup 161 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1-383. Several scholars have postulated a literary relationship between Jubilees and *GA*. For a discussion of the literary relationship between Jubilees and the *GA*, see Kugel, *A Walk through Jubilees*, 305-342; and Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20)*, 13-15.

[279] Though Moshe Bernstein warns that one should be cautious of reading Genesis and *GA* alongside of one another, since early audiences may not have had this as their practice, reading these two different versions of the sojourn in Egypt side by side serves the heuristic purpose of helping contemporary readers to uncover the chief and differing concerns between the two works, particularly with regards to their respective portrayals of Abram. Notably, even Bernstein himself does not entirely do away with the practice of reading the works alongside one another. See Moshe Bernstein, "Is the Genesis Apocryphon a Unity? What Sort of Unity Were You Looking for?" *AS* 8.1 (2010), 107-134, here 133-4 (reprinted in: *Reading and Re-Reading Scripture at Qumran*, vol. 1. of *Reading and Re-Reading Scripture at Qumran*, STDJ 107 (Leiden: Brill, 2013) 239-265.

Harqenosh and his two companions, on account of his words and wisdom (19.24).[280] The nobles give Abram gifts, and Abram reads and expounds upon "the book of the Words of Enoch before them" (19.24-29).[281] Notably, the reference to Enoch here serves to highlight *GA*'s broader apocalyptic worldview.[282] Harqenosh and his companions report back to the Pharaoh of Zoan, and alert him to Sarai's beauty and wisdom, which causes the Pharaoh to desire Sarai and have her abducted (20.2-9).[283]

One of the most prevalent court themes that emerges within *GA* is Abram's ability "to heal" (לאסיותה cf. 20.19) the Pharaoh from his spirit of affliction, which simultaneously serves to bolster Abram's depiction as a wise sage, and highlight the sovereignty of the

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[280] By contrast, in Genesis 12:15 Abram is visited by an indefinite number of "the Pharaoh's princes".

[281] A lacuna appears in the text after Abram receives the gifts from the nobles (19.24-25), so that it is no longer clear what sorts of gifts the nobles give to Abram. Machiela suggests that the lacuna might be filled with מנתנן שגיאן ("many gifts"). See Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20)*, 73.

[282] Apocalypticism is a prevalent feature within *GA* and features throughout the work. For instance, the work features at least seven visionary episodes (cf. *GA* 6.10-7.22, 9.15-12.6, 12.19-15.21, 19.8, 19.14-17, 21.8-10, and 22.27-34). See Perrin, *The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Revelation*, 52-7.

While several literary works from the Second Temple period associate the sage, Abram, with transmitting secret Enochic scriptures (cf. *Jub.* 21:10), it is unclear to which specific literary work *GA* refers here, but wisdom (חכמתא) and truth (קושטא) (cf. *GA* 19.25) seem to have been central to the literary traditions associated with the figure Enoch during this period in general. See George W. E. Nickelsburg, "Patriarchs Who Worry about Their Wives. A Haggadic Tendency in Genesis Apocryphon," in *Biblical Perspectives: Early Use and Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. Michael E. Stone and Esther G. Chazon, STDJ 28 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 137-58, particularly 149. Beate Ego suggests that Abram expounds upon Enochic astrological knowledge here. See Beate Ego, "The Figure of Abraham in GA's Re-Narration of Gen 12:10-20," in *Qumran Cave 1 Revisited: Texts from Cave 1 Sixty Years after Their Discovery: Proceedings of the Sixth Meeting of the IOQS in Ljubljana*, eds. Daniel K. Falk, et al., STDJ 91 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), 233-243, particularly 236-238. Also, see Daniel Machiela, "Genesis Revealed: The Apocalyptic Apocryphon from Qumran Cave 1," in *Qumran Cave 1 Revisited: Texts from Cave 1 Sixty Years after Their Discovery: Proceedings of the Sixth Meeting of the IOQS in Ljubljana*, eds. D. K. Falk et al., STDJ 91 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), 205-21, particularly 218-19. Machiela demonstrates how *GA* as a whole evidences an apocalyptic worldview. More specifically, Machiela notes that the use of the terms "truth" (קושטא) and "wisdom" (חכמתא) in connection with Enochic teaching serves to exemplify the blurred boundaries between Second Temple period wisdom and apocalypticism.

[283] Harqenosh's description of Sarai's beauty employs erotic language. While the use of erotic language is less common among the Jewish court tales, it is certainly not unprecedented. For instance, the account of *Susanna*, which I discuss in the following chapter, recounts how two Judean elders lusted over Susanna when she bathed in her garden. Eroticism also features within the Egyptian court tales. For instance, *Setne Khamwas I* recounts how the noblewoman, Tabubu, seduces the magician prince, Setne.

Most High over the nations, particularly over foreign nations.[284] Weeping over his loss of Sarai, Abram entreats the Most High God, requests that he bring judgment against the Pharaoh and his house, and prevent the Pharaoh from defiling his wife (20.11-16). The Most High thus sends a pestilential spirit to afflict the Pharaoh and his household, which prevents the Pharaoh from having sexual relations with Sarai (20.16-17).[285] The Pharaoh inquires of the wise men, magicians, and healers of Egypt whether "they might be able to heal him" (20.18-20). However, they are unable to heal the Pharaoh, and are instead themselves afflicted and flee (20.20-21). Harqenosh returns to Abram and requests that he pray over the Pharaoh, but Abram's nephew, Lot, reveals that Abram is unable to fulfill this request until the king should return Sarai to him (20.21-23). The Pharaoh thus returns Sarai to Abram (20.26-27), and Abram prays over the Pharaoh, who is healed (20.27-29). The king then rewards Abram with many gifts for healing him and appoints a man to escort Abram out of Egypt (20.29-32).

[284] While scholars have identified several different 'Abraham motifs' within *GA* cols. 19-20, those that focus upon Abram's roles as dreamer, interpreter, advisor and healer, as well as the sovereignty of the Most High, are particularly significant for the purposes of this dissertation, since they are closely related to several of the themes present among the court tales. Daniel Falk, for instance, focuses on: a) the character and piety of Abraham; b) the beauty and purity of Sarai; c) the wisdom of Abram; d) revelation; e) Abram as patriarch; f) chronology and calendar; g) geography; and h) characterization (particularly the emotional and psychological states of the characters in 1Q20). See Daniel K. Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts: Strategies for Extending the Scriptures among the Dead Sea Scrolls*, LSTS 63 (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 80-94. Beate Ego focuses on the themes of Abram as a transmitter of divine revelation, a God-trusting man of prayer, and as an exorcist, as well as the relationship of these motifs to one another. See Ego, "The Figure of Abraham in the Genesis Apocryphon's Re-Narration of Gen 12:10-20," 233-243. On Abram's depiction as a teacher and a healer in cols. 19-20, see Machiela, "Genesis Revealed," 218-20.

[285] While Genesis 12 does not explicitly assert that the Pharaoh was prevented from having intercourse with Sarai, any such ambiguity regarding the issue is alleviated in *GA* 30.16-17 by the explicit statement, which asserts that the Pharaoh was prevented from defiling Sarai, as well as by the Pharaoh's oath that he did not have sex with Sarai (20.30).

While *GA* draws from several sources, some of the most influential sources in *GA* 19-20 include the book of Genesis (particularly Gen 12, 20, and 26), and the court tale traditions (cf. Dan 1-6 and *4QPrayer of Nabonidus*). Thus, in order to gain a deeper appreciation for *GA*'s adoption of the court healing theme, I now turn to the issue of how *GA* utilizes Genesis. *GA* cols. 19-20 supplement and expand upon the account of Genesis 12 by incorporating elements found in Genesis 20 and 26, which recount incidents when the foreign king, Abimelech, abducts the wife of a patriarch and tries to wed her.[286] For instance, while the Pharaoh is afflicted by "diseases" (נגעים) in Genesis 12:17, there is no mention that Abram healed the Pharaoh in Genesis 12. However, Abram's notoriety and association with the ability to bring about healing is not entirely absent from Genesis, and is referenced in Genesis 20:17, where Abraham prays over King Abimelech, who is then healed by God. *GA* 20 evidently draws from this episode since it conforms to the sequence (prayer followed by healing) and language found in Genesis 20:17:

Genesis 20:17	*GA* 20.28[287]
ויתפלל אברהם אל־האלהים וירפא אלוהים את־אבימלך "Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech…"	וׄצׄליׄתׄ על[וה]יׄ[את]רׄפא "Then I prayed over [hi]m, "[be] healed!"

[286] For a detailed discussion on how elements of the account of Abraham and Abimelech in Genesis 20 are woven into the account of *GA* cols. 19-20, see Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts*, 80-94. *GA* utilizes elements from throughout the Book of Genesis to supplement the narrative of Genesis 6-15. For instance, the phrase God utters to Noah, "Do not fear, O Noah; I am with you, and with all of your sons who will be like you, forever" (*GA* 11.15), does not appear in the Genesis account about Noah, but a similar phrase does appear in Gen 26:24. See Machiela and Perrin, "Tobit and the *Genesis Apocryphon*," 121.
[287] I follow Daniel Machiela and James C. VanderKam's updated transcription of *GA* here. See Machiela and VanderKam, "The Genesis Apocryphon," 42 and 94-5.

The healing account of *GA* follows Genesis 20 and emphasizes that God is the source of healing in the royal court (only healing the Pharaoh after Abram has prayed for the foreign ruler), a principle which is also emphasized within the healing accounts of *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* frgs. 1, 2a, 2b and 3, and Daniel 4. In this way, *GA* differs markedly from the ancient Near Eastern skill tales, which associated the supernatural skills exhibited in the court with the courtiers themselves.

GA 19-20 also reorders the events surrounding Abram’s sojourn in Egypt, and this reordering of events should be attributed to the influence of the Jewish skill tales. According to Genesis 12, Abram instructs Sarai to tell the Egyptians that she is his sister, Sarai is taken from Abram, and then Abram receives gifts from the Pharaoh for Sarai’s sake (בעבורה), while she is still in the possession of the Pharaoh and before the Pharaoh had been afflicted. This ordering of events would surely have left some early audiences with an exegetical dilemma: By lying and allowing the Pharaoh to believe that Sarai is his sister, had Abram then gained his riches through deceit rather than for compensation or for some act of piety?[288] By contrast, *GA*, in its reordering of events from Gen 12, emphasizes that Abram did not receive any gifts until *after* Sarai had been returned to him, Abram had prayed, and the Pharaoh had been healed from his affliction (20.29-30). This rearrangement may be further emphasized if Machiela is correct in his reconstruction of the text in *GA* 20.30, which stresses that Abram was given gifts on the very day the Pharaoh was healed: “on t[hat da]y” (בי֯]ומא דנ[א֯). In this way, *GA* resolves the above-mentioned interpretive tension in Genesis 12 by emphasizing that Abram gained his riches after a demonstration

[288] See Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, 2nd Rev. Ed., 125.

of piety. This re-shaping of events from Genesis 12 is striking, since it also brings the account of *GA* col. 20 into closer structural conformity with those court tales that focus upon the skill of the courtier. The following chart serves to highlight how *GA* 20's reordering events from Genesis 12 conforms to the ordering of events in the healing tales. In the left column, I have included a basic outline of the court healing theme, and, in the central column, I have outlined the events surrounding the Pharaoh's healing from *GA* 20, while, in the right column, I have outlined the biblical sources of the events found in *GA* 20:

Healing Tale Structure	*GA* 20	Genesis
i) A problem arises in the royal court	The Pharaoh and his household are afflicted by a spirit that causes illness 20.16-17	12:17; 20:3
ii) None of the king's foreign courtiers can resolve the problem	None of the Egyptian court ministers can heal the Pharaoh 20.18-20	Absent from Genesis
iii) Only the hero is finally able to resolve the problem in the court	Abram prays for the Pharaoh, and he is healed 20.28-29	20:7, 17
iv) The hero is rewarded for his display of skill	Abram receives gifts from the Pharaoh 20.29-30 (cf. 29.31)[289]	12:13; 20:14-16

[289] Notably, Abram is also rewarded by the Pharaoh's nobles for his display of wisdom (19.24-25).

GA also shares several particularities with other well-known court tales. For instance, *GA 19-20* incorporates several elements from the book of Daniel, such as its inclusion of "enchanters" (אשפיא) among those who attempt to heal the Pharaoh.[290] Moreover, Sarai receives the same sorts of gifts (of gold and regal attire) after the Pharaoh has been healed that other courtiers receive for displaying their skills within the court, as is exemplified in the following chart that compares *GA* 20.29-30 with Genesis 41:42 and Daniel 5:29[291]:

GA 20.31	Genesis 41:42	Daniel 5:29
ויהב לה̇ מלכא̊ כ̊[סף וד]הב [ש]גיא ולבוש שגי די ב̇וץ̇ וארג̇ו̊אן "And the king gave her [mu]ch si[lver and go]ld and much clothing of fine linen and purple."	וילבשו אתו בגדי־שש וישם רבד הזהב על־צוארו "And they clothed him in garments of linen and placed a golden necklace upon his neck."[292]	והלבישו לדניאל ארגונא והמונכא די־דהבא על צוארה "And they clothed Daniel in purple and a chain of gold was placed around his neck."

GA col. 20 also shares some affinities with *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* and the episode of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4, which employ the court healing theme. Both *QA* and *4QPrayer*

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[290] See Matthew J. Morgenstern and Michael Segal, "The Genesis Apocryphon," in *Outside the Bible: Ancient Writings Related to Scripture*, vol. 1 of *Outside the Bible: Ancient Writings Related to Scripture*, eds. Louis H. Feldman, James L. Kugel, and Lawrence H. Schiffman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press/Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2013), 237-262, here 254. Cf. Dan 2:10, 27; 4:4; 5:7, 11, 15. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon*, 179-216, particularly 206.

[291] Of additional significance here is that Sarai's wisdom is clearly emphasized in *GA* 20.7, much like the courtiers within several other court tales. Enoch's wisdom is also emphasized when Abram expounds upon his words (*GA* 19.24-29), which is not an explicit focus in Genesis. *GA*, thus, depicts Abram as a member of a family of sages, which at a minimum includes Abram, Sarai, Enoch, and Noah (cf. cols. 0-17). As demonstrated above, families of courtiers also feature within the *Story of Aḥiqar*, *4QTales of the Persian Court* (4Q550), and *Setne Khamwas II*. Accordingly, it is unsurprising here that *GA* should depict Abram's wisdom to be a familial quality. Presumably, the intended audience of *GA* also belongs to Abram's family, and ought to learn from his example in the Pharaoh's court.

[292] Gifts of silver are also given to Abram in Gen 20:16.

of Nabonidus focus upon the ruler's affliction by an evil spirit (בשחנא באישא in 4Q242 frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3 l. 2 and רוח באישא in *QA* col. 20). In the Second Temple period, health was associated with sin, and illness was often understood to be accompanied by a malevolent spirit. Accordingly, being afflicted by an evil spirit or a physical malady in this literature would have been tantamount to the same thing.[293] All three of these texts emphasize that the king remains ill for a time before he is healed (*GA* 20.18, 4Q242 frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3.3, and Dan 4:31), and *GA* and *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* even employ similar language to describe the prolonged affliction of the rulers:

GA 20.18	*4QPrayer of Nabonidus* frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3.3
ולסוף תרתין שנין תקפו וגברו עלוהי מכתשיא ונגדיא "and at the end of two years, the afflictions and diseases grew stronger and overpowered him."	כתיש הוית שנין "I was afflicted for seven years…"

While *4QPrayer of Nabonidus*, Daniel 4, and most other Jewish skill tales, include an acknowledgment by the foreign king that the Most High is sovereign (cf. 4Q242 frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3.4-5; Dan 2:47 and 4:34), *GA* 20.16-30 lacks any such affirmation on the part of the Pharaoh. This absence, however, can be attributed to the fact that no such acknowledgment is made by either the Pharaoh or Abimelech in Genesis 12, 20, or 26.

[293] See Michael O. Wise, "Healing," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. 1 of *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2000), 336-338. The connection between disease, sin and evil spirits is clearly exhibited within both *GA* 20 and Tobit. While *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* no longer preserves any explicit reference to an evil spirit, this connection was likely also assumed within the text.

Despite this absence in *GA* 19-20, the Most High's sovereignty is clearly emphasized throughout the account. For instance, just prior to Abram's sojourn in Egypt, Abram notes that: "There, I called upon the na[me of G]o[d], and I said: "you are he, the God... and the King of eternity" (19.7-8).[294] Abram also emphasizes the Most High's lordship over all things (including all of the kings of the earth) and his authority to enact judgment (20.12-13). Furthermore, that the Most High protects Abram from the Egyptians by giving him a vision (19.14-17) and prevents the Pharaoh from having sexual relations with Sarai by sending spirits to afflict his household (20.14-16) also serves to demonstrate that the Most High is in control over all earthly affairs, including matters pertaining to the Egyptian royal court. The victories described in many of the court tales surveyed above also resulted in a royal pronouncement, which served to protect those Israelites in the foreign empire (cf. Dan 2 and 4). By contrast, the Pharaoh makes no such pronouncement in *GA*, and, instead, Abram is escorted out of Egypt with his foreign riches. Nevertheless, the reader is left with a clear sense that, regardless of where Abram traverses, the Most High will protect him. In this way, the implied audience of *GA* may rest assured that those descendants of Abram and Sarai who trust in the Most High can also experience the same sort of protection, prosperity and success under foreign rule that Abram and Sarai experienced in Egypt.

Dream visions appear at critical points throughout the narrative of *GA*, and the work's employment of visionary motifs and language reminiscent of Daniel 2-6 make Abram's visionary activity in *GA* 19-20 worthy of note.[295] Of particular interest is that,

[294] This acknowledgment presumably takes place at Bethel. See Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon*, 179.
[295] Perrin, *The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Revelation*, 52-7.

when Abram receives his second dream vision while *en route* to Egypt (19.14-17), he also interprets the dream for Sarai and advises her about how she should respond to his foreknowledge (19.17-21). *GA* thus establishes Abram as both a visionary and interpreter in this instance. The dream vision language of *GA* 19.14 and 19.17-8 is strongly reminiscent of the language found in Daniel 2:3 and 4:2, and all three accounts include an expression of fear regarding the vision upon the courtier's awakening.[296]

GA 19.14	*GA* 19.17-8	Daniel 2:3	Daniel 4:2
וחלמת אנא אברם חלם "And I, Abram, dreamt a dream…"	חלם ח֯למ֯ת֯ "I dreamt a dream" [ד]אנה֯ דחל מ֯[ן] ח֯למ֯א֯ ד֯ן "[which] I was afraid o[f] this dream"	חלום חלמתי "I dreamt a dream" ותפעם רוחי לדעת את־חלמתי "And I was disturbed about knowing the dream."	חלם חזית "I saw a dream" וידחלנני על־משכבי וחזוי ראשי יבהלנני "And it caused me to be fearful, and the fancies upon my bed and the visions of my head frightened me."

While both Joseph and Daniel are depicted as visionaries (Gen 37 and Dan 7-12) and interpreters of dreams (Gen 40-41 and Dan 2 and 4), they only ever interpret the dreams of others (and not their own). Accordingly, Abram's interpretation of and exposition about his

[296] Abram's visionary status also recalls Joseph's visionary activity in Gen 37, 40-41, and bears similarity to the visions preserved within *4QFour Kingdoms* and *4QAramaic Apocalypse*.
Abram's awakening from his dream recalls the court motif of the king who awakes in the night in fear of his dream vision that requires interpretation. For instance, in Daniel 2:1-4, Nebuchadnezzar is unable to sleep after having a terrifying dream, and requests that his magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and Chaldeans interpret the dream for him: "Now in the second year of the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamt such dreams that his spirit was disturbed and his sleep fled from him." (Dan 2:1).

own dream in *GA* 19 serve to demonstrate that Abram's mantic abilities would seem to be extraordinary in comparison with the experiences of other visionaries.

In summation, this remarkable expansion and restructuring of Abram's sojourn in Egypt in *GA* 19-20 demonstrate that the work's associated scribal circle intended to re-present the account as a court tale. While many of the expansions in *GA* 19-20 are influenced by *GA*'s exegetical approach towards Genesis and its willingness to incorporate elements from elsewhere in the biblical text into the Egyptian sojourn episode, the restructuring and language of *GA* 19-20 evidence the deep influence of the literature and conventions of the Jewish court tale traditions upon the work. By employing court skill themes, *GA* 19-20 is thereby able to invoke and emphasize many of the motifs associated with the court tales discussed above, including the victory experienced by the courtier and the Most High through Abram's demonstration of piety in the Egyptian court, the prosperity achieved by Abram and Sarai in 'diaspora', and the sovereignty of the Most High over the foreign court.

3.3.3. Tobit

Prior to the discovery of the DSS, the book of Tobit was already well-known to scholars, having been preserved in Greek, Syriac, Latin, Ethiopic and Coptic translations. However, among the DSS, four copies of the book of Tobit were discovered in Aramaic (*4QpapTob*[a] [4Q196], and *4QTob*[b-d] [4Q197-199], preserving about one third of the text. An Aramaic fragment from Cave 3 also appears to preserve a few words from Tobit.[297]

[297] Maurice Baillet, "Fragments Isolés." in *Les "Petites Grottes" de Qumrân (Textes)*, eds. Maurice Baillet, J. T. Milik, and R. De Vaux, DJD III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 103.

Another copy was discovered in Hebrew (*4QTob*^{e} [4Q200]). The critical edition of *4QpapTob*^{a}, *4QTob*$^{b-d}$ and *4QTob*^{e} (4Q200) has been published by J. Fitzmyer in the *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* series.[298] Previously, *Schøyen Tobit* [Schøyen Ms. 5234]) was thought to be another Aramaic DSS manuscript of Tobit but is now thought to be a modern forgery.[299]

Prior to the publication of the Tobit fragments discovered among the DSS, the issue of the original language of the Book of Tobit was a matter of great debate among scholars.[300] However, the discovery of the DSS have established that the work was certainly

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[298] The critical edition of *4QpapTob*^{a}, *4QTob*$^{b-d}$ and *4QTob*^{e} can be found in Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Tobit," in *Qumran Cave 4 XIV: Parabiblical Texts, Part 2*, eds. Magen Broshi et al., in consultation with James VanderKam, DJD XIX (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 1-76.
A polyglot edition of Tobit, which incorporates the principal ancient and medieval versions of the work, was edited by Stuart Weeks, Simon Gathercole and Loren Stuckenbruck. See Stuart Weeks, Simon Gathercole, and Loren Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Tobit: Texts from the Principal Ancient and Medieval Traditions: with Synopsis, Concordances, and Annotated Texts in Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Syriac*, Fontes et subsidia ad Bibliam pertinentes 3 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2004).

[299] Schøyen Ms. 5234 was formerly featured on the Schøyen Collection website, but has subsequently been removed. Edward Cook has posted a transcription and translation of Schøyen Ms. 5234 on his Blog: Edward M. Cook, "A Lost Scrap of Tobit from the Schoyen Collection," *Ralph the Sacred River*, http://ralphriver.blogspot.ca/2005/12/lost-scrap-of-tobit-from-schoyen.html. Schøyen Ms. 5234 has also been published in Michaela Hallermayer and Torlief Elgvin, "Schøyen Ms. 5234: Ein neues Tobit-Fragment vom Toten Meer," *RevQ* 22.3 (2006), 451-61. Prior to the publication of the *Gleanings from the Caves* volume, it was projected that Schøyen Ms. 5234 would be included in the volume. However, the editors did not include the work within the published collection. See Torleif Elgvin, Kipp Davis, & Michael Langlois, *Gleanings from the Caves: Dead Sea Scrolls and Artefacts from the Schøyen Collection*, LSTS 71 (Bloomsbury Academic/T & T Clark, 2016). As has been discussed by Kipp Davis, Schøyen Ms. 5234 is likely a fake. See Kipp Davis, "Nine Dubious "Dead Sea Scrolls" Fragments from the Twenty-First Century," *DSD* 24.2 (2017): 189-228. Also, see Årstein Justnes, "Fake Fragments, Flexible Provenances: Eight Aramaic 'Dead Sea Scrolls' from the 21st Century," in *Vision, Narrative and Wisdom in the Aramaic Texts from Qumran: Essays from the Copenhagen Symposium, 14-15 August, 2017*, eds. by Mette Bundvad, and Kasper Siegismund, STDJ 131 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 242-71, and Eibert Tigchelaar, "A Provisional List of Unprovenanced, Twenty-First Century, Dead Sea Scrolls-like Fragments," *DSS* 24.2 (2017): 173-188.

[300] For a discussion on Tobit's language of composition, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature (Berlin: de Gruyter: 2003), 1-28; and Daniel A. Machiela, "Hebrew, Aramaic, and the Differing Phenomenon of Targum and Translation in the Second Temple Period and Post-Second Temple Period," in *The Language Environment of First Century Judaea*, vol. 2 of *Jerusalem Studies in the Synoptic Gospels*, eds. R. Steven Notley and Randall Buth (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 207-246. Two Greek translations of the book of Tobit have survived: 1) a short recension, preserved in Codex Vaticanus, Alexandrinus and Venetus; and 2) a long recension, preserved in Codex Sinaiticus. Prior to the discovery of the DSS, J. Rendel Harris suggested that a Semitic original underlay the Greek Long Recension of the text, while Johannes

composed in a Semitic language. While linguistic and other literary considerations suggest that Tobit was composed in Aramaic and later translated into Hebrew, the discovery of the Hebrew copy of Tobit at Qumran (*4QTob*^{e}) has led some scholars to advocate for a Hebrew original.[301] While the book of Tobit recounts the lives and trials of Israelites living in the eastern Diaspora after the exile of the ten northern tribes by the Assyrians in 721 BCE, the manuscripts found at Qumran date much later, to 100 BCE-25 CE, which serves as "a *terminus ante quem*" for the composition of the book.[302] Most scholars date the composition of the work to 225-175 BCE.[303]

Müller proposed that a Semitic original underlay the Greek Short Recension of the text. See J. Rendel Harris, "The Double Text of Tobit. Contribution toward a Critical Inquiry," *The American Journal of Theology* 3.3 (1899), 541-554; and Johannes Müller, *Beiträge zur Erklarung und Kritik des Buches Tobit*, BZAW 13 (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1908), 1-53. Other scholars have proposed that the work was originally composed in Greek. For instance, see Antoine Gillaumont, "Tobit," in *La Bible: l'Ancien Testament*, vol. 2 of *La Bible: l'Ancien Testament* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), 1569-97.

[301] Early on, J. T. Milik suggested that Tobit was composed in Aramaic. See J.T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea*, trans. J. Strugnell, SBT 26 (London: SMC Press, 1959), 31. For more recent linguistic and literary arguments in favour of an Aramaic original, see: Edward M. Cook, "Our Translated Tobit," in *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin McNamara*, eds. Kevin J. Cathcart and Michael Maher, JSOTSup 230, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 153-63; Matthew Morgenstern, "Language and Literature in the Second Temple Period," *JJS* 48 (1997): 130-45; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Aramaic and Hebrew Fragments of Tobit from Qumran Cave 4," *CBQ* 57.4 (1995), 655-675; and Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 25. Literary phrases and motifs shared by Tobit and *GA* help to corroborate the suggestion that Tobit was initially composed in Aramaic. See Machiela and Perrin, "Tobit and the *Genesis Apocryphon*," 111-132. Some proponents of a Hebrew original, include: Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer*, 299; and Michael Wise, "A Note on 4Q196 (papTob ara) and Tobit I 22," *VT* 43.4 (1993): 566-570. Whether or not Tobit was originally composed in Aramaic is not a major issue here, since, in either case, Tobit provides yet another example of a text that was discovered at Qumran and employs court tale themes.

[302] Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 50.

[303] See, for instance, Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 52; Beate Ego, *Tobit*, Studien zu den Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer 2.6 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999), 899-900; Machiela and Perrin, "Tobit and the *Genesis Apocryphon*," 132; and Renate Egger-Wenzel, "Jewish Self-Awareness, Religious Identity and Acts of Resistance as Reflected in the Book of Tobit," in *A Feminist Companion to Tobit and Judith*, eds. Athalya Brenner-Idan, and Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, The Feminist Companion to the Bible [Second Series] 20 (London/New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015), 23-47, particularly 43-47. Ego Beate prefers an earlier dating in the late third or early second centuries BCE, and Fitzmyer preferred a date towards the end of 225-175 BCE. Machiela and Perrin set a *terminus ante-quem* of about the 170s BCE, and Renate Egger-Wenzel dates Tobit to a period during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 BCE).

Much like *GA*, Tobit is literarily dependent upon several sources, particularly the patriarchal narratives from the Book of Genesis. Irene Nowell has demonstrated how the premise of Tobit is strongly based upon Genesis' telling of the journeys of two patriarchs outside of the promised land.[304] Tzvi Novick contends that the journey of Tobiah and the angel Raphael to Ecbatana is modeled after Isaac and Abraham's journey in Genesis 22, which is evident by their shared use of the phrase: "and the two of them went along together" (וילכו שניהם יחדו in Gen 22:6, 8, and אזלין תריֿהֿ[ו]ן [כ]חדא in 4Q197 4 i 11).[305] However, Tobit also exhibits its own particular interests, disparate from those of Genesis, which is evident by Tobit's striking use of a complex variety of traditional literary themes

[304] The Book of Tobit exhibits a dependence upon several sources, including the Hebrew Scriptures, particularly Genesis, Job, Deutero-Isaiah, and Deuteronomy. On Tobit's invocation of the patriarchal sojourn theme from Genesis, see Irene Nowell, "The Book of Tobit: Narrative Technique and Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1983). For other treatments on the relationship between Tobit and Genesis, see Paul Deselaers, *Das Buch Tobit: Studien zu seiner Entstehung, Komposition und Theologie*, OBO 43 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 293-6; Morgenstern, "Language and Literature in the Second Temple Period," 130-45, particularly 137; William Soll, "The Book of Tobit as a Window on the Hellenistic Jewish Family," in *Passion, Vitality, and Foment: The Dynamics of Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Lamontte M. Luker (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 242-75, particularly 259-60; Geoffrey David Miller, *Marriage in the Book of Tobit*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 10 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 145-47; and Machiela and Perrin, "Tobit and the *Genesis Apocryphon*," 111-132.
Frank Zimmerman has posited that Tobit exhibits motifs from: *the Grateful Dead*, *the Monster in the Bridal Chamber, the Dragon Slayer*, and *the Two Brothers*, as well as other sources. See Frank Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit* (JAL; New York: Harper, 1958), 11. William Soll, however, objects to Zimmermann's heavy reliance upon the Aarne/Thompson tale type index to identify parallels between Tobit and the ancient Near Eastern stories listed above, and rightfully questions whether all of these works should be understood as sources for Tobit *per se*. See William Soll, "Misfortune and Exile in Tobit: The Juncture of a Fairy Tale Source and Deuteronomic Theology," *CBQ* 51 (1989): 209-231. Fitzmyer is also cautious of identifying a relationship of literary dependency between *The Tractate of Khons*, *The Fable of the Grateful Dead* and *The Monster in the Bridal Chamber*, and Tobit, noting that highlighting the literary parallels shared by these works is a much more feasible task. See Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 1-28. Recently, Andrew Perrin has also demonstrated that Tobit shares several motifs with 1 Enoch, *Genesis Apocryphon*, *Aramaic Levi Document*, *Testament of Qahat*, *Visions of Amram*, and *New Jerusalem*, including: 1) preference for first-person voices, 2) ancestral instruction on Israelite religion, 3) insistence upon endogamous marriage, 4) eschatological outlooks on a 'new' Jerusalem, and 5) awareness of idioms and motifs drawn from dream-vision traditions. See Andrew B. Perrin, "Tobit's Context and Contacts in the Qumran Aramaic Anthology," *JSP* 25.1 (2015), 23-51.
[305] See Tzvi Novick, "Biblicized Narrative: On Tobit and Genesis 22," *JBL* 126 (2007): 755-64. Another scholar, who has discussed the structural and linguistic influence of Genesis 24 upon Tobit 4-11, includes: Giuseppe Pierro, *Tobia* (La Sacra Biblia; Turin: Marietti, 1953), 32-33.

and motifs, including: theodicy, humour, heightened emotions, prayers, a hymn, an angelophany, apocalyptic imagery, as well as court tale.[306]

While the interactions of Israelites within the foreign court are not the sole focus of the Book of Tobit, this literary work draws from court tale themes.[307] Tobit 1 includes a court conflict, and Tobit 2-11 employs the healing theme, recontextualizing it within family life. Tobit makes use of both court tale themes in order to emphasize its interest in important familial obligations. The book begins with a first-person account by Tobit, a member of the northern tribe of Naphtali, who recounts his life in the Upper Galilee, recalling how he alone among the members of his tribe walked in the ways of righteousness and upheld the traditions of his ancestors (1:3-9). After his tribe is taken captive to Nineveh, Tobit initially experiences a period of success as an administrator for King Shalmaneser, purchasing everything that the king needed (1:10-17).[308] During the reign of Shalmaneser's successor, Sennacherib, a Ninevite informs the king that Tobit has been secretly burying his dead kindred (1:18-19). Upon realizing that the king knows about his deeds, Tobit flees in order to avoid being put to death, and all of his property is confiscated (1:19). Forty days later,

[306] While Tobit exhibits a diversity of literary themes and motifs, most scholars have classified the work as a whole as a Jewish folk tale or novella. For instance, Fitzmyer regards Tobit as a work of fiction. Humphreys refers to Tobit as a heroic folk tale and novella, and Lawrence Wills regards Tobit as a novel. See Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 31; W. Lee Humphreys, "Novella," in *Saga, Legend, Tale, Novella, Fable: Narrative Forms in Old Testament Literature*, ed. George W. Coats, JSOTSup 35 (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1985), 82-96; and Lawrence Wills, *The Jewish Novel in the Ancient World*, Myth and Poetics (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), 68-92. Also see, Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 40A (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 11-21.
[307] Devorah Dimant has written an article on the topic of Tobit and the court tales, which can be found in Devorah Dimant, "The Book of Tobit as a Court Tale (ספר טוביה כסיפור חצר)," *Meghillot* 13 (2017): 159-170.
[308] It is interesting to note that Paul of Tarsus considered administrative skill to be a spiritual gift, listing it alongside other spiritual gifts such as healing: "And God has appointed them in the church—first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then the gifts of healing, helpful deeds, administration, types of tongues." (1 Cor 12:28). Since the skill is situated in the same category as healing, one wonders whether the administrative skills of various courtiers could have been considered "miraculous" in certain ancient Near Eastern contexts.

Sennacherib is killed by his sons, and Tobit's nephew Aḥiqar intercedes for Tobit to King Esarhaddon (Sennacherib's successor), and Tobit is permitted to return to Nineveh (1:21-22). Following Tobit's return, his vision is obstructed by the excrement of a sparrow, and he goes blind after physicians unsuccessfully attempt to heal him (2:1-10). Meanwhile in distant Ecbatana in Media, the demon Asmodeus has murdered the seven husbands of Tobit's kinswoman, Sarah, and she is wrongfully accused by her father's maid of murdering them (3:7-9). In their misery, Tobit and Sarah pray for death, but instead God sends the angel, Raphael, to heal them (3:16-17). The tale then shifts from the first person to the third person perspective, and focuses upon Tobiah and Raphael's journey to Rages in Media to retrieve money that Tobit had deposited there with a relative. Upon reaching Ecbatana, Tobiah meets Sarah's parents, marries Sarah and, upon Azariah's instructions, routs the demon Asmodeus (7:1-8:18). A wedding banquet ensues, and Azariah retrieves Tobit's money from Rages (9). Upon returning to Nineveh with Tobit's money, Azariah instructs Tobiah how to cure Tobit's blindness, reveals his true angelic identity to Tobit and Tobiah, and returns to heaven (11:7-12:15). Tobit warns Tobias about the impending destruction of Nineveh, the future restoration of Jerusalem and the return of the Israelites. Following their death, Tobiah buries his parents and in-laws (14:11-15).

3.3.3.1. Tobit 1 and the Court Conflict Theme

In order to understand Tobit's employment of court tale themes, I now turn to the issue of Tobit's literary dependence upon *Aḥiqar*, a work firmly rooted within the ancient

Near Eastern court tale tradition.[309] Tobit's dependence upon *Aḥiqar* is evident from its references to the tale. Of particular significance are Tobit's references to key characters that feature within *Aḥiqar*, including: Aḥiqar (Tob 1:21-22, 2:10, 11:18, and 14:10); Aḥiqar's nephew, Nadab, (11:18 and 14:10); King Sennacherib (1:15-22); and King Esarhaddon (1:21-2:1). Remarkably, Tobit even notes that Aḥiqar is his nephew (1:22), which suggests that Aḥiqar is portrayed as a fellow Naphtalite (and not as an Aramean or Assyrian), who, like Tobit, lived in exile (in Nineveh [cf. 1:22], and later in Elymais [2:10]). Aḥiqar's nephew, who is called Nadin in the Elephantine *Aḥiqar* recension, is attributed a Hebrew name in Tobit, Nadab, which serves to highlight his Israelite identity within the text. As described in Chapter Two, Aḥiqar was widely reputed in the ancient Near East as a skilled courtier who came into conflict with his nephew. Tobit's familial relationship with Aḥiqar would have bolstered Tobit's reputation as a member of the Assyrian court and

[309] For a discussion of the *Story of Aḥiqar*, see Chapter Two above.
On the influence of *Aḥiqar* on Tobit. See: Schmitt**,** "Die Achikar-Notiz bei Tobit 1,21b-22," 18-38; Greenfield, "Ahikar in the Book of Tobit," 195-202; Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 1-28; Weigl, "Die rettende Macht der Barmherzigkeitt," 212-243; Niehr, "Die Gestalt des Ahiqar im Tobit-Buch," 57-76; and Alexander A. Di Lella, "A Study of Tobit 14:10 and Its Intertextual Parallels," *CBQ* 71.3 (2012): 497-506. Scholars tend to presume that although Aḥiqar traditions were well-known to the author of the book of Tobit, they were not precisely the same as those preserved in the Elephantine manuscript. See, for instance, Kottsieper, "'Look, Son, What Nadab Did to Ahikaros…'," 145-167; and Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 78-88. Holm suspects that Tobit was familiar with a later recension of *Aḥiqar*. Kottsieper assumes that the author of the book of Tobit would not have employed the Elephantine version of *Aḥiqar* due to the text's polytheistic perspective. However, Kottsieper's logic unnecessarily complicates the matter. There is no need to assume that a Judean author would have had any compunction about adapting *Aḥiqar* into a monotheistic framework (as in Tobit), since the scribal practice of re-appropriating literary themes and characters from well-known ancient Near Eastern polytheistic texts was a common practice during the Second Temple period. Matthew Goff, for example, has demonstrated how the Qumran Book of Giants appropriated various motifs from the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, as well as the title character, Gilgamesh. See Matthew Goff, "Gilgamesh the Giant: The Qumran Book of Giants' Appropriation of "Gilgamesh" Motifs," *DSD* 16.2 (2009): 221-253. Also see, Devorah Dimant, "Tobit and Ahiqar," in *Wisdom Poured Out Like Water: Studies on Jewish and Christian Antiquity in Honor of Gabriele Boccaccini*, ed. J. Harold Ellens, DCLS 38 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 276-291. Dimant considers the reliance upon and references to Aḥiqar to be a framing device for Tobit, which situates Tobit within the court tale tradition.

would have implicitly connected the Book of Tobit with the court tale tradition, that is with the same literary tradition associated with *Aḥiqar*.[310]

Tobit readapts the conflict between Aḥiqar and Nadab, which features prominently within the Assyrian *Aḥiqar* episode (cf. Dan 3, 6, and *4QTale of Bagasraw* [4Q550, frgs. 5-10]), in both the introduction and conclusion of the work, utilizing the theme in order to highlight the significance of proper familial burial.[311] The structure of Tobit 1:10-22 follows the essential format of Aḥiqar and Nadab's conflict, which serves to highlight the basic similarities between Tobit's and Aḥiqar's situations: i) Tobit and Aḥiqar both initially occupy significant ministerial positions within the Assyrian royal court; ii) Tobit and Aḥiqar's actions are denounced before the king; iii) Tobit and Aḥiqar are condemned to death; iv) Tobit and Aḥiqar survive by going into hiding; v) another member of the court intercedes for Tobit and Aḥiqar; and vi) Tobit and Aḥiqar are later permitted to return, and continue to prosper within the Assyrian kingdom.[312] Tobit 1 notes that King Sennacherib seeks to put Tobit to death, since he has been secretly burying his dead kinsmen, and identifies the one who informs the King about Tobit as a Ninevite (Tob 1:19), suggesting that there is an ethno-religious dimension to Tobit's conflict.[313] The *Aḥiqar* conflict theme

[310] See Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 122.
[311] Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 37-38.
[312] Renate Egger-Wenzel contends that there are three viable forms of resistance against a misuse of state power over minorities: 1) revolt, 2) uncompromising religious adherence unto death (i.e., martyrdom), and 3) a sort of compromise between the religious life and civil authority. Egger-Wenzel sees Tobit falling into the third option, which depicts the eponymous hero privately attempting to keep the commandments and burying dead kinsmen in secret, as his burial practices were contrary to the laws of the civil authority. See Egger-Wenzel, "Jewish Self-Awareness, Religious Identity and Acts of Resistance as Reflected in the Book of Tobit," 23-47, particularly 43-47.
[313] While ethnic tension appears to be absent from Elephantine *Aḥiqar*, it does feature in many of the Jewish conflict accounts (see above).
King Sennacherib's persecution of Tobit also exhibits the court tale motif of the *ira regis* ("the rage of the king"), whereby the king is depicted as humorously full of rage and violent. Tobit 1 establishes that King

is invoked again in the conclusion of the work, when Tobit refers to Nadab's betrayal of his father Aḥiqar, warning Tobiah to avoid the sort of folly embodied by Nadab's actions (Tob 14:10). Tobit's admonition follows his command that Tobiah and his sons are to seek to serve God, as well as Tobit's description about how Tobiah ought to bury his parents. The issue of burial also plays a role within *Aḥiqar*, with Aḥiqar's friend Nabusumiskun killing another prisoner and using the body to feign Aḥiqar's death, so that Aḥiqar might escape the wrath of the king. Accordingly, Nadab's betrayal of Aḥiqar serves as a counterpoint to the way that Tobiah and his sons ought to act in Tobit 14—Nadab betrayed his own father and attempted to have him killed, while, by contrast, Tobiah is to seek to please God and honor his parents through their burial.[314]

3.3.3.2. Tobit 2-11 and the Healing Theme

The court healing theme, which features prevalently within *GA* 19-20 and *4QPrayer of Nabonidus,* is also present within Tobit 2-11, with Tobit shifting the setting of the theme away from the royal court to family life. The dual healing accounts of Tobias' relatives (Tobit and Sarah) follow the basic structural pattern of the court healing motif in *GA* 19-20. The parallelism established between the situations of Tobit's blindness and Sarah's

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Sennacherib, who seeks to put Tobit to death, as an intemperate brute, noting that he frequently had Israelites killed during fits of rage. Several court tales, both Jewish and Near Eastern, share the theme of the *ira regis*. For instance, Nebuchadnezzar seeks to have all of the wise men in his kingdom killed in Daniel 2:13 (cf. Dan 3:13, 19; Bel 8, 21; Gen 40:2, 41:10), and Artaxerxes appears as though he is about to explode with anger when Esther seeks to speak with him, causing poor Esther to faint in fear before him (Add Esth D:7; cf.: Esth 1:12; 2:1; 7:7). See Michael Chan, "*Ira Regis*: Comedic Inflections of Royal Rage in Jewish Court Tales," *JQR* 30.1 (2013), 1-25.

[314] Tobit appropriation of *Aḥiqar*, as well as *Aḥiqar*'s discovery at Elephantine in a copy dating to the fifth century BCE, evidences its early reception among Diasporic Jewish communities, and suggests that the work was well-known in various Judean scribal circles in Egypt, Judea and perhaps east of the Jordan River. Moreover, Tobit's special use and adaptation of various *Aḥiqar* traditions suggest that the work may have been reinterpreted in a "Hebraized" fashion by at least some scribal circles.

affliction by Asmodeus is evident, and would not have been lost on early readers, for, as noted above, malady was often understood to be a result of demonic affliction during the Second Temple period.[315] As in the healing tales discussed above, specialists (physicians) unsuccessfully attempt to heal Tobit, and instead he goes completely blind (Tob 2:10 [S]). This detail of the worsening of the situation is similar to *GA* 19-20, in which the court specialists are themselves afflicted by the evil spirit when they attempt to heal the Pharaoh.[316] Only with the guidance of God's angel, Raphael, is Tobiah finally able to heal Sarah and Tobit. The text's focus upon healing is further suggested by the names of Tobiah's accompanying angel, רפאל ("God heals") and his human alias עזריהו ("God helps"), who teaches Tobiah how to heal his family members. Following Sarah and Tobit's healing, Sarah's father and Tobit respectively acknowledge the sovereignty of the God of Israel, which recalls Nabonidus' rejection of idolatry upon his healing (cf. *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3). Reminiscent of the courtier's reception of rewards after resolving a king's problem in other skill tales, Tobias is safely able to take Sarah as his wife upon exorcising the demon Asmodeus, and later receives half of Sarah's father's possessions (10:10), which serves to reinforce the Book of Tobit's focus upon tribal duties—endogamy in this case.[317] The chart below highlights the basic structure of the healing theme in Tobit and *GA*:

[315] See Wise, "Healing," 336-8.
[316] Machiela and Perrin have demonstrated how Tobit and *GA* share affinities on several levels, including purpose, ideology, language, use of Genesis and shared type scenes (such as that of the endangered bride in Tob 6-8 and *GA* 19-20). See Machiela and Perrin, "Tobit and the *Genesis Apocryphon*," 111-32.
[317] The theme of endogamy has long been recognized as a particularly prominent theme throughout the Book of Tobit. It is exhibited in Tobit's marrying within his own tribe (1:9) and Tobiah's marrying his relative, Sarah (7:9-16). See Thomas Hieke, "Endogamy in the Book of Tobit, Genesis, and Ezra-Nehemiah," in *The Book of Tobit: Text, Tradition, Theology: Papers of the First International Conference on Deuterocanonical*

Event	Tobit's Healing	Sarah's Healing	*Genesis Apocryphon*, cols. 19-20
i) someone is afflicted by an illness/evil spirit	2:10a	3:8	20.16-17
ii) none of the other specialists are able to heal the afflicted individual	2:10		20.20
iii) the situation instead worsens	2:10	3:8-10	20.20
iv) only the hero is able to heal the afflicted individual	11:10-13	8:2-3	20.28-9
vi) the sovereignty of God is acknowledged	11:14-17	8:15-17	
v) the Israelite healer is rewarded		8:20-21[318] and 10:10	20.29-31

While Tobit's employment of the healing theme highlights the sovereignty of the Most High over the foreign court and demonstrates that Israelites can achieve success within the Diaspora, it also differs from the healing tales described above in two significant

Books, Pápa, Hungary, 20-21 May, 2004, eds. Géza G. Xeravits, and József Zsengellér, JSJSup 98 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005), 53-82; and Geoffrey David Miller, *Marriage in the Book of Tobit*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 10 (New York: de Gruyter, 2011), 53-82. Also, see Machiela and Perrin, "Tobit and the *Genesis Apocryphon*," 121-126.

318 Here a wedding banquet ensues. Nathan MacDonald discusses Tobit's and other Jewish novellas' attitude regarding the proper disposition towards food. See Nathan MacDonald, "Food and Drink in Tobit and Other 'Diaspora Novellas'," in *Studies in the Book of Tobit: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Mark Bredin (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 165-78.

ways. First, though Tobit 1 focuses on Tobit's role within the royal court, Tobit 2-14 shifts its focus away from matters pertaining to the court and instead to matters pertaining to Diasporic family life. While issues pertaining to the courtier's family life feature within several of the tales detailed above (particularly *Aḥiqar*, *4QPersian Tales* and *GA* 19-20), the setting within these tales is the royal court. Moreover, the problems that arise in the Jewish skill tales discussed above directly affect the king. In this way, Tobit's employment of the healing theme makes a significant departure from the skill tales above, since it now connects the sorts of problems that were typically associated with the foreign king (here the affliction caused by an evil spirit) with the courtier and his family.

A second significant departure from the skill tales has to do with the tale's attribution of the healing to Tobiah. While the Jewish healing tales typically credit the courtier's skill to the Most High, Tobit emphasizes that Tobiah is the one who heals his father and exorcises the demon Asmodeus.[319] Of course, Tobiah learns how to heal them due to the instruction received by the angel Raphael, and so Tobiah's successful healing of Sarah and Tobit highlights Tobiah's superior skill and demonstrates the victory that pious Israelites can achieve over malevolent spirits via the instruction given by the King of Heaven. The difference in Tobit, however, is subtle, and grants greater agency and emphasis to Tobiah's role, since he must himself learn how to heal. This shift in focus

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[319] Note the lack of any explicit mention of divine intervention in Tobit's rescue from Sennacherib in Tobit 1. Nevertheless, the fact that Sennacherib dies within forty days follows the precept found elsewhere in the court tales that those kings who do not acknowledge the sovereignty of God are swiftly deposed. Sennacherib's adversity to Tobit's burying his dead kinsmen would have been perceived as antagonistic towards the statutes of the Most High, and, accordingly, his swift deposition would have suggested divine intervention to the astute early reader.

serves to highlight that Tobiah functions within a social setting where Israelites must learn the skills necessary to survive in the Diaspora. This shift in focus should be attributed to Tobit's reliance upon *Aḥiqar*, a work which does not attribute the skill of the courtier to a deity.

Though Tobit lacks any royal statement that overtly acknowledges the sovereignty of the God of Israel, God's providence and victory is emphasized throughout the work, particularly via Raphael's guidance of Tobiah and in Tobit's final testament in Tobit 13.[320] As a whole, the book of Tobit demonstrates how Diasporic life is often a precarious existence, whereby Israelites like Tobit who are faithful to the God of Israel are at risk of persecution. Nevertheless, the righteous are ultimately rewarded, as is emphasized by Tobit's vindication (Tob 1) and Sarah and Tobit's healing (Tob 7 and 11), which serves to highlight the Most High's influence over Diasporic life.[321] Nevertheless, the work, much like several other court tales discussed above, exhibits an acute eschatological tension, with a dual focus upon present fulfillment and the coming salvation of God.[322] For instance, the work's eschatological expectation is particularly prevalent in Tobit 12-13, in which Tobit utters a prayer of thanksgiving and penitence before God that anticipates a time when all nations will acknowledge the God of Israel. In the prayer, Tobit exhorts Diasporic Israelites

[320] Phillip Muñoa contends that Tobit employs the Second Temple motif of a 'micro' exodus, whereby an angel descends to deliver an Israelite from suffering. See Phillip Muñoa, "Raphael the Savior: Tobit's Adaptation of the Angel of the Lord Tradition," *JSP* 25.3 (2016): 228-243.

[321] Micah Kiel asserts that Tobit's physical blindness parallels his paradigmatic blindness, with Tobit espousing a simple Deuteronomistic perspective that action results in consequence. Kiel contends that the narrative voice of the Book of Tobit thus resists explaining Tobit's affliction within a Deuteronomistic framework. See Micah D. Kiel, "Tobit's Theological Blindness," *CBQ* 73.2 (2011): 281-98.

[322] Jill Hicks-Keeton discusses Tobit's eschatological expectations, as well as the work's depiction that prophetic hopes for the future "have already begun to be fulfilled." See Jill Hicks-Keeton, "Already/Not Yet: Eschatological Tension in the Book of Tobit," *JBL* 132.1 (2013): 97-117.

to confess God among the nations and tells of a time when “A bright light will shine upon all the ends of the earth, and many nations of the earth will come to you from far away and the inhabitants of all the ends of the earth to your holy name, bearing their gifts for the king of heaven in their hands.” (13:12 [S]). Moreover, Tobit’s final testament, which focuses upon the imminent fall of Nineveh and Israel, the future rebuilding of Jerusalem and the impending return of the Israelite exiles (14:3-8), betrays the work’s anticipation of an eschatological political victory for Israel.[323] These hopes are partially realized by the close of the text when Tobiah witnesses the fall of Nineveh before his death (14:11-15), which further serves to demonstrate the inevitability of Tobit’s promised restoration of Jerusalem. Thus, the present victory experienced within Tobit is a relatively minor one, with righteous members of Tobit’s family experiencing vindication and acknowledging God’s sovereignty, yet the work also promises a future eschatological victory that will occur on a universal scale.

In summary, Tobit concludes, much like the court tales detailed above, with a continued existence in the Diaspora, where Israelites who remain faithful to the God of Israel may prosper, yet with the hope of a future restoration. As demonstrated above, one of Tobit’s most significant innovations is its recontextualization of themes traditionally associated with the court, adapting them for a new context—family life. Indeed, the work’s employment of these themes leads one to suppose that the scribal circle responsible for the

[323] Tobit 13, which prominently features Tobit’s eschatological expectations, evidences the influence of yet another popular Second Temple literary form: the testament. For a description of the literary features of the testament, see Devorah Dimant, “The Testament as a Literary Form in Early Jewish Pseudepigraphic Literature (הצוואה כצורה ספרותית בספרות הפסוודאפיגרפית היהודית),” *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* (*דברי הקונגרס העולמי למדעי היהדות*) ח (1981), 79-83.

work deliberately recontextualized these themes in an attempt to repurpose them for a broader Diasporic audience and not only for the elite who may be more interested in royal politics.

3.4. Conclusions

The preceding survey demonstrated that court tale themes feature in at least eight works among the twenty-nine Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls. These works include: Daniel, *4QPseudo-Daniel*[a-b], *4QFour Kingdoms*, *4QAramaic Apocalypse*, *4QPrayer of Nabonidus*, *4QTales of the Persian Court*, *4QGenesis Apocryphon*, and Tobit. While court tale themes are present within these eight works, it was found that the court tale themes were often comfortably fused together with other literary motifs, particularly apocalyptic themes. Indeed, the amalgamation of court tale and apocalyptic themes was found to be particularly prevalent within several of the works discussed above. The relationship between these two forms of literature shall be discussed at greater length in Chapter Five. While the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean tales typically depicted the courtiers as autonomous agents that gained success through their own merits, the Jewish court tales always attribute the victory of the courtiers to the God of Israel, which serves to emphasize the Most High's sovereignty and victory over the foreign king and his court. While most of the court tales focus on the lives and vicissitudes of Israelite exiles in the east from the eighth century BCE and onwards, *GA* 19-20 focuses on the patriarch Abram as a court hero. The literary settings of the court tales (with the exception of Tob 2-14) were found to be various foreign royal courts, including the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian courts. Though these foreign environments are portrayed as often perilous, the court tales assure the

triumph of righteous courtiers over the foreign king, rival courtiers and the court through the agency of the God of Israel. Several of the works discussed above (such as the Danielic material, *4QTales of the Persian Court*, and Tobit) also hint at the possibility of other now lost court episodes, suggesting that the early court tale corpus was once more extensive than what now remains, further attesting to the popularity of the court themes in antiquity.

While all of the Aramaic court tales surveyed above recount instances when the courtier and the God of Israel successfully achieved victory in the foreign court, this victory is achieved in different ways in the conflict and skill themes. 1) In the conflict tales (Dan 3, 6; *4QTale of Bagasraw*; and Tob 1), the hero faces adversity within the court from a foreign ruler or courtiers, and is condemned to death, usually for refusing to abandon various Jewish mores (for e.g., the refusal to worship foreign gods, burying dead kinsmen, etc.). Accordingly, ethnic tension is a focus within many of these tales and serves to elucidate what is truly at the heart of these conflicts—that is the clash between different peoples and worldviews. In this way, the court conflict theme highlights that the foreign king and courtiers are not only initially in opposition with the hero, but also with the will of the God of Israel.[324] However, the hero is inevitably rescued via the agency of the Most High, and later reinstated within the court by the king. God's consistent and successful rescue of these righteous courtiers in these tales would certainly have been considered

[324] Johansson aptly notes that all sins are committed either against God or other peoples, and that all sins are also transgressions of God's commandments. See Johansson, "'Who Can Forgive Sins but God Alone?'" 352. Accordingly, the foreign king and courtiers' wrongful opposition against the righteous courtier would serve to demonstrate that they have set themselves in opposition to God. For instance, Nabonidus' transgression of idolatry would have been understood by early audiences as a transgression against God, and as a breach of his commandments.

indicative of the Most High's power over the imperial court and highlights the victory of the God of Israel over the power of the foreign king.

2) The skill tales (Dan 2, 4, 5; *4QPseudo-Daniel*$^{a\text{-}b}$; *4QFour Kingdoms*; *4QAramaic Apocalypse*; *4QPrayer of Nabonidus*; *4QTale of Patireza*; *GA* 19-20; and Tob) employ a somewhat different approach to highlight the victory of the courtier and his God, by establishing the courtier's superior skills within the court. Although this theme exhibits variation in regards to the type of skills employed by the courtier (dream interpretation, reading miraculous writing, healing, and riddle solving, which will be discussed in Chapter Four), tales that employ this theme all share a similar pattern: 1) the foreign king is troubled by a problem in the court; 2) none of the foreign specialists are able to resolve the problem; 3) only the tale's hero is at last found to be able to resolve the issue; and 4) the hero is rewarded for his display of superior skill. Ethnic tension also features within these tales, which focus on the inability of the less competent, foreign courtiers and the ability of the Israelite courtier to resolve matters for the king. This theme serves to demonstrate the hero's national superiority over other foreign courtiers, despite belonging to a minority population group within the foreign empire. God's role is also emphasized within the Jewish adaptation of the skill theme, with these narratives attributing the success of the hero to the Most High. In this way, the skill tales demonstrate the power and influence that the God of Israel exercises over the foreign court. Moreover, both the conflict and skill themes were often found to further emphasize the victory of the courtier and his God by concluding with a proclamation of the king that conferred special privileges upon the hero and acknowledged the sovereignty of the Most High. If the most powerful figure in the kingdom

should espouse the sovereignty of the God of Israel, then surely should not all the members of his kingdom also recognize this fact?

The Jewish "adaptations" of the ancient Near Eastern court themes described above serve to elucidate their purpose: to highlight the victory of the Israelite courtier and the God of Israel over the foreign imperial establishment. This purpose is not a complete departure from the ancient Near Eastern court tales, which focused largely on the successes of the courtier; however, the Jewish tales have a dual focus upon the victory of both the courtier and his deity. The victories achieved within these tales might be best described as validating and accommodationist: They are validating in so far as these tales conclude with a recognition of the significance of the courtier and the sovereignty of the God of Israel. This is evidenced by the fact that these tales usually conclude in the following two ways: 1) the foreign king acknowledges the sovereignty of God; or 2) the king is swiftly removed from power if he does not learn to honor the Most High. In the first case, the sovereignty of God is demonstrated through the activities of the Israelite courtier, and the victory of the one true God of Israel is explicitly conceded by the king. In the second case, God's sovereignty is reaffirmed, and his victory is established through the swift deposition of the prideful ruler. The victories in these tales are also accommodationist in so far as they depict a social reality in which the God of Israel permits a foreign king to continue to rule over pious Israelites and the rest of the empire. Foreign rule, however, is simultaneously depicted as a temporary situation, with many of these tales also expressing anticipation for an eschatological establishment of a holy empire and a time when all nations will turn towards

the God of Israel (cf. Tob 14:6). Surely though, these tales express a partial fulfillment of that expectation, with the king's acknowledgment of the power of the Most High.

In this way, the Jewish court tales offer a theological explanation for Hellenistic Jews in the third-second centuries BCE wondering why the God of Israel would have permitted foreign Ptolemaic or Seleucid officials to rule over them.[325] Deuteronomy 28 promises the Israelites that if they obey God's commandments they will be set up above all other nations, yet if they are disobedient then they will be punished. Consequently, Judeans, both inside of Judea and in the Diaspora, would have pondered why God would allow foreign rulers, who are unfamiliar with the divine laws of the ancestors, to rule over righteous, law-abiding Judeans. The court tales address this issue by demonstrating that the Most High has permitted foreign kings to rule, as long as they give deference to the God of Israel (for e.g., Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 2), while those foreign rulers who fail to humble themselves before God (such as Belshazzar in Dan 5) are swiftly deposed. Those rulers who are permitted to rule do not necessarily adopt all of the commandments, but must, at a minimum, acknowledge the sovereignty of the God of Israel and respect the special status of his chosen people, the Israelites.[326] In this manner, the foreign king serves as a model for the implied audience of the tales, for, if the brash and buffoonish foreign king can recognize God's sovereignty over the court, then so should the Judeans in his empire. Indeed, the humbling of these foreign rulers before the God of Israel would have been particularly poignant to Second Temple Judean audiences who were familiar with biblical

[325] I have chosen these dates based upon the evaluation of the court tale dates discussed above.
[326] This contrasts with Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History, which generally focuses on the consequences of the actions of God's chosen people. See Kiel, "Tobit's Theological Blindness," 282.

sources, particularly Deuteronomy, which interpreted exile as divine punishment for disobedience (cf.: 2 Kgs 17:18-23; 24:20) and the prospect of future restoration to be contingent upon repentance.[327] Unlike the foreign king, the Judeans already had a special affinity with the God of Israel, and had learned about the consequences of opposing God's commandments. Accordingly, they should already know better than the foreign king!

Together, then, these Aramaic court tales evince an accommodationist Deuteronomic worldview, which is simultaneously expressed through the interests and mores of the ancient Near Eastern court literature. While the Deuteronomic worldview espoused by the Jewish court tales was certainly not a new worldview for early Judeans, it would have required reinterpretation and re-adaptation within new socio-political circumstances, particularly in a context where foreign overlords ruled over both Judea and the Diaspora. On a basic level, the Deuteronomic perspective understands the world to function on the basis of cause and effect. Those who are righteous and uphold the divine laws are rewarded, while those who oppose God's laws are punished. Court politics function in a similar manner within the Jewish court tales; however, the principle is extended to accommodate Gentiles. Foreign courtiers who conspire against Israelite courtiers and prideful rulers are punished, while foreign rulers who at a minimum acknowledge God's sovereignty are permitted to rule. This is the essential worldview propounded by the Jewish court tales, and this worldview can simultaneously be understood to be descriptive and prescriptive. This worldview is descriptive in so far as the court tales

[327] On the Deuteronomic understanding of exile, see Rom-Shiloni, "Deuteronomic Concepts of Exile Interpreted in Jeremiah and Ezekiel," 101-123, particularly 103.

are the literary products of their social environments and would have espoused the *du jour* sentiments of their communities, yet they are also prescriptive, since these tales could serve to inform and reinforce the worldviews of their early audiences.

It is evident that for all the diversity evidenced by the Aramaic court tales, they espouse an innovative, accommodationist Deuteronomic perspective. In order to gain a clearer sense of their major literary features, it is critical to highlight the basic motifs and themes shared by the various tales. The table below summarizes the court tale themes found among the Aramaic texts surveyed in the preceding analysis. A second supplementary chart is included in the following chapter, which highlights these themes as they appear in the other early Jewish court tales.

Table 1: Key Literary Features of the Aramaic Court Tales

	Court Conflict	**Dream Interpretation**	**Miraculous Reading**	**Healing**	**Riddle Contest**	**Other Skill**	**Ethnic Perspective**	**Generic Adversary/ies**	**Personal Adversary**	**King Deposed**	**Courtier Receives Special Privileges**
Dan 2		●									
Dan 3	●						●	●			●
Dan 4		●		○							
Dan 5			●							●	
Dan 6	●						●	●			
4QPseudo-Dan^{a-b}			○			●					
4QFour Kgdms		○									
4QAramaic Apoc		○									
4QPrNab				●							
4QTale of Patireza						○					
4QTale of Bagasraw	●						◦		●		●
GA 19-20		●		●							
Tob	●			●			●	●		●	

Legend

● = Presence of Theme/Motif is Certain

○ = Presence of Theme/Motif is Likely

◦ = Presence of Theme/Motif is Possible

Table 1: Key Literary Features of the Aramaic Court Tales

	King's Insomnia	**Courtier Receives Royal Gifts**	**Courtier Granted Political Authority**	**King Acknowledges God's Sovereignty**	**Former Deeds of the Courtier Referenced**	**Family of the Courtier Referenced**	**The Rage of the King**	**Succession of Kings**	**Four Kingdoms**	**Eschatological Kingdom**
Dan 2	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Dan 3			●	●	●		●			
Dan 4	●			●	●					
Dan 5		●	●		●			●		
Dan 6		●	●	●	●			●		
4QPseudo-Dan^{a-b}								●		○
4QFour Kgdms				◦				●	●	○
4QAramaic Apoc				◦				○		●
4QPrNab	◦			●						
4QTale of Patireza	◦	●	○		○	●				
4QTale of Bagasraw		●		●		●				
GA 19-20		●			●	●	●			
Tob		●			●	●	●	●		●

Legend

● = Presence of Theme/Motif is Certain

○ = Presence of Theme/Motif is Likely

◦ = Presence of Theme/Motif is Possible

CHAPTER FOUR

OTHER EARLY JEWISH COURT TALES

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter Three, I surveyed the early Jewish court tales preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The purpose of the present chapter is to evidence the unique thematic interests of those "other" early Jewish tales not preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as those themes shared among the Jewish tales more broadly. This chapter grants special attention to the responses to exile, and prospects for restoration found in these other tales. While the perspective of the other Jewish tales is diverse, they tend to portray Jewish life in the Diaspora relatively favorably, whereby Judeans aspire to positions of power and prestige. For many of these tales, exile is depicted in idyllic fashion, and the urgency for restoration is often diminished.

I examine the other early Jewish court tales in two distinct clusters: 1) I begin with a discussion of court tales associated with Daniel: the Greek Additions to Daniel (Susanna, the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men, and Bel and the Dragon), the *Vita Danielis*, and traditions about Daniel preserved by Josephus; and 2) I analyze those other early Jewish tales that are not explicitly associated with Daniel: 1 Esdras 3-4, Hebrew Esther, Greek Esther, the *Letter of Aristeas* 187-294, Jannes and Jambres, and Josephus' *Story of Archelaus* (*War II.111-13*, and *Antiquities of the Jews XVII.* 345-348). As in Chapter Three, my discussion of these other court tales is followed by a consideration of the function of their themes and motifs, as well as a chart, which lists major literary features

present within these tales. In my consideration of their themes, I demonstrate that the other Jewish tales share specific themes and language with those found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. As in Chapter Three, the goal of Chapter Four is not to suggest a formal literary dependence between the tales, but to highlight their overlapping worldviews, particularly with regards to the topics of exile, punishment, and restoration.

4.2. Other Texts Associated with Daniel

As demonstrated in Chapter Three, Daniel had a well-established reputation as a courtier of foreign kings at Qumran (Daniel, *4QPseudo-Daniel*[a-b], *4QPseudo-Daniel*[c], *4QFour Kingdoms*, *4QAramaic Apocalypse*, and *4QPrayer of Nabonidus*). This reputation extended beyond the literature preserved in the Judean Desert and is further evidenced by additional texts not preserved among the DSS. While these Danielic works by no means contain a uniform response to the topics of exile, punishment, and restoration, they do suggest an overall acceptance of Diasporic life, with little focus upon a future restoration or return to Israel.

4.2.1. Greek Additions to Daniel

I return here to the issue of the development of the Book of Daniel. As Daniel's popularity within the ancient Near East grew, some of the Aramaic and Hebrew writings associated with him began to be translated into other languages for new communities facing new social situations. Such translations were often supplemented by additional material. The Greek translation(s) was supplemented by several such additions: Susanna, the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men, and Bel and the Dragon. There are two

different Greek versions of Daniel: the Old Greek (OG), and the Theodotion (Th). Both Greek versions preserve variant editions of the Greek additions. While the OG version has been preserved in only three manuscripts (Codex Chisianus MS 88, Kölner Papyrus 967, and the Ambrosian Syro-Hexapler), the Th is represented by several manuscripts.[328] The critical editions of the OG and the Th have been edited by Joseph Ziegler and Olivier Munnich.[329] While none of the Greek Additions have been found at Qumran, the fourteenth century *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* has preserved a Hebrew version of Susanna, an Aramaic version of the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men, and a Hebrew and an Aramaic version of Bel and the Dragon.[330] Though scholars generally agree that *Jerahmeel* contains older material, the direction of the work's literary relationship with or dependency upon the MT and Greek versions of Daniel is difficult to ascertain.[331] I examine the Greek Additions below, and remark upon significant variations between the OG and the Th where relevant for the present discussion of the court tales.

4.2.1.1. Susanna

The story of Susanna was probably once an independent tradition, which was later appended before Daniel 1 in the Th version, after Daniel 12 in the OG (ms. 99 Syh) and the

[328] On the OG versions, see Carey A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah: The Additions*, AB 44 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 33; and Joseph Ziegler, *Susanna, Daniel, Bel et Draco*. 2nd ed., Septuaginta Band 16 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 9-86.

[329] Joseph Ziegler and Olivier Munnich, *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritae Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum XVI.2: Susanna Daniel Bel et Draco* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999). An earlier critical edition of OG Daniel can be found in Joseph Ziegler, *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum 16/2: Susanna, Daniel, Bel et Draco*, 2nd ed., Septuaginta 16 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968). The *terminus ante quem* of Papyrus 967 is the third century C.E. For a discussion of the codicology of Papyrus 967, see Collins, *Daniel*, 4-5.

[330] On the topic of the Greek Additions and Qumran, see Takamitsu Muraoka, "Notes on an Aramaic Fragment of the Apocryphal Stories in the Book of Daniel," *ANES* 53 (2016): 25-40.

[331] Holm, *Of Kings and Courtiers*, 370-375.

Vulgate versions, and after Bel and the Dragon in Papyrus 967. The Th version appears to be literarily dependent upon the older OG version.[332] The tale of Susanna may derive from the late Persian or Hellenistic era, but it was probably not appended to Daniel 1-12 until around 100 BCE. when the OG translation was completed.[333] Though the tale of Susanna has not been preserved at Qumran, there is evidence to suggest that both the OG and the Th derived from a Hebrew or Aramaic original.[334] The work's apparent Semiticisms, lack

[332] See J. W. van Henten, "The Story of Susanna as a Pre-Rabbinic Midrash to Dan. 1:1-2," in *Variety of Forms: Dutch Studies in Midrash*, eds. A. Kuyt, E. G. L. Schrijver, and N. A. van Uchelen (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 1990), 2-6; Collins, *Daniel*, 426; Michael Segal, ""For from Zion Shall Come Forth Torah…" (Isaiah 2:3): Biblical Paraphrase and the Exegetical Background of Susanna," in *New Approaches to the Study of Biblical Interpretation in Judaism of the Second Temple Period and in Early Christianity*, Proceedings of the Eleventh International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, Jointly Sponsored by the Hebrew University Center for the Study of Christianity, 9-11 January, 2007, eds. Gary A. Anderson, Ruth A. Clements, and David Satran (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 30-39. John Collins notes that several portions of the OG and the Th are nearly exactly the same, with the Th largely deviating from the OG in its elaboration upon the OG.

[333] On the possibility of a Persian or Hellenistic dating, see Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah*, 29, 91; and Collins, *Daniel*, 437-8. By contrast, Dan Clanton proposes that the tale of Susanna would comport well with the socio-historical context of the first century BCE, particularly during the rule of the Hasmonean, Salome Alexandra (76-67 BCE). See Dan W. Clanton, "(Re)Dating the Story of Susanna: A Proposal," *JSJ* 34.2 (2003): 121-140.

Also, see Catherine Brown Tkacz, "Susanna and the Pre-Christian Book of Daniel: Structure and Meaning," *HeyJ* 49.2 (2008), 181-193, especially 185. Catherine Brown Tkacz discusses the narratival impact of including Susanna at the beginning of the pre-Christian Greek edition of Daniel, as well as Bel and the Dragon at the end of the work. Tkacz notes how this restructuring of the Danielic accounts unlocked the themes of "law, kingdom, judgment, and the overriding theme of wisdom vs. folly."

[334] While Józef T. Milik suggested that the fragmentary Aramaic 4Q551, found at Qumran, was a counterpart to the story of Susanna, it has since been demonstrated to share stronger affinities with Judg 19:15-23 and Gen 19:4-7. Several scholars have found evidence for a Hebrew original of Susanna in supposed mistranslations of Hebrew into Greek in the OG version of Susanna, as well as in apparent Semitisms and paratactic sentences (such as over fifty clauses beginning with καί in OG Susanna). See Collins, *Daniel*, 427-8; Frank Zimmermann, "The Story of Susanna and Its Original Language," *JQR* 48 (1957-58), 236-41; and S. T. Lachs, "A Note on the Original Language of Suzanna," *JQR* 69 (1978-79): 52-54. Koenen proposed that both the OG and the Th versions derive from a common Semitic original, but suggests that the OG and the Th were unfamiliar with one another. See Klaus, Koenen, "Von der todesmutigen Susanna zum begabten Daniel: Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Susanna-Erzāhlung," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 54 (1998): 1-13. By contrast, Helmut Engel suggests that the differences between the OG and the Th versions can be explained without invoking a hypothetical Semitic original. See Helmut Engel, *Die Susanna Erzāhlung*, OBO 61 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 56-7.

Also, see Milik, "Daniel et Susanne à Qumrân?" 337-59. George Nickelsburg demonstrates 4Q551's affinities with Judg 19. See George W. E. Nickelsburg, "4Q551: A *Vorlage* to Susanna or Text Related to Judges 19?" *JJS* 48 (1997), 349-351; also, see Puech, DJD XXXVII, 48.

of interest in foreign kings and courtiers, and disparagement of the Jewish leadership in Babylon suggest a probable provenance in Judea.[335]

Though the tale lacks the setting and many of the character types typically associated with the court narratives, the tale features a court style conflict.[336] Susanna focuses on the eponymously named beautiful Israelite woman. Two corrupt Judean elders lust after Susanna, and, as she bathes, attempt to coerce her into having a sexual liaison with them. Susanna refuses the elders' advancements, and screams. The elders then falsely accuse Susanna of having sexual relations with a young man.[337]

It is the latter portion of the work, Susanna's trial on the accusation of adultery, that bears the greatest similarity to the Jewish court tales. While the setting of the conflict in Susanna is a judicial (and not a royal) court, the tale has an exilic setting in Babylon.[338] Although the adversaries are Judean elders, and not foreign courtiers, the work attempts to distance the elders from the Judean community, and associate them with Babylon, suggesting that their lurid behaviour is 'foreign'. This is clear from the outset of the story, which attributes the elders' wickedness to Babylon: "Wickedness came forth from

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[335] See Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah*, 84-92; and Segal, ""For from Zion Shall Come Forth Torah…","
39.

[336] See Lorenzo DiTomasso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 61. Lorenzo DiTomasso presumes a strong relationship between Susanna and the court tales. By contrast, Collins views Susanna as distinct from the Jewish court tales. See Collins, *Daniel*, 437.

[337] In this manner, Susanna becomes a victor, as she resists the elders, cries out, publicly proclaims her innocence, and trusts in God's deliverance. See Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "The Additions to Daniel," in *NIB*, vol. VII of *NIB*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 175, 181; and David M. Valeta, "Crossing Boundaries: Feminist Perspectives on the Stories of Daniel and Susanna," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect: Volume I: Biblical Books*, vol. I of *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect*, ed. Susanne Scholz, Biblical Books 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 290-308, here 302-3.

[338] Cf. Sus 1-5. The Th preserves the tale's Babylonian setting, while this detail has not been preserved in the OG.

Babylon, from elders who were judges, who were supposed to govern people" (Th Sus 5, NRSV). A young man, later revealed to be Daniel, intervenes, and proves Susanna's innocence, which results in the execution of her accusers. Susanna's vindication is thus a direct result of Daniel's wisdom. Th, which grants Susanna and Daniel greater prominence in the story, concludes with a public acknowledgment of Susanna's virtue and Daniel's growing reputation.

The identification of the young man as Daniel directly associates the tale of Susanna with the court tales of Daniel 1-6. The revelation that the young man in v. 45 is Daniel is significant. OG notes that Daniel has "πνεῦμα συνέσεως" ("a spirit of understanding"), which suggests that his reputation is already established. Notably, Th places the story of Susanna before Daniel 1 as a sort of introduction to the court tales of Daniel 1-6, and in Susanna 45, Daniel is introduced "as someone not previously known".[339] Th, however, states that "ἐξήγειρεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον παιδαρίου νεωτέρου" ("God raised up a holy spirit of the young man"), indicating that this is an origin story of sorts for Daniel. Both OG and Th indicate that Daniel has special divine gifts, which guide him to outwit the Judean elders. The young man's identification as Daniel and Susanna's secondary appendment to the Greek versions of Daniel 1-12 demonstrate that the work bore literary affinities strong enough for early Jewish redactors to associate it with the thematic interests of Daniel 1-12.

[339] Collins, *Daniel*, 433.

While the focus of the narrative is upon interactions within the Judean community (and not with literal foreigners), the text suggests that dwelling in exile is shameful. This view is evident, for instance, in the association of the shame of Susanna's exposed nakedness with the shame of exile, an association that has been well noted by scholars.[340] The narrative's solution to this shame of nakedness and exile are resolved through the fulfilment of Jewish legal traditions. For instance, Deut 19:18 insists that judges are to make thorough inquiry, and Daniel insists on thoroughly examining Susanna's case before she be put to death (Sus 48). Deut 19:19 insists that false witnesses should be subjected to the same punishment that was to be inflicted upon the accused, and this is exactly what happens to the wicked elders who attempted to manipulate the law for their own gratification. The elders sought to wrongfully put Susanna to death, but they themselves are to be killed (Sus 60-62). The wicked elders' enmity with the lawful Susanna and Daniel, then, is ultimately met by their deposition and death, much like the adversaries of Daniel 3 and 6. The false witness, lechery, and corruption of the elders, thus, serves to critique the Jewish leadership in Babylon, portraying them as transgressors of the law.[341] The result of this critique reinforces that exile is a place of punishment for Israel where lawless authority figures reside, and yet it is also a place where the Jewish laws are fulfilled.

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[340] Jennie Grillo discusses the connection between shame, nakedness, and exile within ancient Jewish literature. The Hebrew language has a precedence for this in the root גלה. The *hiphil* tense often takes the meaning of "to exile", and the *qal* "to go into exile", while the *piel* can have the meaning "to uncover" and the *niphil* has the meaning "to be exposed, revealed". This sort of play on concepts appears to have a role in Susanna. See Jennie Grillo, ""You Will Forget Your Ancient Shame": The Innocence of Susanna and the Vindication of Israel," in *Women and Exilic Identity in the Hebrew Bible*, eds. Martien A. Halvorson-Taylor, and Katherine E. Southwood, LHBOTS 631 (New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2018), 8-22, particularly 14-20.

[341] Segal, "From Zion Shall Come Forth Torah," 39.

4.2.1.2. The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Children

Another lengthy Greek addition is included after Dan 3:23. The addition contains three parts: the prayer of Azariah (vv. 24-45); an account of the rescue of Daniel's three friends by an angel (vv. 46-50); and the song of these three young men (vv. 51-90). The original language of the prayer seems to have been Hebrew, and it would have been composed between the third to first centuries BCE (when Daniel was translated into Greek).[342] The Prayer of Azariah is a penitential prayer for mercy from God, and focuses upon the destruction of the enemy (as was common within such prayers of the Maccabean era), a sentiment that is quite contrary to the relatively tolerant attitude towards foreign rule found in Daniel 1-6.[343] The Song of the Three Young Men is a Jewish hymn of praise.[344] While the Prayer and the Song may have circulated independently prior to their inclusion in Daniel, the prose account of verses 46-50 would have been composed as an elaboration upon Daniel 3 at the time of the Additions' incorporation into Daniel, and was almost certainly composed in Greek.[345]

[342] Though an Aramaic parallel to this addition is included in the *Chronicle of Jerahmeel*, Klaus Koch has demonstrated that it does not seem to have been derived from Greek. See Klaus Koch, *Deuterokanonische Zusätze zum Daniel-buch*, vol. 2 of *Deuterokanonische Zusätze zum Daniel-buch*, AOAT 38 1/2 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1987), 60. Several features suggest a Hebrew original, such as the use of שכח in the Aramaic preserved in *Jarahmeel* to refer to forgetting (v. 11[40]), and the Hebraism in Th 4:27: πᾶσαι αἱ κρίσεις σου ἀλήθεια ("all of your judgments are true"). The Greek and Aramaic do not appear to be translations of one another. A common Hebrew source could explain this ambiguity. See Collins, *Daniel*, 202.

[343] See Claus Westermann, "Struktur und Geschichte der Klage im Alten Testament," *ZAW* 66 (1964): 44-80; Claus Westermann, *The Praise of God in the Psalms* (Richmond: John Knox, 1965), 52-64; and Collins, *Daniel*, 202-3.

[344] Collins, *Daniel*, 207.

[345] Collins, *Daniel*, 204.

Granted that the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Children are situated within the context of the tale of the wrongful accusation and vindication of Daniel's three friends (Dan 3), these additions further attest to the dynamism of the court tales and their ability to be supplemented and reinterpreted within different social contexts. The insertions further emphasize Shadrach, Abednego and Meshach's reliance upon God.

The insertion of the Prayer brings a Deuteronomistic bent to Daniel 3, which is in tension with the otherwise accommodationist view of exile found in the Aramaic text. This is evidence, for instance, by the phrase "κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν" ("Lord, God of our fathers") (v. 26) is a common Deuteronomic sobriquet for God (e.g., Deut 1:11, 21; 4:1; 6:3). The assertion that there is "no place to offer whole offerings, nor sacrifices, nor offerings, nor incense before you…" (v. 38) is a Deuteronomic ideal.[346] The Prayer also emphasizes the breaking of the covenant (v. 34); here, the Prayer uses the term διασκεδάσῃς ("scatter"), a term that also hints towards the dispersion of the people of Israel. Israel is referred to as "your holy one" (v. 35), a phrase typically reserved for the LORD, but occasionally used for Israel (cf. Exod 19:6; and Deut 7:6).[347] The Prayer emphasizes that: "You have executed true judgements in all you have brought upon us and upon Jerusalem, the holy city of our ancestors; by a true judgement you have brought all this upon us because of our sins" (v. 28). Thus, in contrast to the generally favorable view of exile found in Daniel 1-6, the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Children reminds the reader that exile is a place of judgment for sin, certainly a less than ideal social setting. While a

[346] Collins, *Daniel*, 200-1.
[347] Collins, *Daniel*, 200.

petition for the deliverance of Israel also features within the Prayer (11-22), there is little indication regarding when or if God will restore Jerusalem and the people of Israel.

4.2.1.3. Bel and the Dragon

Of the Danielic Greek additions, Bel and the Dragon thematically and formally bears the greatest similarity to the tales of Daniel 1-6. Bel and the Dragon comprises three episodes: the tale of Bel (vv. 1-22), the tale of the dragon (vv. 23-27), and a tale of Daniel in a lions' den (vv. 28-42). The dating and provenance of Bel and the Dragon is uncertain. The latest date that can be attributed to the work is the second century BCE, when it would have been incorporated into OG Daniel.[348] Scholars have assigned various settings to the work, including Egyptian, Babylonian, and Judean.[349] If the work was composed in Hebrew or Aramaic, then a provenance among Judeans in Egypt is unlikely because there are no examples of Jewish literature from Egypt composed in a Semitic language from this period.[350] Moreover, the work's imprecise depiction of Babylonian religion suggests that

[348] Collins, *Daniel*, 418.
[349] Wolfgang M. W. Roth, Moore, Andreas Wysny, Roth, and Holm suggests an Egyptian setting for the work. See Wolfgang M. W. Roth, "For Life, He Appeals to Death (Wis 13:18): A Study of Old Testament Idol Parodies," *CBQ* 37.1 (1975): 21-47, here 43; Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah*, 127-8; Andreas Wysny, *Die Erzählung von Bel und dem Drachen: Untersuchungen zu Dan 14*, SBB 33 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1996), 200-211; Roth, "For Life, He Appeals to Death," 43; and Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 470-2. Yehoshua M. Grintz and Koch, by contrast, suggest a Babylonian provenance. See Yehoshua M. Grintz, "Bel and the Dragon," *EJ* 4 (1971): 412; and Koch, *Deuterokanonische Zusätze zum Danielbuch*, 2.152. T. Witton Davies, however, suggests a setting in Israel. See T. Witton Davies, "Bel and the Dragon," in *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, ed. R. H. Charles, vol. 1 of *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1913), 652-64, here 656; and Collins, *Daniel*, 418-9. Collins tentatively suggests the site of Jerusalem during the first quarter of the second century BCE, prior to the persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, as the social milieu for the work.
[350] Collins, *Daniel*, 418-9. An Aramaic provenance has been advocated by Frank Zimmermann and Carey Moore. See Frank Zimmermann, "Bel and the Dragon," *VT* 8 (1958): 438-440; and Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah*, 438-40.

the work did not originate in the eastern Diaspora. A Judean provenance, thus, seems most likely.

Bel and the Dragon draws heavily from the Jewish court tale traditions and, in particular, Daniel 2-6 (more on this below). The setting of the work is the foreign royal court, and features Daniel's interactions with King Astyages and the priests of Bel. The first episode (the tale of Bel) is a contest between Daniel and the priests of Bel, which concludes with Daniel's eventual victory over their idol, Bel.[351] Daniel denounces the king's worship of Bel as idolatry. This leads to a contest between Daniel and the priests of Bel, who seek to prove that Bel is a living god.[352] The king places an offering before Bel in his temple and seals the temple's entrance. The following morning, the king enters the temple to discover that the food has been consumed, which leads him to believe that Bel is indeed divine. Daniel, however, has strategically scattered ash along the floor of the temple the previous evening, which reveals the footprints of the priests and their families, who had entered the temple through a secret entrance and consumed the food in the night. The account concludes with the execution of the priests and their families, and Daniel's victory over the idol, Bel, which he destroys. Daniel's victory is a result of his wisdom, as is common among the ancient Near Eastern tales.

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[351] Bel and the Dragon evidences the influence of Second Temple period idol parodies. See Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 136-7; and Collins, *Daniel*, 417.

[352] Some commentators have suggested that the reference to Daniel's rivals as "priests" is problematic for its court setting. However, priests commonly serve as courtiers in many court tales, such as the Egyptian tales. Accordingly, the tale of Bel is conventional in this regard. In OG Bel and the Dragon, Daniel is associated with the priesthood, being referred to as "priest" and "companion of the king of Babylon" (v. 2). See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 471.

In the second episode, the tale of Daniel and the Dragon, the king attempts to persuade Daniel to worship a local dragon, whom the king insists to be a god. Daniel refuses and sets out to prove that the king is mistaken in his veneration. Daniel feeds the dragon cakes of pitch, fat, and hair, which causes the dragon to split apart. As in the first episode, Daniel's victory over the king's false god is achieved via Daniel's own wisdom.[353] The king's subjects then accuse him of becoming a Judean (Ιουδαῖος γέγονεν). Though it is hard to imagine that the king literally became a 'Judean', the phrase, at the very least, suggests that the king's subjects believe he has adopted a new worldview that is sympathetic towards the God of Israel.

The final episode of Bel and the Dragon, the tale of Daniel in the lions' den (vv. 28-42), is a conflict tale. Both this episode and Daniel 6 focus upon an incident involving Daniel being thrown into a lions' den by his adversaries, and his subsequent vindication, which suggests that a special literary relationship exists between the two works, with both works likely drawing from a common, yet no longer extant tradition.[354]

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[353] See Joseph J. De Bruyn, "Daniel Dragonslayer – Bel and the Dragon, Verses 23-27 (OG/Th)," *In die Skriflig* 49.1 (2015): 1-8. Joseph De Bruyn notes that worldviews inform narratives, narratives inform constructed realities, and constructed realities inform worldviews. De Bruyn contends that the tale of Daniel and the Dragon undermines the Gentile worldview that there are other gods, by depicting Daniel destroying the dragon with food. In the Gentile view, the dragon would have been a deity who could eat, drink, and have wisdom. By killing the dragon with food, Daniel problematizes these Gentile assumptions, demonstrating that the Babylonian gods (represented by Bel and the Dragon) have not defeated the God of Israel as the Gentiles would have expected of them, and that the God of Israel is the only true god.

[354] See Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 134-8, particularly 135. Wills provides an overview of the discussion of the literary relationship between *Bel and the Dragon* and Daniel 6. Wills takes the position that "Daniel 6 has borrowed motifs from both parts of Bel and the Dragon to make one story". While a few scholars, such as Moore and Augustine Fenz, suggest that *Bel and the Dragon* and Daniel 6 are not doublets of each other, the specific similarities of the courtier being thrown into a den and surviving suggests otherwise. See Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah*, 147-149. Augustine Kurt Fenz, "Ein Drache in Babel: Exegetische Skizze über Daniel 14, 23-42," *SEÅ* 35 (1970): 5-16. Augustine Fenz aptly suggests that the two works are variants of a common source. Several subsequent scholars, including myself, have adopted this view. See Collins, *The*

The episode follows the tales of Bel and the dragon. The king reluctantly hands Daniel over to his rivals, and they toss him into a lions' den. The designation of Daniel's rivals as "Babylonians" in this episode emphasizes their "otherness" in relation to Daniel, highlighting the ethnic tension within the work. During Daniel's time in the den, God sends an angel to the prophet Habakkuk to carry him to Babylon to feed Daniel. Although few biographical details about Habakkuk are provided in the Book of Habakkuk, most scholars have concluded that he was active in Jerusalem.[355] Habakkuk's appearance in the episode, thus, emphasizes the positive relationship between the Judeans of Jerusalem and those of the Babylonian exile, as well as the Most High's protection of Daniel. Thus, the view of exile within the work is unique, favorably emphasizing a continuity between the experience of Jews living both in Jerusalem and Babylon. The king later returns to mourn for Daniel, but is surprised to discover that Daniel has survived. Bel and the Dragon, then, concludes with the king's acknowledgment of the greatness of Daniel's God: "Great is the Lord God, and there is none other than him!" (41).

Much like the tales of Daniel 1-6, *Bel and the Dragon* lampoons and dismantles the folly of foreign idolatry, and highlight's Daniel's God's superiority over false gods.

Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel, 4 and 53; Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel*, 270; and Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, 21 & 197.

See Francis Borchardt, "How Bel and the Serpent Went from Addition to Edition of Daniel," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 80.3 (2018): 409-428. Borchardt demonstrates how some of the unique features of Th *Bel and the Dragon* should be attributed to the Th version's attempt to draw a closer literary parallel between *Bel and the Dragon* and Dan 6 via subtle interpretive, syntactical and phraseological differences. For example, both the OG and the Th confirm that Daniel is a companion of the king (συμβιωτής του βασιλέως); however, only Th notes that Daniel was honored (ένδοξος) above his friends. By contrast, Dan 6:3 does not refer to Daniel as a "companion" of the king, but he is "honored" (ένδοξος) before Darius. Hence, Th *Bel and the Dragon* demonstrates a symbiosis of sorts between OG *Bel and the Dragon* and Dan 6.

[355] Homer Hailey, "Habakkuk," in *A Commentary on the Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House: 1972), 271.

Daniel’s success within the first two episodes is reminiscent of the older ancient Near Eastern court tales, which emphasize the wisdom of the courtier and scarcely highlight the role of intervening deities or their acknowledgement by foreign rulers. The third episode, however, clearly emphasizes that Daniel’s ultimate vindication is brought about through God’s intervention. The work provides little indication, however, of a future return or restoration from exile.

4.2.2. Life of Daniel

The *Life of Daniel* (*Life*) has been preserved within the longer composition of the *Lives of the Prophets* (*Lives*), a work which recounts the lives of twenty-three different Hebrew prophets, and surveys their tribe, place of birth, death, and burial. The work has been preserved in Greek, Syriac, Ethiopic, Latin, and Armenian.[356] The work’s earliest manuscripts are preserved in Greek.[357] Whether the *Lives* was translated from an earlier Hebrew or Aramaic edition is a matter of dispute. Without the remains of any textual evidence, such a Hebrew or Aramaic edition remains a matter of speculation.[358] The Greek

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[356] Hare, “The Lives of the Prophets,” 379. The Syriac, Ethiopic, Latin and Armenian recensions are all based upon earlier Greek manuscripts. The most significant Greek manuscripts date to the medieval period and include Codex Marchalianus, Cod. Vaticanus Gk. 2125; Codex Paris. Gk. 1115; Codex Coisl. 120; Codex Vinob. Theol. Gk 40 (formerly 77); and Codex Coisl. 224.

[357] The earliest manuscript of *Lives* is the sixth or seventh century text preserved within Codex Marchalianus.

[358] The *Lives* seems to depend upon both the Hebrew and Greek text of the Jewish scriptures, which may reflect the multi-lingual nature of the Jewish population that lived in Palestine during the first century CE. Proponents of a Semitic original, include: Samuel Klein, “על הספר [Concerning the Book of] Vitae Prophetarum,” in *ספר קלוזנר* [*Klausner Fetshrift*] (Tel-Aviv: תרצ״ז, 1937), 189-209, here 209; C.C. Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets: Greek Text and Translation*, SBLMS 1 (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1946), 7; Theodor Schermann, *Propheten- und Apostellegenden* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1907), 131; and Isaac H. Hall, “The Lives of the Prophets,” *Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis* 7.1 (1887): 28-40, here 38-9. Samuel Klein contends that the work may have been composed in either Hebrew or Aramaic. C.C. Torrey and Theodor Schermann posit that there was an earlier Hebrew version of the work. Isaac H. Hall suggests that the work was composed in Syriac.

D. R. A. Hare notes that two pieces of evidence suggest that the work was not originally composed in a Semitic language: 1) there is little evidence of mistranslation from a Semitic original into Greek; and 2) there

manuscripts have been published with a translation by C. C. Torrey, and a transcription of the Greek variants and a critical apparatus are currently in preparation by Douglas Estes for the *Online Critical Pseudepigrapha*.[359] Though the work has only survived within medieval Christian manuscripts and evidences Christian influence, most scholars suspect an earlier Jewish version underlies the extant Christianized recension, and might date to the first quarter of the first century CE, the time in which the Herodian practice of erecting monuments in honour of the prophets and other heroes began.[360] The work's relatively accurate description of Israel's geography suggests the author's familiarity with Israel, and may suggest the work's compositional setting was in Israel.[361] Though the *Life* principally summarizes and expounds upon the court contest of Daniel 4 (the tale of Nebuchadnezzar's madness), the *Lives* exhibits a broader familiarity with the traditions preserved within the Greek versions of the Book of Daniel, referencing: Daniel's fasting (Dan 1), Nebuchadnezzar's madness (Dan 4), and Habakkuk's visit of Daniel in the lions' den (Bel 33-39).

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are several instances where the *Lives* is closer to the Greek version of the of the Jewish scriptures than to the Hebrew. See Hare, "The Lives of the Prophets," 380.

[359] Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets: Greek Text and Translation*; and Douglas Estes, "Lives of the Prophets," *The Online Pseudepigrapha*, n.p. Online: http://ocp.tyndale.ca/docs/intro/LivPro.

[360] Hare, "The Lives of the Prophets," 380-1. The phrase "Elijah, a Thesbite from the land of the Arabs" (*Lives* 21:1) helps to establish a *terminus ad quem* for the text with relative certainty since the text indicates that Elijah's birthplace was under Nabatean dominance, but Nabatean hegemony came to an end in 106 CE by Trajan. Accordingly, the phrase suggests a compositional setting during the first century. See David Satran, *Biblical Prophets in Byzantine Palestine: Reassessing the Lives of the Prophets*, SVTP 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 96; Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 368; and Collins, *Daniel*, 135, n. 60. Satran suggests that the work evidences a fourth century CE Christian interpretive influence, but also evidences features indicative of the late Second Temple era. Holm notes that the work betrays "Byzantine-era modifications", though probably had a first century CE Jewish origin. Collins, however, thinks that the work betrays Byzantine Christian piety.

[361] See Hare, "The Lives of the Prophets," 381-2; and Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets*, 11. Torrey suggests that the author lived in Jerusalem.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Daniel's role in Nebuchadnezzar's rehabilitation from madness in Daniel 4 is vague and allusory, with the text suggesting that God ultimately healed Nebuchadnezzar. The *Life* maintains the basic outline of the court conflict of Daniel 4, and supplements it, clearly highlighting Daniel's role in the healing. *Life*'s greater emphasis upon Daniel's role in the healing brings the court contest of Daniel 4 into greater conformity with the earlier ancient Near Eastern tale traditions, which focus primarily upon the skill and agency of the courtier (and rarely upon the intervention of a deity). For instance, *Life* 4:12 adds the crucial detail that Daniel does not wish to see Nebuchadnezzar in his state of madness, and, accordingly, intercedes for him in prayer, suggesting that Daniel's prayer led God to heal the foreign king. Daniel's aversion to seeing Nebuchadnezzar in such a state suggests a more tolerant outlook towards gentiles and exilic life more generally. The *Life* further emphasizes God's sovereignty over the foreign king. While Daniel 4 concludes with Nebuchadnezzar praising and honoring the king of heaven, in the *Life* Nebuchadnezzar undergoes a six and half year penitentiary period, prostrates himself and confesses his impiety before the LORD, and fasts from bread, wine, and meat (cf. Dan 1:12-21, and Liv. Pro. 4:3). This is atypical of the Jewish tales, which tend to be satisfied with the foreign ruler's simple acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the God of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar intends to make Daniel a joint heir with his children, but Daniel declines, noting his disdain at the idea of cleaving "to the inheritances of the uncircumcised," evidencing the author's discomfort with their foreign neighbours.[362] The

[362] Liv. Pro. 4:16. Translation from: Hare, "The Lives of the Prophets," 390.

work lacks any focus upon a possible restoration, and is unsurprising considering the foreign king's particularly favorable treatment of Daniel, and his deity.

4.2.3. Traditions about Daniel in Josephus

Intriguingly, Titus Flavius Josephus (37-c. 100 CE) explicitly remarks upon the presence of "several books" of Daniel (*Ant. X*.267), but largely paraphrases Daniel 1-6, and 8 within his *Antiquities of the Jews X*.10-11 (186-281), without any overt reference to Daniel 7, 9-12, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, or the other Qumranic *Pseudo-Daniel* materials.[363] While Josephus abbreviates Daniel 3 and 4, he expands Daniel 1 and 5. In his treatment of Daniel 1-6, wherein Daniel demonstrates the sovereignty of his God over the foreign court, Josephus includes several unique details that are not preserved within the Aramaic-Hebrew or Greek biblical accounts. In general, *Antiquities* is a historiographical work intended to summarize Jewish history, and was composed during the thirteenth year of the reign of the Roman emperor Flavius Domitian (c. 93 or 94 CE) (*Ant*. 20.267 [§12.1]).[364] The work seems to have been written in Greek.[365] *Antiquities* has been published along with a translation by Ralph Marcus.[366] While Josephus recounts the stories

[363] Nevertheless, Josephus seems to exhibit a familiarity with Daniel 9, alluding to the prophecy of the seventy weeks of years elsewhere in *Antiquities*. See F. F. Bruce, "Josephus and Daniel," *ASTI* 4 (1965): 148-62, here 152-53; and Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 363.
[364] Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 291.
[365] Some scholars have proposed that the medieval *Josippon* is a Hebrew version of the work, covering Jewish history from the time of Adam to the time of Titus. This view has since been rejected, and most scholars now date *Josippon* between the ninth and tenth centuries CE. See David Flusser dates *Josippon* to 953 C.E. David Flusser, "Josippon, a Medieval Hebrew Version of Josephus," in *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity*, eds. Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1987), 387-97. S. Bowman proposes a late ninth-century date. See S. Bowman, "Sefer Josippon: History and Midrash," in *The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*, ed. M. Fishbane (Albany: State University of New York, 1993), 280-94; and Holm, *Of Kings and Courtiers*, 369-40.
[366] Ralph Marcus, *Josephus VIII: Jewish Antiquities, Books IX-XI*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press/London: Heinemann, 1961), 260-313.

of Joseph and Esther, analyzing each of these retellings goes beyond the periphery of this dissertation. I focus upon Josephus' retelling of Daniel here to provide an example of the way that Josephus adapts biblical court tales for his own purpose of emphasizing that the experience of exile and punishment is cyclical and will be resolved in a future restoration. For Josephus, just as Daniel and the Jews of Babylon experienced the cycle of exile, punishment, and restoration, so is Josephus living through the same cycle again. I also provide an example of how Josephus employs court tale themes to describe a non-biblical figure below (in a treatment of the *Story of Archelaus*).

Josephus is particularly interested in Daniel's career in foreign royal courts and contributes to the development of the Jewish court tale traditions by re-presenting Daniel's stories for a new audience and purpose. It is notable that Josephus should preserve the court themes associated with Joseph, Daniel, and Esther, and utilize court themes elsewhere in his writings to describe historical figures (such as in the *Story of Archelaus*), when writing for a Roman audience that would have already been familiar with other court tales, such as the *Life of Aesop* and those recounted by Herodotus (as discussed in Chapter Two). Josephus, thus, further demonstrates the intercultural nature of the court tales, as a mode of literature that was familiar among diverse people groups and one that could aptly communicate certain Jewish ideas to the Romans.

While some of Josephus' unique details associated with the tales of Daniel 1-6 and 8 may derive from earlier sources, much of Josephus' elaboration should be attributed to his own broader purpose within the *Antiquities*—that is to present the Jews in a positive

manner for a Roman audience.[367] In particular, the *Antiquities* are apologetic, and highlight Daniel as an example of a Jew who is protected by God in exile. For example, Josephus notes that after having been saved from the lions (cf. Dan 6), Daniel's enemies refused to acknowledge his divine protection, and attempt to convince the king that the lions did not eat Daniel because they were already full (*Antiq*. 10.260). The king then has the lions fed and has Daniel's detractors tossed into their den. The lions kill all of Daniel's adversaries, and the king is convinced of Daniel's divine protection (10.260-2). Such additions heighten the miraculous nature of Daniel's vindication, and suggest that, like the foreign king, Josephus' gentile benefactors should be convinced of the Judeans' special relationship with God.

The themes of exile, punishment, and restoration are central to Josephus' thinking, and heavily influence his treatment of court tales. For Josephus, sin and exile led to punishment, which is experienced through mistreatment by foreigners in exile, yet Josephus, much like Jeremiah, advocated for Jewish submission to foreign power.[368] For Josephus, restoration would involve the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, which was destroyed again in Josephus' lifetime.[369] Moreover, the cycle of exile and restoration are archetypal experiences of divine punishment, meaning that he thought that this pattern is

[367] See Bruce, "Josephus and Daniel," 148-62; A. Paul, "Le concept de prophéties biblique: Flavius Josèphus et Daniel," *RSR* 63 (1975): 367-84; G. Vermes, "Josephus' Treatment of the Book of Daniel," *JJS* 42 (1991): 149-66; Steve Mason, "Josephus, Daniel, and the Flavian House," in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith*, eds. Fausto Parente and Joseph Sievers, StPB 41 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 161-91; and Holm, *Of Kings and Courtiers*, 363.
[368] Nicholas R. Werse, "Exile, Restoration, and the Question of Postexilic," *JSJ* 49 (2018): 397-9.
[369] Louis H. Feldman, "Restoration in Josephus," in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspectives*, ed. James M. Scott (Leiden: Brill, 2001): 223-61.

repeatable and believed that he was living through the pattern again during his lifetime.[370] Josephus' employment of the court tales thus evidences the continued viability of the Jewish court tales in the late first century CE, and their ability to be molded to fit different purposes for different audiences.

4.3. Other Jewish Court Tales

4.3.1. 1 Esdras 3-4

1 Esdras 3-4 is the only Jewish court tale that results in an immediate restoration, in this case involving a return of Judeans from exile, and the reconstruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. 1 Esdras has been preserved in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Arabic.[371] Most of the non-Greek texts, however, are dependent upon the Greek version.[372] The Greek, in turn, appears to be a translation of a Hebrew or Aramaic original.[373] Literarily, the work is situated within the reigns of Cyrus the Great (r. 559-330 BCE), Darius the Great (r. 522-486 BCE), and Artaxerxes I of Persia (r. 465-424 BCE). The reign of the latter king serves as the *terminus post quem* for the work. Josephus employs

[370] Werse, "Exile, Restoration, and the Question of Postexilic," 390-403.
[371] Jacob M. Myers, *I & II Esdras*, AB 42 (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1974), 5-7.
[372] Kristin De Troyer, "Zerubbabel and Ezra: A Revived and Revised Solomon and Josiah? A Survey of Current 1 Esdras Research," *CurBR* 1.1 (2001): 30-60, here 33.
[373] Charles C. Torrey outlines linguistic insights that demonstrate the work derives from a Semitic original. For instance, Torrey demonstrates that the repeated use of the Greek τότε, "then", almost certainly derives from the Aramaic אדין or באדין (a common convention used to continue the narrative flow in Ezra and Daniel). Frank Zimmermann suggests that several passages evidence mistranslations of an Aramaic original into Greek. See Charles C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies*, The Library of Biblical Studies (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970), 23-5; and Frank Zimmermann, "The Story of the Three Guardsmen," *JQR* 54.3 (1964): 179-200, here 182-194. Robert Pfeifer has argued for an Aramaic original. See Robert H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times with an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: Harper, 1949), 251. Also see, Kristin De Troyer, "Zerubbabel and Ezra," 33-51.
Only a few scholars suggest that the work was a Greek original. See H. St.J. Thackery, "1 Esdras," in *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. I of *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. J. Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), 758-63; and M. Carrez, "1. Esdras Septante," *RHPR* (1994): 74:13-42.

1 Esdras as a source in *Antiquities of the Jews* XI:1:1-5:5 (c. 93-94 CE), which serves as the *terminus ante quem* for the work.[374] The broadest range for the work's composition then is 465 BCE-94 CE. The presence of Hellenistic, Ptolemaic, and Roman court terminology within 1 Esdras suggests a late Hellenistic or early Roman period setting.[375] The work's depiction of a relatively benevolent Persian monarchy may suggest that the work was composed prior to the Antiochean persecutions of the second-century BCE. Suggestions regarding the site of the work's provenance, however, are conjectural at best.[376]

The overall contents of 1 Esdras closely parallel those of Ezra, as well as Nehemiah 8 and 2 Chronicles 35-36, which has led to speculation regarding the literary relationship between these works. Since K.-F. Pohlmann, most scholars have advocated for one of two compositional hypotheses: 1) the *Fragmenthypothese* ("fragment hypothesis"), or 2) the

[374] Both Josephus and Yosippon include minor variations in their accounts of the three bodyguards (cf. 1 Esd 3-4). However, these differences may simply reflect their own authorial interests. See Zimmermann, "The Story of the Three Guardsmen," 195.
[375] For a discussion of *1 Esdras*' employment of Hellenistic court terminology, see Paul B. Harvey Jr., "Darius' Court and the Guardsmen's Debate: Hellenistic Greek Elements in 1 Esdras," in *Was 1 Esdras First?: An Investigation into the Priority and Nature of 1 Esdras*, ed. Lisbeth S. Fried, Ancient Israel and Its Literature (Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta, 2011), 179-90. Harvey suggests that συγγενής ("kinsman", cf. 3:7), ἐν τῷ χρηματιστηρίῳ ("in the judgment hall", cf. 3:14), μεγιστᾶνας ("nobles" or "magnates", cf. 3:14), στρατηγοὺς ("generals", cf. 3:14), τοπάρχας ("district magistrates", cf. 3:14), and ὑπάτους ("high officers") derive from usage within the Hellenistic and Ptolemaic courts. The final term, ὑπάτους ("high officers"), was employed by Greeks in the second century BCE to refer to the Roman consul, but Harvey notes that the term does not maintain this technical sense in 1 Esdras. Granted the court tales' legendary character and their tendency to exaggerate the grandeur of foreign court systems, it is unsurprising that 1 Esdras should employ these terms anachronistically in the context of the Persian court.
[376] Suggestions regarding the work's provenance are disparate. Michael F. Bird suggests that the work's similarities to Ezra-Nehemiah indicate that it was composed in Judea, where Ezra-Nehemiah is typically thought to have been composed. See Michael F. Bird, *1 Esdras: Introduction and Commentary on the Greek Text in Codex Vaticanus*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), 6-7; and Harvey, "Darius' Court and the Guardsmen's Debate," 179-90. By contrast, Harvey suggests that the work may have been composed in Alexandria.

Kompilationshypothese ("compilation hypothesis").[377] In general, the fragment hypothesis maintains that 1 Esdras is a fragment of a longer work that contained Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, while the compilation hypothesis suggests that 1 Esdras was compiled by selectively drawing from Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

As a whole, 1 Esdras can be described as a work of "biblical historiography".[378] Some have designated 1 Esdras as a secondary composition (dependent upon Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, or their *Vorlage*), much like *GA* (which is dependent upon Genesis), and consider the work to be an example of "Rewritten Bible".[379] Smaller units within 1 Esdras incorporate various generic forms. The court contest between the king's three bodyguards in 1 Esdras 3-4 is one such example and has no parallel in Ezra-Nehemiah or Chronicles. The inclusion of this unique tale, as well as 1 Esdras' different order of events found in Ezra, evidences that, regardless of the precise literary relationship between Ezra and 1 Esdras, 1 Esdras was composed with a distinct purpose.

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[377] See K.-F. Pohlmann, *Studien zum dritten Esra: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach dem ursprünglichen Schluß des chronistischen Geschichtswerkes*, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten and Neuen Testaments, Der ganzen Reihe 104 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970); and K.-F. Pohlmann, *3. Esra-Buch*, JSHRZ 1: Historische und legendarische Erzählungen – Lieferung 5 (Güttersloher Verlaghaus/Gerd Mohn, 1980). De Troyer has composed a helpful overview of those scholars who adhere to the fragment and the compilation hypotheses. She suggests that the author of the *Vorlage* of 1 Esdras also compiled 2 Chronicles 35-7, Ezra, Nehemiah, and 2 Kings 22, as well as their parallels. See De Troyer, "Zerubbabel and Ezra," 36-60. By contrast, a major proponent of 1 Esdras' priority is D. Böhler. See D. Böhler, *Die heilige Stadte in Esdras a und Esra-Nehemiah: Zwei Konzeptionnen der Wiederherstellung Israels*, OBO 158 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997).

[378] Bird, *1 Esdras*, 7-8.

[379] On the genre of "Rewritten Bible," see P. S. Alexander, "Retelling the Old Testament," in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture*, eds. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 99-121. On 1 Esdras as "Rewritten Bible," see K. De Troyer, *Rewriting the Sacred Text: What the Old Greek Texts Tell Us about the Literary Growth of the Bible*, SBLTCS 4 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature/Leiden: Brill, 2003).

The court contest of 1 Esdras 3-4 ultimately results in the restoration of Jerusalem, and the reconstruction of the Temple (1 Esdras 2:16-30). Thus, 1 Esdras 3-4 serves to propel the broader narrative of 1 Esdras forward, in a similar way to the tale of *GA* cols. 19-20.

4.3.1.1. The Structure of the Skill Theme in 1 Esdras 3-4

1 Esdras 3-4 follows the general structure of the court contest: 1) a problem arises in the court 2) the king's non-Hebrew courtiers are unable to solve the problem; 3) the Hebrew courtier solves the problem; and 4) the Hebrew courtier is rewarded. The empire's court officials, "all under [the king]… those born in his house, and all the nobles of Media and Persia, and all the satraps, generals, toparchs," are gathered together for a great banquet hosted by King Darius (3:1-3).[380] Once Darius has gone to bed, his three bodyguards each agree to offer a response to the question: "what one thing is the strongest" (3:5). There is certainly a precedent for associating heroes with riddles within the biblical literature. Daniel is credited with "solving riddles" (ואחוית אחידן, Dan 5:10-12). On the occasion of his marriage to a Philistine woman, Samson poses a riddle (חידה) to his thirty companions with the promise of gifts if they can solve it (Judg 14), and God instructs Ezekiel to "Speak a riddle (חוד חידה)… to the house of Israel" (Ezek 17:2). The courtiers of 1 Esdras each write down their answers and expound upon them before the king (3:8-4:41). The first guard argues that wine is the strongest. The second suggests that the king is the strongest. The third courtier, who is later revealed to be Zerubbabel (4:13)—the grandson of the penultimate Judean king Jehoiachin, contends that women are the strongest and that the

[380] For a discussion of the significance of the preoccupation with banquets within the court tales, see Myers, *I & II Esdras*, 53-54.

truth is even stronger still.[381] Zerubbabel notes that strength, kingship, authority, and majesty all belong to truth, suggesting that "truth" is a cypher for the God of Israel.[382] This suggestion is confirmed by Zerubbabel's use of the genitive of apposition: "Blessed is the God of Truth!" (4:40). In the end, the king affirms truth to be the strongest. Darius then bestows gifts upon Zerubbabel, permits him to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple, and the Temple vessels are to be returned to Jerusalem from exile. Moreover, Darius offers financial aid for the restoration, and orders that the Idumeans return occupied lands to the Judeans (4:43-57).[383] As is uniquely common to the Jewish tales, Zerubbabel attributes his victory to "the King of Heaven" and the "Lord of our ancestors" (4:58-63), declaring: "From you is every victory; from you is wisdom. Yours is the glory, and I am your servant" (4:59).

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[381] Lewis John Eron rightfully notes that as much as 1 Esdras 3-4 emphasizes the strength of women, it also speaks to the weakness of men towards women. See Eron, Lewis John, "'That Women Have Mastery over Both King and Beggar' (*TJUD*. 15.5)—The Relationship of the Fear of Sexuality to the Status of Women in Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha: 1 Esdras (*3 Ezra*) 3-4, Ben Sira and *The Testament of Judah*," *JSP* 5.9 (1991): 43-66. On the depiction of the strength of women in 1 Esdras 3-4, see Timothy J. Sandoval, "The Strength of Women and Truth: The Tale of the Three Bodyguards and Ezra's Prayer in First Esdras," *JJS* 58.2 (2007): 211-227; and Pierre J. Jordaan, "Clarifying the Thesis of 1 Esdras 3 and 4 that 'Women Are the Strongest' through Cognitive Linguistics," *JSem* 17.1 (2008): 19-32.

[382] Bird, *1 Esdras*, 178-9.

[383] 1 Esdras 3-4 then provides another example of Wills' "ethnic perspective", whereby heightened ethnic tensions play a significant role within the account. See, Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 68. In this instance, the Judeans' conflict with the Ιδουμαῖοι, "Idumeans", (4:45, 50) is significant with regards to the reward requested by Zerubbabel since, according to 1 Esdras, the Idumeans are responsible for burning the Temple in Jerusalem, as well as occupying Judean villages. Thus, Darius' permission to rebuild the Temple and return the captured lands evidences a valuative judgment in favor of the Judeans, over and against the Idumeans.
Notably, the Idumeans occupied parts of southern Judah during the Persian and Hellenistic periods, and 2 Maccabees 10:15-17 recounts a Maccabean reconquest of certain Idumean strongholds. This reference to the Idumeans and stolen Judean lands in 1 Esdras 4:45, and 50 may further suggest a Hellenistic period setting. See Bob Becking, "The Story of the Three Youths and the Compositions of 1 Esdras," in Was 1 Esdras First?: An Investigation into the Priority and Nature of 1 Esdras, ed. Lisbeth S. Fried, Ancient Israel and Its Literature 7 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011) 68-9.

The following chart highlights how 1 Esdras 3-4 employs the court contest structure. In the left column, I have included an outline of the court contest. In the middle column, I have outlined the events of 1 Esdras 3-4, and, in the right column, I have outlined the court contest from the writing on the wall scene of Daniel 5. While some scholars have proposed that 1 Esdras 3-4 is literarily dependent upon other ancient court tales, this similarity is better understood to be due to its drawing from the court contest theme rather than due to specific literary dependence upon other court tales.[384] I do not refer to Daniel 5 here to suggest a relationship of literary dependence with 1 Esdras 3-4, but rather to highlight the general similarity of the structure of the court contest theme shared by these tales.

Court Contest Structure	1 Esdras 3-4	Daniel 5
i) A problem arises in the royal court	Darius' three bodyguards seek to answer the question "what is strongest?" 3.1-9	The fingers of a hand write upon a wall and terrify King Belshazzar 5:5-6
ii) None of the king's foreign courtiers provide a suitable solution	a) The first courtier suggests that wine is the strongest, and	None of Belshazzar's court ministers can read the writing on the wall

[384] See André Canessa, "Le concours des gardes du corps de Darius dans Esdras A'," *Pallas* 44 (1996): 24-45; and Harvey, "Darius' Court and the Guardsmen's Debate", 184-9. André Canessa argues that 1 Esdras 3-4 derives from an Indo-Iranian story about sovereignty, which was adapted by an author connected to the Achaemenid court. Alternatively, Harvey proposes that the bodyguards' debate in 1 Esdras 3-4 derives from a Herodotean source.

	b) the second courtier suggests that the king is the strongest 3:17-4:12	 5:7-8
iii) Only the Hebrew hero can resolve the problem in the court	The third courtier, Zerubbabel, suggests that women are the strongest, and then suggests that the truth is even stronger still 4.13-41	Only Daniel can read and interpret the enigmatic writing on the wall 5:17-28
iv) The hero is rewarded for his display of skill	Zerubbabel receives gifts from Darius and is permitted to reconstruct Jerusalem and the Temple, and return the Temple vessels 20.42-57	Daniel receives gifts of purple and a gold chain from Belshazzar 5:29

4.3.1.2. Court Tale Language in 1 Esdras 3-4

1 Esdras 3-4 also employs terminology and phrases shared by other Jewish court tales. For instance, the prospective victor among the three bodyguards is promised great gifts, purple, gold, and fine linen (1 Esd 3:5b-6), all of which are common rewards for courtiers in the Jewish court tales. "Great gifts" (δωρεὰς μεγάλας) is a translation of the Aramaic מתנן שגיא and is a phrase employed in other tales, as in Daniel 2:6. "Purple cloth" (πορφύραν), a translation of the Aramaic ארגואן "purple (garment)", is attested in Daniel 5:29 and *GA* 20.31. Gold is a common reward among the Jewish tales, and similarly 1 Esdras 3-4 includes golden cups, a golden bed and bridle among the rewards promised to the victor of the riddle contest (3:6). The victor is promised a μανιάκην περὶ τὸν τράχηλον ("a necklace around the neck"). Similarly, Daniel is promised a μανιάκην in both OG and Th Daniel 5:29, which is a translation of the Aramaic המונכא ("necklace"). Not only do purple, fine linen, gold, and necklaces feature as common prizes for courtiers, they are frequently grouped together in the Jewish tales, as they are in 1 Esdras 3:5b-6. In the chart below, I have provided some examples of these groupings of gifts in 1 Esdras 3-4, GA 20.31, and Daniel 5:29:

GA 20.31	1 Esdras 3:5b-6	Daniel 5:29
ויהב לה֯ מלכא֯ כ֯[סף וד]הב [ש]גיא ולבוש שגי די בו֯ץ֯ וארגו֯א֯ן	δώσει αὐτῷ Δαρεῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς δωρεὰς μεγάλας καὶ ἐπινίκια μεγάλα καὶ πορφύραν περιβαλέσθαι καὶ	והלבישו לדניאל ארגונא והמונכא די־דהבא על צוארה

	ἐν χρυσώμασιν πίνειν καὶ ἐπὶ χρυσῷ καθεύδειν καὶ ἅρμα χρυσοχάλινον καὶ κίδαριν βυσσίνην καὶ μανιάκην περὶ τὸν τράχηλον	
“And the king gave her [mu]ch si[lver and go]ld and much clothing of fine linen and purple.”	“Darius will give him great gifts and great honours of victory, and he shall be clothed in purple, drink from gold (cups), sleep upon a gold(en bed), and have a chariot with a gold-studded bridle and a turban of fine linen, and a necklace around his neck.”	“And they clothed Daniel in purple and a necklace of gold (was placed) around his neck.”

Bob Becking has also convincingly highlighted phraseological similarities between 1 Esdras 3:1-3 and Daniel 5:1-4: In particular, the description of the banquet scene of 1

Esdras 3:1-3 closely resembles that of Daniel 5:1-4.[385] Moreover, 1 Esdras contains a list of various political figures and dignitaries summoned by the foreign king (3:1-2), as is common among the Jewish tales (e.g., LXX Dan 3:1-3), which includes both στρατηγοὺς ("generals") and τοπάρχας ("heads of provinces") who also feature together as court officials within Daniel 3.

4.3.1.3. Restoration and the Significance of Zerubbabel's Victory in the Persian Court

Zerubbabel's victory in the Persian court is central to the broader narrative of 1 Esdras and serves to depict the beginning of a period of restoration from exile. This is evident from the broader narrative context of 1 Esdras, which describes three historical eras: 1) the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (1 Esdras 1-2); 2) the restoration under Zerubbabel (1 Esdras 3-7); and 3) the religious renewal during the time of Ezra (1 Esdras 8-9).[386] 1 Esdras begins with a description of a gradual national decline in Judah, providing an overview of the days of the final kings of Judah from Josiah to Zedekiah (1:23-43), the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians and the plundering of its vessels, and exile to Babylon (1:46-58). Though Cyrus, king of the Persians, permits the Judeans to rebuild the Temple (2:1-15), King Artaxerxes halts the reconstruction. It is at this critical juncture that the narrative shifts its attention from grand-scale national politics to the fanciful riddle contest of the three bodyguards (3-4). Zerubbabel's victory in the contest has national consequences, which result in the return of a contingent of Judeans to

[385] See Becking, "The Story of the Three Youths and the Compositions of 1 Esdras," 61-72.
[386] Sara Japhet, "דמותה של תקופת שיבת ציון בעזרא החיצוני [The Portrayal of the Restoration Period in *1 Esdras*]," in מגילות: מחקרים במגילות מדבר יהודה ה-ו. מוגשים לדבורה דימנט [*Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls V-VI. A Fetschrift for Devorah Dimant*], eds. Moshe Bar-Asher and Emmanuel Tov (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute and Haifa University Press, 2007), 109-128.

Judea, the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the return of the Temple vessels to Jerusalem. In other words, Zerubbabel's victory results in a restoration of the decline described in 1 Esdras 1:46-58. The remainder of 1 Esdras returns to matters of national significance and focuses on the reestablishment of the Temple cult and Judean political institutions (5-9).[387]

Zerubbabel's victory also has monarchical implications for the restoration of 1 Esdras. The significance of Zerubbabel's identity as a Davidic scion is emphasized by the aforementioned list of the final kings of Judah, which includes a brief account of Jehoiachin, Zerubbabel's grandfather (1:43-5). According to 1 Esdras 1:43-6, Jehoiachin sinned before the LORD, and was exiled to Babylon in the sixth century BCE. Thus, Zerubbabel's introduction (4:13) serves to highlight the continuation of power and influence of the Davidic line in exile during the Persian era. Though Zerubbabel is never consecrated king, he receives the honour of being called the συγγενής "kinsman" of Darius (cf. 3:7). This is a notable title since, in the Ptolemaic court system, this was the highest possible honour that could be bestowed upon a courtier.[388] 1 Esdras' use of the term serves to associate Zerubbabel with Darius' house, further emphasizing Zerubbabel's royal significance. When Zerubbabel returns to Judea, he is referred to as the ἔπαρχος

[387] Lisbeth S. Fried suggests that 1 Esdras rearranges the correspondences from Ezra and includes the account of the three bodyguards in order to help exonerate Zerubbabel from the delays in the reconstruction of the Second Temple. See Lisbeth S. Fried, "Why the Story of the Three Youths in 1 Esdras," in *Was 1 Esdras First?: An Investigation into the Priority and Nature of 1 Esdras*, ed. Lisbeth S. Fried, Ancient Israel and Its Literature (Society of Biblical Literature: Atlanta, 2011), 83-92.

[388] The honour bore the full title of "kinsman of king Ptolemy" and was instituted by King Ptolemy II Philadelphus (309-246 BCE). On the significance of the term συγγενής, see J. H. Moulton and George Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* (London: Hoddor, 1930), 595; and Harvey, "Darius' Court and the Guardsmen's Debate," 179-180.

("governor") of Judea (6:26, 28), an administrative position that establishes Zerubbabel as the "commanding officer" of the returnees in Judea.[389] Zerubbabel's return to Jerusalem and special status in 1 Esdras may also hint at a hope for a restoration of the Davidic monarchy. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, tales recounting the deeds and adventures of deposed royal scions in foreign courts were not uncommon among the ancient Mediterranean court tales, such as Herodotus' Croesus tales in the *Histories*. Similarly, it would have been natural for Judeans living during the Hellenistic period to ponder the fate of deposed Hebrew monarchies.

In summation, 1 Esdras 3-4 draws heavily from the Jewish court tale traditions in order to highlight Zerubbabel and the continued influence of the Davidic line in exile. This focus has restorationist overtones and leads to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple, the return of Judeans and Temple vessels to Jerusalem, and perhaps a hope for the reinstitution of the Davidic monarchy. In this way, 1 Esdras 3-4 is unique among the Jewish tales since it features a fulfilment (if only in part) of restoration from the punishment of exile.

4.3.2. Esther

Similar to 1 Esdras, Esther focuses upon the continued role of royal (here Saulide) scions in the foreign court. Distinctive, however, from 1 Esdras' focus upon a realized restoration, the concept of a restoration is nebulous in Esther, which instead focuses primarily upon the power experienced by Hebrew courtiers in exile. Esther is the only text

[389] On the use of the term ἔπαρχος, see Bird, *1 Esdras*, 212-13.

among the Hebrew Bible that has not been preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls.[390] While Esther was originally composed in Hebrew, two Greek versions also exist: 1) the Septuagintal B-Text; and 2) the shorter Alpha-Text (A-Text).[391] These Greek versions incorporate additional material, and differ markedly from the Hebrew version.[392] I focus primarily upon the Hebrew text in the section that follows, but discuss significant alterations found in the Greek versions as they relate to themes of exile, punishment, and restoration in the following section.

While Esther is literarily situated within the Persian empire, the work achieved its final form in the second century BCE.[393] A reference to the Hebrew work's translation into Greek is included in Greek Esther Addition F11, which states "in the fourth year of the rule of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who claimed to be a priest and Levite, and Ptolemy, his son, brought the letter presented above of Purim, which claimed to be authentic and translated by Lusimachus, the son of Ptolemy, from those in Jerusalem." Assuming this ascription is accurate, the dating of the Greek translation to the fourth year of Ptolemy and

[390] However, as discussed in Chapter Three, previous scholars, such as Starcky and Milik, had assumed a close literary relationship between 4Q550, which was found at Qumran, and Esther. This proposed relationship has since been problematized and largely rejected. See Starcky, "Le travail d d'édition des fragments manuscrits de Qumrân," 66; and Milik, "Les modèles araméens du livre d'Esther," 321-406.
[391] The A-Text often ""omits" personal names, numbers, dates, and repetitious elements." For an overview of the Greek versions of Esther, see Carey A. Moore, *Esther: Translated with an Introduction and Notes*, AB 7B (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971), LVII-LX, quotation from LXII.
Some have suggested that Esther was originally composed in Aramaic, but this suggestion must remain on the level of speculation. See Charles C. Torrey, "The Older Book of Esther," *HTR* 37.1 (1944): 1-40. Charles C. Torrey argues that the Greek version of Esther is older than the Hebrew, and he proposes that it is a translation of an Aramaic original.
[392] Though the Additions have been preserved in Greek, Additions A, C, D, and F may have originally been composed in a Semitic language. See Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah*, 155.
[393] Moore, *Esther*, LVII-LX. Note that most date Hebrew Esther to the second century BCE; however, the "extreme limits" (LIX) of the work seem to be between about 400-114 BCE (with 114 and 78 BCE being the two most probable dates for the translation and incorporation of the additions of Greek Esther).

Cleopatra serves as the *terminus ad quem* for Hebrew Esther. However, depending upon which Ptolemy and Cleopatra are assumed here, several different dates are possible: 114/113, 78/77, or 49/48 BCE.[394] This leaves a wide range of possibility for dating the work—between about 400 (based on the work's Persian setting) to 48 BCE (representing the fourth year of the latest possible pairing of a Ptolemy and Cleopatra). The work's lack of Greek loan words, sympathetic stance towards gentiles, and generally friendly (though threatened) Jewish relations with their gentile neighbours suggest a compositional date prior to the second century conflicts of the Maccabean era.

4.3.2.1. Hebrew Esther

Hebrew Esther focuses upon the exploits of two Benjaminites, Esther and Mordecai, in the Persian royal court, and their interactions with foreign courtiers and the king.[395] The work features two principal different, yet intertwining, accounts: 1) Esther's ascension to queendom, and her interactions with the king and his vizier, Haman; and 2) the conflict between Mordecai and Haman. The conflict theme featured in the latter, is a theme shared by many other Jewish court tales, including Daniel 3 and 6. Mordecai, who is a lower ranking courtier (indicated by the description of his role: יושב בשער־המלך ["was sitting at

[394] See Moore, *Esther*, LXII-LXIII; and Elias Bickerman, "The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 63 (1944): 231-32.
[395] Unique to the Book of Esther is that the text features two heroes (Esther and Mordecai), with distinct yet intersecting stories. This has led some scholars to conclude that the work has fused two discrete sources together. See Henri Cazelles, "Notes sur la composition du Rouleau d'Esther," in *Lex tua veritas: Fetschrift für Hubert Junker*, eds. H. Gross and F. Mussner (Trier: Paulinus, 1961), 17-29, particularly 23 [reprinted in (*Studies in the Book of Esther*, ed. Carey A. Moore, The Library of Biblical Studies (New York: KTAV, 1982), 424-436]. For Henri Cazelles, the extant text with combined sources focuses on the origin of the feast of Purim, which developed out of an earlier non-Jewish tradition. Also see Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 153-92; and Wills, *The Jewish Novel in the Ancient World*, 128-131. Wills proposes that an earlier court conflict source about Mordecai and Haman underlies the Book of Esther.

the king's gate"] in Esth 2:21) refuses to do obeisance before Haman, which leads Haman to hate and persecute Mordecai. As an act of retribution, Haman persuades King Ahasuerus to destroy Mordecai's people. Thus, the entire Jewish people of the Persian empire are put at the forefront of Mordecai and Haman's conflict. This is similar to the way that Zerubbabel's actions have a direct influence upon the entire nation of Judea in 1 Esdras 3-4. Haman's threat towards the Jewish people also highlights the work's ethnic perspective. Ultimately, Mordecai and his people are protected from peril. As is common among the Jewish tales, Mordecai is promoted (in 8:2 Mordecai becomes King Ahasuerus' second-in-command), and Haman is punished by being hanged.[396]

Central to understanding the significance of the court themes in Esther is understanding the cause of Mordecai and Haman's conflict. The text explains that Haman persecutes Mordecai because he does not do obeisance before him (3:1-7). However, the text never explicitly indicates why Mordecai refuses to do obeisance. This refusal is peculiar since doing obeisance before fellow courtiers was common within the Persian administrative system, and would have been expected of Mordecai in his role as a courtier.[397] Scholars have proposed three solutions to this exegetical crux: 1) Mordecai refuses because he wishes to establish his grandeur in the court above that of Haman; 2) Mordecai refuses due to his religious compunctions; or 3) Mordecai refuses due to the

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[396] Esther appears to draw from proverbial wisdom, with Haman seemingly conforming to the wicked courtier of proverbial sayings and Ahasuerus recalling the foolish king of Prov 29:12, who listens to falsehoods (Haman's false accusations against the Judeans of Persia). See Kevin McGeough, "Esther the Hero: Going Beyond "Wisdom" in Heroic Narratives," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 70.1 (2008): 44-65, here 15.

[397] See Chris Seeman, "Enter the Dragon: Mordecai as Agonistic Combatant in Greek Esther," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 41.1 (2011): 3-15, here 5; and Richard N. Frye, "Gestures of Deference to Royalty in Ancient Iran," *Iranica Antiqua* 9 (1972): 102-7.

historical feud between his tribe and Haman's tribe.[398] While Mordecai's social status improves by the conclusion of the narrative, there is no indication that this was his motive; accordingly, solution 1) should be rejected.

The second solution suggests that Mordecai does not bow before Haman because it would conflict with his Judean religious sentiments and such an action would be tantamount to idolatry. However, there are no Israelite laws, which forbid bowing (from the root חוה) before a human ruler. In fact, there are several examples of other Hebrew heroes who have bowed before human rulers (cf. Gen 23:7, 43:26-8; 2 Sam 14:4; 1 Kgs 1:16; and Dan 2:46). If Mordecai did refuse to bow due to some religious compunction, this act of resistance would be one of the few overt acts of religious piety exhibited within Hebrew Esther, a work that otherwise makes no explicit reference to the God or religious practices of Israel. Esther's lack of focus upon religious distinctives, thus incidentally, brings the work into closer conformity with the broader ancient Near Eastern court tale tradition, which focuses principally upon the skill of the courtier rather than upon the role of the divine in their success.

[398] The first solution was proposed in Seeman, "Enter the Dragon," 3-15. While the second solution is suggested within the Greek Additions (see C7), it is not supported within the Hebrew text. The third solution has been supported by several interpreters (ancient and modern), and is the view espoused by the current author. See Moore, *Esther*, 42-4; Linda Day, *Esther*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 66; Elliott Horrowitz, *Reckless Rites: Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006): 107-46; and Elsie Stern, "Esther and the Politics of Diaspora," *JQR* 100.1 (2010): 25-53, 39. Day does not endorse the second solution, and seems to favor the third solution. She, also, considers the first solution to be possible. Stern suggests that Mordecai does not bow before Haman because Mordecai is a descendant of Saul, and Haman is a descendant of Agag the Amalekite, who played a key role in Saul's loss of his dynasty. Accordingly, Stern suggests that tribal animosity motivates Mordecai's reluctance to bow before Haman.

This solution seems even less likely given that the narrative suggests that Mordecai and Esther have been highly assimilated within Persian culture, with the text providing little evidence of the distinctiveness of their Hebrew identities. As is common among other Hebrew courtiers, Mordecai and Esther's names are foreign (cf. Belteshazzar and Patireza), which helps to mask their distinctive Hebrew identities. While the text refers once to Esther's Hebrew name, Hadassah (2:7), there is no mention whether Mordecai has a Hebrew name at all. Mordecai also instructs Esther to keep her national identity hidden (2:20), a request which Esther evidently fulfills until the climax of the tale (7:1-6). Haman is unable to identify Mordecai's ethnic status until it is revealed to him by Mordecai's fellow gatekeepers (3:3-4), and, similarly, King Ahasuerus is oblivious to Esther's Hebrew identity until she reveals it to him (7:1-6). Granted that Mordecai and Esther appear to be so assimilated into Persian culture, with their distinctive Hebrew identities muted, it seems unlikely that Mordecai would refrain from obeisance due to religious compunction.

The third solution, which advocates that Haman refuses to do obeisance due to a historical tribal feud, is the only solution supported by the text. Mordecai is identified as a Benjaminite, and his genealogy includes well-known figures of the house of Saul: איש יהודי היה בשושן הבירה ושמו מרדכי בן יאיר בן־שמעי בן־קיש איש ימיני ("There was a man *living* in the palace of Shushan whose name was Mordecai, son of Yair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite") (2:5[-6]).[399] The two figures of prominence here are: 1) Shimei (cf. 2 Sam

[399] The genealogy of Mordecai harkens back to the Saulide dynasty and Saul's conflict with Agag, with the phraseology of 2:5-6 evoking 1 Sam 9:1, which introduces Saul.

16:5-14, 19:16-23; 1 Kgs 2:8-9, 36-46), and 2) Kish (cf. 1 Sam 9:1-2).[400] The syntax of בן־שמעי and בן־קיש do not suggest that these figures are Mordecai's literal grandfather and great grandfather, but rather suggest that Shimei and Kish are more distant ancestors.[401] The text also emphasizes that Haman is as an Agagite (3:1, 3:10; 8:3, 8:5; 9:24), that is a descendant of King Agag of the Amalekites, which means both Mordecai and Haman have royal ancestry. Of significance, King Agag was captured by King Saul and later put to death by the prophet Samuel (1 Sam 15:8-33), evidencing that Esther's emphasis of Mordecai and Haman's genealogies suggests a continuation of the long-standing intertribal feud between the Israelites and the Amalekites (cf. Exod 17:8-16; Numb 24:7; Deut 25:17-19; 1 Sam 15) in exile in Susa. Like 1 Esdras then, Hebrew Esther is a court tale focused upon the continued relevance and influence of a defunct royal lineage (the Saulides) in exile.

The story of Esther, then, has broader monarchical and national implications, particularly with regards to the Judean community living in exile.[402] The Saulide dynasty failed to consolidate its power and was deposed in the eleventh century BCE, and the Book of Esther presents two members of that household, Esther and Mordecai, generations later

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[400] Shimei was associated with the fall of Saul's house, and the rise of David's dynasty. In 1 Sam 16, David, who is fleeing from Absalom's attempted usurpation, arrives in Bahurim, where a man of the house of Saul, Shimei, curses David. Later, David instructs his son, Solomon, to have Shimei killed (1 Kgs 2:8-9). Accordingly, Mordecai is clearly associated with the old Saulide dynasty. For more on Mordecai's Saulide relationship, see Esth 2:5-7.

[401] This interpretation is found in Josephus and the Targums. See Moore, *Esther*, 19-20. Aaron Koller cautions that the syntactic construction of the genealogy of 2:5-6 does not necessarily entail that Kish is the literal father of Saul, but more likely is just one of his more well-known ancestors. See Aaron J. Koller, "The Exile of Kish: Syntax and History in Esther 2.5-6," *JSOT* 37.1 (2012): 45-56.

[402] The debate regarding whether the figure Esther should be understood as a symbol of the community or as an individual woman also has nationalistic implications. See Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "Sleeping with the Enemy?: Reading Esther and Judith as Comfort Women," in *Women and Exilic Identity in the Hebrew Bible*, eds. Martien A. Halvorson-Taylor, and Katherine E. Southwood, LHBOTS 631 (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 99-128, especially 118-121.

living in Susa. In spite of her humble beginnings in exile, Esther becomes the queen of the entire Persian Empire by only the second chapter of the story. The implication then is that a member of the house of Saul is enthroned again, and now rules over the entire Persian Empire, a much larger realm than ancient Israel.[403] Esther's newfound power as queen is highlighted by the Persian king's repeated offer to grant Esther half of his kingdom (Esth 5:3, 5:6; 7:2; and 9:12): ומה־בקשתך עד־חצי המלכות ("Now what is your request—up to half of the kingdom!"). Esther then is a Saulide queen who rules over both the Judeans and gentiles of the Persian Empire.

Unique among the Jewish tales, Esther's success is a result of her ability to wield her מלכות ("royal power"). This theme is evident when the text emphasizes Esther's willingness to negotiate, confront, and speak with the king in spite of her own fears (5:1-2) and later take vengeance upon the enemies of the Judeans (8).[404] Prior to Esther's

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[403] For an overview of feminist readings of Esther, see Yael Shemesh, "The Stories of Women in a Man's World: The Books of Ruth, Esther, and Judith," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect: Volume I: Biblical Books*, vol. I of *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect*; ed. Susanne Scholz, Biblical Books 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 248-267, particularly 258-262.

[404] McGeough suggests that Esther's brazen boldness to enter the court of the king and negotiate with him, despite the inherent dangers involved, and Esther's willingness to take vengeance upon the enemies of the Judeans precludes her identification as a wise woman (cf. Proverbs); instead, McGeough prefers the designation "heroine". For example, Proverbs 24:21-22 heeds that one should fear the king and avoid those who are given to change, which are both qualities indicative of Ahasuerus (cf. Ahasuerus' change of heart after his dismissal of Queen Vashti [Esth 2:1]). Nevertheless, Esther enters unannounced before the king, and requests his presence at a banquet. See McGeough, "Esther the Hero," 20.

There has been long-standing debate regarding the place and significance of wisdom within the Book of Esther. Drawing from Gerhard von Rad and his interpretation of the Joseph story as a narrativized form of wisdom, Shemarayahu Talmon refers to several wisdom parallels (particularly Proverbs) to attempt to demonstrate how Esther and Mordecai are paragons of wisdom, how Haman serves as the wicked and willy courtier, and how Ahasuerus and Vashti are exemplars of foolish rulers. Detractors, particularly J. L. Crenshaw have demonstrated the shortcomings in Talmon's argument and noted how Esther's association with wisdom literature is overly speculative. Nevertheless, Talmon's interpretation of Esther has remained influential. For instance, Wills' draws heavily from Talmon's interpretation in his understanding of the court tales, which he understands to be rooted in a narrativized wisdom tradition. See Gerhard von Rad, "Josephsgeschichte und ältere Chokma," in *Congress Volume: Copenhagen 1953* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 1; Leiden: Brill, 1953), 120-27; Shemarayahu Talmon, "'Wisdom' in the Book of Esther,"

unsummoned entry before King Ahasuerus, the text emphasizes her preparations: "and she put on [her] *royal power* (מלכות)" (5:1). The word מלכות, derived from the root *מלכ ("to rule"), can be translated in a variety of ways, including "royal," "royal power," "dominion," "kingship," and "kingdom". The word's appearance in this context is anomalous and has resulted in rather creative English translations.[405] Linda Day notes how Esther literally puts on "royalty"; Esther no longer needs to rely on her beauty, but instead takes on political authority.[406] More broadly, the word מלכות holds special significance in Esther, with the word and cognates appearing twenty-six times and always in reference to royal power. The use of the term in Esther implicitly contrasts the "royal power" of various characters in the text (particularly Vashti, Ahasuerus, and Esther). For instance, the term appears three times in 5:1, with the first usage relating to Esther's royal power, and the second and third occurrences referring to Ahasuerus's royal power: "Esther put on [her] royal power [מלכות]… And the king sat upon the throne of his royal power [מלכותו] in the house of his royal power [המלכות], opposite the entrance of the palace." Thus, the scene depicts the meeting of two monarchs, Esther and Ahasuerus, who bargain with royal power.

Esther's royal negotiations result in the resolution of Mordecai's conflict with Haman, as well as the threat of Haman's planned genocide against the Judeans. Esther and Mordecai, as well as the broader Judean community, experience an empowering victory over their ancestral enemies. The wicked Agagites, Haman and his household are

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Vetus Testamentum 13.4 (1963): 419-455; J. L. Crenshaw "Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon "Historical" Literature," *JBL* 88.2 (1969): 129-142; and Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 153-92.

[405] For instance, the King James Version, the New American Standard, and the New Revised Standard Bibles translate this as "her royal robes".

[406] Day, *Esther*, 94-95.

destroyed, and the Judeans defend themselves from their attackers on the thirteenth of Adar. Dissimilar from her ancestor, King Saul, Esther consolidates her royal power (מלכות) and wields it to great effect, and Mordecai is promoted to second-in-command to the king (10:3) and is given Ahasuerus' signet ring (טבעת) (8:2), signs of power commonly conferred upon the heroes of the court tales as noted in Chapters Two and Three.

That there is no overt reference to a future return from exile for the Judeans of the Persian Empire, or a reconstruction of Jerusalem or the Temple is striking. A Hebrew monarch, Esther, has been enthroned again, but not in Judah or Israel. Esther's dominion is the entirety of the Persian Empire, which would have included Judea. Accordingly, for Hebrew Esther, there is no need to focus upon a future restoration of Jerusalem or a return from exile, for a change of fortunes has already occurred. A restoration of sorts has taken root in Susa, the heart of the Persian (read: Saulide) Empire.

4.3.2.2. Greek Esther

The Greek translator of Esther was evidently not satisfied with Hebrew Esther's solution to the problem of exile, and, accordingly, supplemented and nuanced the story of Esther with pietistic additions, downplaying the role of Saulide royal power and focusing more heavily upon the relationship between the Judeans living in exile and Israel.[407] The

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[407] Through a close examination of 6:13, De Troyer demonstrates the ambiguities of strictly distinguishing whether LXX Esther should be considered a translation or an interpretation. See Kristin De Troyer, "Translation or Interpretation? A Sample from the Books of Esther," *LXX: X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*, SCS 51 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1998), 343-353.
Moore states that the additions "are primarily intended to strengthen the book's religious character (so A, C, and F) and authenticity (so B and E)". See Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah*, 153. There are likely other traditions that also helped to influence the composition of the Additions. For instance, Wills suggests that motifs derived from the Greco-Roman novella impacted the development of early Jewish novellas, such as

six major Greek additions can be summarized in the following manner: Addition A draws from mythological and eschatological traditions in order to recount Mordecai's vision of two dragons who battle for supremacy, and describes how Mordecai thwarts a regicidal plot.[408] Addition B includes a letter of Haman, which calls upon the residents of the Persian Empire to destroy its Judean inhabitants. In Addition C, Mordecai and Esther pray for the deliverance of the Judean people, and Esther prays for courage. In Addition D, Esther enters, unsummoned, before the king, faints, and is comforted by him. Addition E is a copy of the letter sent by Mordecai and Esther, which permits the Judeans to defend themselves from their enemies. Addition F details Mordecai's interpretation of his dream of two dragons (cf. Addition A).

One of the most unique features of Hebrew Esther is its apparent absence of overtly religious themes, which would have been striking for its early Jewish audiences. This certainly would have been a factor that prompted the Greek translator of the text to include additions that highlight God's involvement in the tale and draw greater attention to the Judeans' displacement from Judea.[409] From the outset of Greek Esther, the text draws greater attention to the displacement of the Judeans, by an ethnic other (Nebuchadnezzar

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Judith and Greek Esther, particularly with regards to their fanciful settings and idealized plots. See Lawrence M. Wills, "Jewish Novellas in a Greek and Roman Age: Fiction and Identity," *JSJ* 42.3 (2011): 141-165. Noah Hacham contends that the linguistic and thematic affinities shared between Greek Esther and 3 Maccabees evidence that the letters of Additions B and E were composed after and influenced by 3 Maccabees. See Noah Hacham, "3 Maccabees and Esther: Parallels, Intertextuality, and Diaspora Identity," *JBL* 126.4 (2007): 765-785.

[408] On the mythological and eschatological significance of the two dragons, see Moore, *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah*, 179-81.

[409] Adele Reinhartz suggests that the inclusion of the Additions also emphasizes God's involvement in helping to change Jewish fortunes in Persia and exact revenge against those who seek to harm them in the Diaspora. See Adele Reinhartz, "LXX Esther: A Hellenistic Jewish Revenge Fantasy," in *Early Jewish Writings*, *eds.* Eileen Schuller, and Marie-Theres Wacker, The Bible and Women 3.1 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 9-28, particularly 14-15.

of Babylon): “He [Mordecai] was one of the captives, who King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia had deported from Jerusalem with King Jeconiah of Judea” (Addition A 3). Addition C 23 (Vulg. 14:12) reminds future generations that the king of the gods and master of all dominion (πάσης ἀρχῆς) will protect his chosen people. The Temple, unmentioned within Hebrew Esther, has a single mention in Addition C 19-21:

> And now they are not satisfied that we are in bitter slavery, but they have covenanted with their idols to abolish what your mouth has ordained, and to destroy your inheritance, to stop the mouths of those who praise you and to quench your altar (θυσιαστήριόν σου) and the glory of your house (οἴκου σου), to open the mouths of the nations for the praise of vain idols, and to magnify forever a mortal king.[410]

While the Greek additions draw greater attention to the Temple and the exile of the Judeans, they also serve to mute much of the underlying significance of Hebrew Esther’s Saulide/Agagite conflict. In Greek Esther, Haman is identified as a Macedonian (Addition E:10 [Vulg. 16:10]) rather than as a descendant of King Agag. The change preserves an ethnic perspective, but effectively erases the *raison d’être* of the conflict from Hebrew Esther. Mordecai also provides an explanation for his refusal to bow before Haman, noting that it was because he refuses to worship anyone but the God of Israel (Addition C:5-7

[410] NRSV.
Jill Middlemas, “The Temple in the So-Called Jewish Romances in the Deuterocanonical Literature: Judith, Tobit, and Esther,” in *The Early reception of the Book of Isaiah*, eds. Kristin De Troyer, and Barbara Schmitz, DCLS 37 (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2018), 67-90, particularly 81-6. Jill Middlemas suggests that the Temple serves to refer to the Jewish community as witnesses to the God of Israel in this context.

[Vulg. 13:12-14]).[411] Such references to the God of Israel suggest a strong connection between the Judeans of Susa and other Judeans, in that it recalls their shared connection to the land of Israel. Greek Esther also exhibits greater hostility towards the broader gentile community, rather than the Agagites and their allies in particular. For instance, Esther describes how she despises her crown and the marriage bed of her uncircumcised husband, the king (Addition C 26-30 [Vulg. 14:15-18]). Esther also petitions God to "make an example of the one who has ruled over us!" (Addition C 22 [Vulg. 14:11]).

The Hebrew wordplay of "royal power" (מלכות) is absent within Greek Esther. Instead of "putting on" "royal power" (מלכות) (cf. Hebrew Esth 5:1), Esther removes her clothing of servitude (θεραπείας) and clothes herself with δοξαν ("glory"). The term δοξαν is associated with divine power, but not political power. The change in word choice shifts the focus from Esther's royal ancestry and invokes the "glory of God" that formerly resided in the Solomonic Temple.

In summary, Greek Esther shifts the focus away from the continued significance and power of the house of Saul in exile, as described in Hebrew Esther, to the God of Israel's role in protecting his people in exile. While Greek Esther draws a closer affiliation between the Jews of Susa and the broader community of Israel, God's protection of Esther, Mordecai, and the broader Judean community suggests a viable continued existence in

[411] Chris Seeman argues that the Greek additions provide an additional layer of ambiguity to Mordecai and Haman's conflict, and questions whether Mordecai's motivations to not bow before Haman were indeed as pious as he lets on. Seeman contends that the additions, particularly the visions of Additions A and F, suggest that Mordecai and Haman are locked in a Hellenistic style agonistic (competitive) competition in the court to gain prestige (rather than in an intertribal feud). See Seeman, "Enter the Dragon," 3-15.

exile, where Israelites, who rely upon the protection of God, thrive—even though dealings with their gentile neighbours may be loathsome.

4.3.3. The Letter of Aristeas, verses 187-294

The Letter of Aristeas (henceforth Aristeas) was composed in Greek, recounts the translation of the Hebrew law into Greek, and includes a riddle contest in the Egyptian court. The work has been preserved in more than twenty manuscripts, which date between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, but the contents of the text date much earlier.[412] The Egyptian King Ptolemy II Philadelphus (r. 285-246 BCE), features prominently in Aristeas, and his inclusion provides a terminus post-quem for the work. Josephus (37-c. 100 CE) paraphrases Aristeas in Jewish Antiquities 12.12-118, which provides a terminus ante quem for the work and suggests that the work was composed between 285 BCE-100 CE.[413] Though the authorial voice of the work assumes the role of the Greek, Aristeas, to his brother, Philocrates, Aristeas' familiarity with and attempt to promote various Jewish traditions (including laws, Temple worship, Jerusalem, etc.) betray the work's Jewish apologetic character.[414] Aristeas' special predilection and idealization of Jerusalem (for

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[412] André Pelletier, *Lettre d'Aristée à Philocrate*, SC 89 (Paris, 1962), 8.

[413] See S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford, 1968), 48, n. 1. Jellicoe outlines three major views for the dating of *Aristeas*: 1) early (250-200 BCE), 2) 150-100 BCE, and 3) late (first century CE). The work evidences a Jewish provenance, and seeks to promote harmony between Jews and Gentiles, as well as a basic continuity between Judaism in Judea and the Diaspora. Thus, one must consider what sort of circumstances would have prompted the author to focus on these themes present within the work. In the 170s BCE, Antiochus IV Epiphanes sought to carry out a Hellenistic campaign in Judea; *Aristeas'* attempt to demonstrate a harmony between Jewish and Gentile ideas would have been particularly important during this period. Accordingly, the present author suggests that *Aristeas* might best fit this period and attempts to demonstrate how the Hebrew laws are compatible with Greek ideals and are superior to them. Such a message would thus constitute a reversal of the message of Antiochus' Hellenistic campaign.

[414] For a discussion of *Aristeas*' Jewish apologetic character, see Victor Tcherikover, "The Ideology of the Letter of Aristeas," *HTR* 51.2 (1958): 59-85.

e.g., as a land of milk and honey) echoes biblical descriptions of the land as one of abundance with many olive trees, vines, and honey. The reliance upon biblical language to describe Jerusalem suggests that the author may not have been particularly familiar with Judea, and perhaps never visited Jerusalem.[415] By contrast, the author demonstrates an acute understanding of local Alexandrian matters, including a precise understanding of the Ptolemaic court, including the technical titles of court officials.[416] Accordingly, the work suggests a Jewish provenance in Egypt.

The court riddle contest of Aristeas, vv. 187-294, depicts Diasporic life in an idyllic fashion. The king, Ptolemy II, is urged by his chief librarian, Demetrios of Phaleron, to acquire the Hebrew laws for the renowned library of Alexandria, and have them translated into Greek.[417] Vss. 12-27 notes that the king releases those Jews who were forcibly

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[415] Cf. Exod 3:8. See Ekaterina Matusova, "Deuteronomy Reworked, or Composition of the Narrative in the Letter of Aristeas," in *XV Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies: Munich, 2013*, eds. Wolfgang Kraus, Michaël N. van der Meer, and Martin Meiser, SCS (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 511-529. Matusova demonstrates that *Aristeas* has a peculiar understanding of Deuteronomy, arguing that the letter can be understood as an elaboration upon Deuteronomy 30:1-5 and 4:5-8.

[416] See Giacomo Lumbroso, *Recherches sur l'économie politique de l'Égypte sous les Lagides* (Turin, 1870), xiii. Some examples of the employment of official Ptolemaic terminology in *Aristeas* include: ἀρχισωματοφύλακες (12), οἱ ὑπηρέται τῶν ταγμάτων (26), παρεύρεσις (14), and παραγενέσθαι εἰς τοὺς τόπους.

[417] Ptolemy II's attempt to expand the library of Alexandria via the inclusion of the Hebrew laws should be contextualized within similar Hellenistic national endeavors of the second century BCE to highlight the superiority of their library. See Ronnie Goldstein, "Late Babylonian Letters on Collecting Tablets and Their Hellenistic Background—A Suggestion," *JNES* 69.2 (2010): 199-207. Two late Babylonian copies of letters (BM 45642 and BM 28825), purportedly between Asshurbanipal and the scholars of Borsippa, recount Ashurbanipal's attempt to gather all important texts from Nabû's temple, the Ezida for his Ninevite library. The final form of the letters, which may originate in the seventh century, were likely copied during the second or first century BCE. Goldstein suggests that the Babylonian letters should be contextualized among similar third-second century BCE debates between competing libraries, such as the Alexandrian and Pergamon libraries. Similarly, these Babylonian letters exhibit the desire of Hellenistic Babylonians to demonstrate the illustriousness of their own bibliographic collections.

BM 45642 and BM 28825 can be found in Grant Frame and Andrew R. George, "The Royal Libraries of Nineveh: New Evidence for King Ashurbanipal's Tablet Collecting," *Iraq* 67 (2005): 265-66. E. Frahm provides some commentary on the texts in E. Frahm, "On Some Recently Published LB Copies of Royal Letters," *NABU* 2005/2: 45.

deported to Egypt by his father; thus, Jews have permission to return from exile, and those that remain do so due to their own volition.

The king then sends lavish gifts to the Temple in Jerusalem.[418] The high priest also sends six wise men of each of the twelve tribes of Israel (seventy-two in total) to Alexandria to translate the Hebrew laws, yet, in this period, ten of the tribes had already been destroyed.[419] The text thus suggests that all of Israel is represented, which suggests that some sort of restoration has occurred. A banquet is provided for the Hebrew sages, and the king asks each of them a riddle; for example: "How can one keep his kingdom without offense to the end?" (187).[420] After each sage satisfactorily responds to the king's questions, they translate the Jewish laws in seventy-two days, with each translator translating the laws in the same way. The king then rewards the translators with lavish gifts, including fine linens, purple cloth, and gold, gifts commonly granted to the courtiers in the tales examined above. The sages then return to Judea.

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[418] On the idealization of the Jerusalem Temple in *Aristeas*, see Jonathan R. Trotter, "The Letter of Aristeas and the Jerusalem Temple," in *The Jerusalem Temple in Diaspora: Jewish Practice and Thought during the Second Temple Period*, ed. Jonathan R. Trotter, JSJSup 129 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 139-162.

[419] A.D. MacDonald, "The Seventy-Two Elders of Aristeas: An Evaluation of Speculation," *JSP* 29.1 (2019): 36-53, here 51.

[420] Shutt, "Letter of Aristeas," 25. Shutt rightly notes how the impetus to translate the laws does not come from the Judean officials, but rather from the Ptolemaic officials, which serves to demonstrate a Gentile appreciation of Judean traditions within *Aristeas*.

Many of the questions in *Aristeas* focus on the proper rule of the king. Accordingly, G. Zuntz suggests that "one written [Greek] source" on kingship must therefore underlie the text, while Oswyn Murray demonstrates how both Greek and Jewish ideals about kingship underlie the work. G. Zuntz, "Aristeas Studies I: "The Seven Banquets"," *JSS* 4.1 (1959): 21-36, especially 29-31; and Oswyn Murray, "Aristeas and Ptolemaic Kingship," *JTS* 18.2 (1967): 337-371, especially 350-61. Many of the ideals about kingship in *Aristeas* echo Greek sentiments about kingship, particularly the *peri Basileus* literature. See Benjamin G. Wright III, "Greek Paideia and the Jewish Community of Alexandria in the Letter of Aristeas," in *Second Temple Jewish "Paideia" in Context*, eds. Gabriele Boccaccini, and Jason M. Zurawski, BZNW 228 (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2017), 93-112, here 107.

As demonstrated in Chapter Two, court tales involving a ruler who poses riddles to a court sage are a well-established ancient Near Eastern court tale tradition (cf. *Aḥiqar*, Tales from Cheops' Court), and are also present within the Jewish tales (cf. Dan 5 and 1 Esd). King Ptolemy II's test of riddles in Aristeas, vss. 187-294 employs the court riddle contest structure. Instead of asking one riddle of one courtier, however, the king asks each of the seventy-two courtiers a different question. The following chart highlights the riddle test structure in Aristeas, vss. 187-294. In the left column, I have included an outline of the riddle contest. In the middle column, I have outlined the riddle tests of *Aristeas*, and, in the right column, I have outlined the riddle contest of 1 Esdras 3-4. I have not included 1 Esdras here to suggest that it shares a direct literary relationship with Aristeas, but to demonstrate their shared riddle contest structures**.**

Riddle Contest Theme Structure	Letter of Aristeas, vss. 187-294	1 Esdras 3-4
i) A difficult riddle is posed in the court	Over the span of seven days, Ptolemy II asks each of the seventy-two wise men a difficult riddle. 187-294	Darius' three bodyguards seek to answer the question "what is strongest?" 3.1-9

ii) None of the king's foreign courtiers can provide a suitable answer	Foreign courtiers do not take part in the riddle contest in Aristeas.	The first courtier suggests that wine is strongest. The second courtier suggests that the king is strongest. 3:17-4:12
iii) Only the Hebrew hero can provide an adequate response	Over the span of seven days, each of the seventy-two wise men offer a suitable response to each of their riddles. 187-294	The third courtier, Zerubbabel, suggests that women are the strongest, but then that the truth is even stronger still. 4:13-41
iv) The hero is rewarded for their display of wisdom/skill	Each of the wise men are commended in turn; Ptolemy asks the men to visit him regularly; and gifts each one three robes of fine material, two talents of gold, a cup, and	Zerubbabel receives gifts from Darius and is permitted to reconstruct Jerusalem, the Temple, etc. 4:42-57

	the furnishings for a dining room.	The winner of the contest is also promised a turban of fine linen, gold cups, etc.
	187-294; 319	3:5B-6

Dissimilar from other riddle tales, there is no competition between courtiers in Aristeas; rather, riddles provide the courtiers with an opportunity to show off and demonstrate their wisdom.[421] The Alexandrian court system, thus, exhibits beneficence towards the Judeans from the outset of the work, whereas respect must be earned by Judean courtiers in many of the other tales, such as in Daniel 3, 4, Bel and the Dragon, Esther, and 4Q550, wherein foreign officials are hostile to the Judean officials.[422] Indeed, it is at the behest of the Alexandrian librarian, Demetrios, that the Hebrew laws are to be included in the Alexandrian library, and by Ptolemy's decree that the Jews in Egypt are to be liberated from captivity. Such details evidence a positive outlook of exilic life; the Judeans need not prove their wisdom—their value is already assumed by their foreign patrons.

Moreover, the principle I referred to as the court tale worldview in Chapter Three, whereby foreign kings and courtiers either learn to reverence the God of Israel or are

[421] See Myrto Hatzimichali, "Text and Wisdom in the Letter of Aristeas," in *Hellenism and the Local Communities of the Eastern Mediterranean: 400 BCE-250 CE*, eds. Boris Chrubasik, and Daniel King (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 161-4.
[422] See George Howard, ""The Letter of Aristeas" and Diaspora Judaism," *JTS* (New Series), 2 (1971), 337-348.

punished, also appears within Aristeas. King Ptolemy reverences the Hebrew laws, suggesting a favorable situation for Jews living in Egypt. For instance, Ptolemy prostrates before the laws, thanks the sages, offers thanks to the God who inspired the laws (vs. 177), and orders that the Greek translation of the laws be "persevered reverently (ἁγνῶς)" (vs. 317), a phrase which evokes the consecration of an object to a deity.[423] The use of the verb κατευθύνω ("to guide, direct, lead") is one of the clearest indications of God's sovereignty over foreign rulers within Aristeas. The verb is employed throughout Aristeas in relation to God's ruling power (cf. 195). The same verb is employed in conjunction with God's sovereignty in Greek Esther and 3 Maccabees.[424] For instance, the king notes that "inasmuch as whatsoever men think to do in piety in the way of righteousness and attention to good works, God the Lord of all directs (κατευθύνει) their acts and intentions" (18).[425] Aristeas also provides examples of Gentiles who lack such reverence and are, consequently, punished. Theopompus attempts to misquote the Law, but is, instead, mentally afflicted for thirty days (314-5). Theodectus plans to include a passage of "the Bible" in his play, but is prevented when he is afflicted with a cataract of the eyes (316).[426] Both Theopompus and

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[423] See Benjamin G. Wright III, *The Letter of Aristeas: 'Aristeas to Philocrates' of 'On the Translation of the Law of the Jews'*, CEJL (Berlin: de Gruyter: 2015), 455-6.
[424] Artaxerxes acknowledges God's Sovereignty in Greek Additions to Esther E:16, and Ptolemy IV Philopator acknowledges God's sovereignty in 3 Maccabees 7:2.
[425] Translation from Shutt, "Letter of Aristeas," 13. See Sarah Pearce, "Ptolemy II Philadelphus in the Letter of Aristeas §§1-27: A Study in Power," in *A Study in Power*, eds. Dikla Rivlin Katz, Noah Hacham, Geoffrey Herman, and Lilach Sagiv (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019): 201-222, particularly 210-212.
[426] Vs. 311 explicitly asserts that curses are to be set upon any who attempt to change the Greek translation of the laws, suggesting that the translation is divinely protected (cf. Deut 4:2 and 12:32). See Mogens Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint*, JSOTSup 206/Copenhagen International Seminar 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 50.

Theodectus are restored once they repent. Aristeas therefore offers a pointed meditation upon the sovereignty of Israel's God over the royal Egyptian court.

Aristeas, thus, depicts an era wherein Jews experience emancipation. They are free to travel between Judea and Egypt, and they and their laws are reverenced by the foreign king and his court. The social situation described in Aristeas, much like that in Hebrew Esther, leaves little reason to focus upon any future restoration, when the era depicted within the work is already a golden age for Judeans. Though perhaps removed from historical experience, Aristeas envisions a period in which Judea is a theocratic state (governed by the high priest), and enjoys the splendor of its biblical depictions, being described as a land of milk, honey, and abundance.

4.3.4. Jannes and Jambres

Inspired by the court contest of Moses and Aaron with the court magicians of Egypt from Exodus 7:8-9:12 (see Chapter Two), Jannes and Jambres is a fascinating Jewish court tale that focuses upon the lives and exploits of two foreign magician brothers, Jannes and Jambres. The work stands in contrast with the other Jewish tales that focus upon the wisdom of Hebrew courtiers, and instead highlights the folly of the Egyptian magicians. Notably, Israel has a long history of speculating about the lives of their enemies. For example, Numbers 22-24 features the diviner, Balaam, who is hired to curse Israel. Wisdom 5 recounts the inner thoughts and regrets of "the wicked", and Esther describes the inner workings of Haman's devious machinations against the Jews of Persia. In Jannes and

Jambres, the brothers are lampooned in their capacity as court magicians and depicted as too foolish to recognize the special significance of their Hebrew counterparts.

Only a few fragments of Jannes and Jambres have been preserved in Latin and Greek.[427] The Septuagint had a profound influence upon Second Temple literature composed in Greek. Accordingly, apparent Semitisms within the work are more likely to derive from the author's familiarity with Septuagintal language.[428] Evidence that the work was originally composed in Greek includes the Greek manuscripts' employment of the historical present and the particle *te* as a connective for coordinate clauses.[429] Due to the fragmentary nature of the work, it has been notoriously difficult to date. Literary references to traditions about the magicians, Jannes and Jambres, can be found as early as the first century BCE in the Damascus Document 5.17-19. Subsequent references to Jannes and Jambres are present within 2 Timothy 3:8-9 (early second century CE), Pliny the Elder's (23-79 CE) *Natural History* 30.2.11, Talmud Menaḥ. 85a, and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (Exod 1:15; 7:11; and Num 22:22). These references evidence long and widespread traditions about Jannes and Jambres that developed through the late Second Temple period.[430] The earliest extant manuscript of the text, Pap. Vindob. G 29 456, dates to the third century CE, and Origen (c. 185 CE-c. 254 CE) mentions an apocryphal book of Jannes

[427] For a codicological history of the work, see: A. Pietersma and R. T. Lutz, "Jannes and Jambres," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; vol. 2 of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1985), 431-2.
[428] Klaus Koch, for instance, proposes the existence of an Aramaic original of Jannes and Jambres. See Klaus Koch, "Das Lamm, das Ägypten vernichtet. Ein Fragment aus Jannes und Jambres und sein geschichtlicher Hintergrund," *ZNW* 57.1-2 (1966): 79-93.
[429] On Jannes and Jambres' Greek language origins, see: Pietersma and Lutz, "Jannes and Jambres," 432.
[430] M. McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch,* AnBib 27 (Rome, 1966), 82-96.

and Jambres. Thus, the third century CE serves as the *terminus ante quem* for the work. The extant form of the work is Christian, and much of the work is a confession (*poenitentia*), a genre adopted by early Christians and not by early Jews.[431] However, the references listed above suggest that an earlier Jewish version underlies the work. The extant manuscripts of Jannes and Jambres lack any explicit reference to distinctive Christian theological features, and evidence Jewish literary features, including court conflict and healing motifs.[432]

The story of Jannes and Jambres takes place prior to the conquest of Canaan, and a major focus of the work is life in Egypt. The Pharaoh's court features as the setting of the account, and the lead character, Jannes, is said to be among the wise men and magicians of the court, the latter of which, as demonstrated earlier in this dissertation, feature prominently as heroes in the Egyptian tales and as adversaries in several Jewish tales.[433] Jannes, along with the other wise men and magicians, is summoned before the Pharaoh to witness a miraculous tree. The tree is damaged by a sudden heavenly earthquake, and Jannes withdraws to consult his magic books (presumably to find a means to restore the tree). At a certain point, Jannes and Jambres come into conflict with Moses and Aaron. Heavenly messengers inform Jannes that the LORD is (the) Overseer, and that Jannes will

[431] Pietersma and Lutz, "Jannes and Jambres," 433, and 435-6.
[432] Scholars have suggested the presence of two Christian theological allusions in the text: 1) Fragment B of the Vienna papyrus l. 8 includes the word *chiazein*, which has the meaning "to cross out", but has been taken as a possible reference to Jesus' crucifixion; and 2) Chester Beatty 23e recto, l. 2 refers to one who descended to Hades, which could be a reference to the descent of Christ. However, neither of these possible Christian allusions are evident, and are only speculatory at best. See Pietersma and Lutz, "Jannes and Jambres," 433.
[433] The "wise men" and the "magicians" also feature prominently in other Jewish tales (cf. Gens 41:8, 24; Dan 1:20; 2:2, 5 12-4, 10, 18, 21, 24, 27, 48; 4:6-7, 9, 18; 5:7-8, 11, 15; *GA* 20:18-20; and Jannes and Jambres).

die. Jannes (and his mother) is afflicted by an ulcer, but is unable to heal himself.[434] Jannes' inability to heal himself is ironic, and subverts expectations of the court tales, which is evident when one recalls the other Jewish healing tales wherein the Hebrew courtier heals someone from affliction (cf. Dan 4, 4QPrNab ar, 1QapGen ar cols. 19-20, and Tob 11). Jannes succumbs to his illness, but notes that he has been rightfully punished, and acknowledges God's sovereignty over the foreign court. Granted the work's reliance upon the Exodus account, one assumes that Moses and Aaron emerge victorious from their conflict with Jannes (and Jambres), as they emerge victorious in Exodus 7:8-9:12 from the conflict with the magicians.

Jannes and Jambres offers a polemical "window" into the lives of foreign courtiers from a distinctively Jewish vantage point. The work evidences an 'ethnic perspective' by highlighting the comedically futile (mis)deeds of the bumbling Egyptian court magicians, Jannes and Jambres, and their conflict with the Hebrews, Moses and Aaron. There are no redeeming Egyptian figures in the text; rather, the text establishes a general antagonism between the "Egyptians" and the "Hebrews". The effect of this literary strategy highlights the superiority of the Hebrew courtiers over their Egyptian counterparts by lampooning the latter. This is the case with Jannes' inability to continue imitating Moses' miracles. This is also the case with Jannes' inability to heal himself. Jannes' conflict with Moses and Aaron, and his eventual death, ultimately serve to highlight the victory of the God of Israel over the idolatrous practices of the Egyptian magicians.

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[434] Notably, affliction by illness features in other Jewish court healing tales (cf. 4QPrNab ar, frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3, l. 3 and 1QapGen ar 20.16-17).

While the literary setting of the Book of Exodus would suggest that the Hebrews leave Egypt following the extant portions of the narrative of Jannes and Jambres, the question arises regarding how the text depicts Jewish life in Egypt. Though the text does not focus explicitly upon a future restoration, the tale presents a bleak existence for Jewish life in Egypt, with the Egyptians depicted as idolatrous adversaries to the Hebrews, who only repent and accept the sovereignty of the God of Israel when faced with death. The problem of exilic life is literarily resolved in this tale by the narrative's reliance upon the exodus story, which concludes with the Hebrews leaving Egypt. The text's Greco-Roman era social setting was no doubt very different, with the exodus story perhaps suggesting that the solution to the contemporary issue of Diasporic life might only be definitively resolved when Jews depart the land of their foreign overlords, as did Moses and Aaron.

4.3.5. Josephus and *the Story of Archelaus (*War *II.111-13 and* Antiquities of the Jews *XVII. 345-348)*

As noted above, Josephus (37 CE-c.100 CE) recounts and reshapes court tales associated with Joseph, Daniel, and Esther in Antiquities to suit his own apologetic purposes. Josephus employs court tale themes and language to describe other historical events. Much like Herodotus' tales, these tales are best described as historicized court tales. The story of Archelaus and the Essene dream interpreter serves as such an example. The account is preserved in two variant versions: The Jewish *War* II. 111-13 and *Antiquities of the Jews* XVII. 345-348. *The Jewish War* (henceforth *War*) dates to about 75 CE, and

outlines the background of the First Jewish-Roman War (66 CE-73 CE).[435] *Antiquities of the Jews* (henceforth *Antiquities*) dates to around 93 or 94 CE, and recounts the history of the Jews with the goal of fostering a deeper appreciation for the Jewish people among Josephus' Gentile audience.[436] Both works were composed in Greek, but an earlier, now lost, edition of *War* was originally composed in Aramaic or Hebrew.[437]

The structure of the story of Archelaus and the Essene follows that of court dream interpretations and begins by recounting how the Jews petitioned Caesar against the rule of Herod Archelaus (23 BCE-c. 18 CE) due to his cruelty. Archelaus has a dream about ears of corn and wheat, which are devoured by oxen, and seeks an interpreter for his dream. None of the professional dream interpreters can provide a satisfactory explanation of the dream, but Simon, an Essene, explains the dream to him, noting that Archelaus should reign as many years as there were ears of corn. Josephus then asserts that following his vision, Archelaus' rule came to a swift end, and he was sent to Vienna (modern Vienne, France) in exile.

Robert Gnuse demonstrates how Archelaus' dream vision is literarily dependent upon the dream visions of the Joseph cycle (Gen 37, 40-41), and probably also Daniel 2 and 4.[438] All three narratives share specific thematic similarities: 1) all are examples of

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[435] Josephus required assistants to compose *War* in Greek and would not have published the work until after 75 CE See Tessa Rajak, *Josephus, the Historian and His Society* (London: Duckworth, 1983), 62.
[436] Josephus himself dates *Antiquities* to the thirteenth year of Emperor Domitian, which situates the work between September 93-September 94 CE Rajak, *Josephus*, 237. On the purpose of the book, see Geza Vermes, & Martin Goodman, *The Essenes According to the Classical Sources* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 50.
[437] Rajak, *Josephus*, 175-6.
[438] Gnuse, "The Jewish Dream Interpreter in a Foreign Court," 29-53. Steve Mason also notes how the episode in *War* 2.111-113 recalls the dream interpretations of Joseph (*Antiquities* 2.64-86) and Daniel (*Ant.* 10.195-

ancient predictive visual-symbolic dreams (and share this pattern); 2) all are paired with another dream (Archelaus' dream is followed by that of his wife, Glaphyra); 3) the images of grain and animals are central to Pharaoh's and Archelaus' dreams; 4) Pharaoh's dreams and the Antiquities version of Archelaus' dreams share a formal termination ("he awoke"; cf. Gen. 41:4, 7); 5) the professional foreign dream interpreters fail to interpret the ruler's dream; 6) a Judean successfully interprets the dream; 7) simple equations are made between the symbols of the dreams and future events; 8) symbolic numbers signify years and eating signifies ill fortune in the interpretations of Pharaoh's and Archelaus' dreams; 9) Simon's interpretation of Archelaus' dream is a judgment against Archelaus, and Daniel's interpretation is a judgement against Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4; and 10) the interpretation provided is followed by an expression of certainty (for e.g., "And it was in this way that he explained the dream." [Ant. XVII.13 347], and "This is its interpretation" [Gen 40:12]; cf. Gen 40:12, 18, 25, 26, 32; and Dan 2:36, 45).[439]

The story of Archelaus also shares specific language with the court tales. Present among the court professionals that Archelaus summons to interpret his dream are the Chaldeans (Χαλδαῖοι) and the diviners (Greek: μάντεις [Josephus]; Aramaic: גזרין), who feature as court rivals in several of the tales discussed above and in Chapter Three (Chaldeans: LXX Dan 1:4; 2:2, 4-5, 2:10; 3:8; 4:7; 5:7, 5:11, 5:30; 9:1, 1 Esd 4:45, and *J.W.* 2.112; diviner, see cf. Dan 2:27; 4:7; 5:7, 11, 4QPrNab ar frgs. 1, 2a, 2b, 3; *J.W.* 2.112;

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210), which Josephus elsewhere recounts. See Steve Mason, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary: Volume 1b Jewish War 2*, Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary 1B (Boston: Brill, 2008), 72, n. 678. Also see Gaia Lembi, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary: 6b Antiquities 12-13*, Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary (Boston: Brill, forthcoming).

[439] Gnuse, "The Jewish Dream Interpreter," 45-48.

Ant. XVII.346).[440] Cows (βόες in *J.W.* 2.112-3; and *Ant.* XVII.345, 347; LXX Gen 41:2-4, 18, 19, 20, and 26-7) and 'ears' (στάχυες in *J.W.* 2.112-3, and *Ant*. XVII. 345, and 347; and in LXX Gen 41:5-7, 22-4, 26-7) feature in both Archelaus' and Pharaoh's dreams. The verb δοκέω ("he supposes") indicates the uncertainty with which Archelaus discerns his vision (*J.W.* 2.112 and *Ant*. XVII.13 345), as it does in Josephus' rephrasing of the chief baker's dream from the Joseph cycle (*Ant*. 2.71, 81).

As noted above, Josephus held the view that exile and restoration were part of an ongoing cycle of divine punishment.[441] This view influences Josephus' accounts of the story of Archelaus and the Essene, wherein Archelaus is punished for his cruelty by being exiled to Vienna. It is noteworthy that Archelaus never became king (and was ever only an ethnarch), yet Josephus notes that Archelaus 'ruled as king' (βασιλεύσειν) (*J.W.* 2.113). Josephus' employment of this verb is a literary flourish, which recalls the role of the great foreign kings of the court tale literature. Indeed, it may be that Josephus treats Archelaus as 'foreign' because, like his father, Herod the Great, Archelaus came from a family of Idumeans who had converted to Judaism. This sentiment is echoed within Josephus' reminder that Herod was accused by Antigonus II Mattathias, a Hasmonean, of being "a half Jew" (*Ant.* 14.403). At the least, Archelaus' Roman support would have been viewed as tantamount to Gentile rule by at least some Judeans. Thus, Archelaus' tyrannical rule

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[440] Note that LXX Daniel transliterates the singular from Aramaic גזר ("diviner) into Greek as γαζαρηνός, while Josephus translates the word as the plural μάντεις (from μάντις). Mason, *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary: 1B Jewish War 2*, 72-3, n. 685. Though the Chaldeans were the southern inhabitants of Babylonia, by the time of Herodotus (1.181, 183), the term "Chaldean" came to refer more specifically to Babylonian priests, who had expertise in occult matters.

[441] Werse, "Exile, Restoration, and the Question of Postexilic," 390-403.

(*Ant*. 14.342) should be read as indicative of the current state of exilic punishment that Josephus believed himself to be living within, wherein mistreatment by foreigners in exile was indicative of God's punishment. Josephus' accounts of Archelaus and the Essene thus serve as a reminder that Archelaus' abuses towards the Jews are indicative of the current state of punishment experienced by Judeans that Josephus believed was symptomatic of his own era.

4.4. Conclusion

The discussion above surveys a number of other Jewish court tales not preserved at Qumran, including Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, the Life of Daniel, Josephus' treatment of Daniel, 1 Esdras 3-4, Hebrew Esther, Greek Esther, the Letter of Aristeas, Jannes and Jambres, and Josephus' story of Archelaus and the Essene. The combined discussions of Chapters Three and Four demonstrate the popularity and diversity of the early Jewish court tales. Most of these tales include an acknowledgment by the foreign king that the God of Israel is sovereign. In other words, the court tales echo the Jewish zeitgeist of the late Second Temple period, which Wisdom 6:1-4 summarizes well:

> Listen, therefore, O kings, and understand; learn, O judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, you that rule over multitudes, and boast of many nations. For your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High; he will search out your works and inquire into your plans.[442]

[442] NRSV.

As in the tales surveyed in Chapter Three, the Judeans of the tales analyzed in this chapter thrive in exile, though they are faced with adversity at times. Several of these tales—1 Esdras, Josephus' writings, and Jannes and Jambres—echo the Deuteronomic sentiment that exile is a state of punishment, which involves a loss of the Temple, subjugation to foreign rulers, and adversity from other peoples. For these tales, some sort of restoration is oft necessary to resolve the punishment of exile, but such restoration is not uniform among these tales. In Jannes and Jambres, the problem of exile is resolved by its literary setting—that is Moses and Aaron lead the people out of Egypt. 1 Esdras offers a different solution, wherein the events of the court tales (1 Esd 3-4) serve as a catalyst to a restoration within the tale itself. By contrast, Josephus envisions a different schema, in which punishment, exile, and restoration are stages of a repeatable pattern.

By contrast, Esther, Aristeas, and Bel and the Dragon are less concerned about the prospect of a restoration from exile. Esther, for instance, addresses the problem of exile by demonstrating that a Hebrew monarch (Esther), along with a Hebrew vizier (Mordecai), exhibit control over the Persian empire. Aristeas, by contrast, envisions a period in which Israel appears to have already been reconstituted, and those living in the Diaspora are emancipated. Jews throughout the Mediterranean Basin, thus, enjoy an idyllic age in Aristeas, with a *de facto* restoration forming the implicit background of the tale. Finally, Bel and the Dragon espouses yet another view, whereby a continuity exists between the Jewish experience in Judea and in exile, with little indication of a concern for a Judean return from exile.

In the following and final chapter, I focus in on those tales discussed in Chapters Three and Four that envision a future restoration, and I consider how these works enmesh apocalyptic themes within their court settings, a unique trait among the Jewish tales. I also consider the historical context that served as the background and catalyst for the composition, development, and proliferation of the Jewish tales. As in Chapter Three, I include the table below to highlight several shared themes among the court tales discussed above.

Table 2: Key Literary Features of the Court Tales not Found among the Dead Sea Scrolls

	Court Conflict	**Dream Interpretation**	**Miraculous Reading**	**Healing**	**Riddle Contest**	**Other Skill**	**Ethnic Perspective**	**Generic Adversary/ies**	**Personal Adversary**	**King Deposed**	**Courtier Receives Special Privileges**
Sus					●				●		
Bel	●						●	●			
Life of Daniel	●						●				
Josephus' Daniel	●	●					●	●		●	●
1 Esd 3-4					●		●				●
Hebrew Esth	●						●	●	●		●
Greek Esth	●	●					●	●	●		●
Let. Aris.			● (Laws translated from Hebrew into Greek)		●		●				
Jan. Jam.	●			● (Attempted)			●		●		
Story of Archelaus		●								● (Archelaus as king)	

Legend

● = Presence of Theme/Motif is Certain

◌ = Presence of Theme/Motif is Likely

◦ = Presence of Theme/Motif is Possible

Table 2: Key Literary Features of the Court Tales not Found among the Dead Sea Scrolls

	King's Insomnia	**Courtier Receives Royal Gifts**	**Courtier Granted Political Authority**	**King Acknowledges God's Sovereignty**	**Former Deeds of the Courtier Referenced**	**Family of the Courtier Referenced**	**The Rage of the King**	**Succession of Kings**	**Four Kingdoms**	**Eschatological Kingdom**
Sus										
Bel			●	●				●		
Life of Daniel	●				●					
Josephus' Daniel	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●
1 Esd 3-4	●	●	●	●		●				
Hebrew Esth	●	●	●			●	●			
Greek Esth	●	●	●			●	●			
Let. Aris.		●		●	● (Presumed)					
Jan. Jam.					● (Presumed)	●				
Story of Archelaus						●				

Legend

● = Presence of Theme/Motif is Certain

◌ = Presence of Theme/Motif is Likely

◦ = Presence of Theme/Motif is Possible

CHAPTER FIVE

THE JEWISH COURT TALES AND THEIR WORLDVIEW

5.1. Introduction

The well-known axiom that "history is written by the victors" reminds us that our literary sources about the past are limited, subject to the worldviews, memories, ideologies, and interpretations of events of those who wrote them. The Jewish communities that composed the court tales were dispossessed, disenfranchised, forced into situations of foreign subjugation, and left without a king of their own, hardly the inheritors of vast political empires. Dissimilar from the ancient Near Eastern court tales, the Jewish heroes featured in the court tales are generally courtiers seeking favor before (in)famous foreign kings. Yet, despite these inequities, the communities that composed the Jewish court tales considered themselves victors. Though the communities behind the court tales were subject to foreign rule and faced an existential crisis, they employed the court tale traditions as a literary means to propose a new understanding of victory, a cultural and religious one. The court tales provided a literary vehicle to demonstrate "what was really going on" during periods of foreign rule. Though the foreign king might rule over a vast empire, he was still ultimately subject to the sovereignty of the God of Israel and beholden to the Judean courtier.

As discussed in Chapter One, these Jewish court tales can be grouped together on the premise that they have shared literary settings (the foreign royal court), tropes, and concerns about life in exile. The court tales were a well-attested ancient Near Eastern

literary form, which Jewish scribes of the Second Temple period saw fit to employ as a literary vehicle to convey their own distinctive concerns about life under foreign rule. While a few examples of Jewish court tales had been known to scholars, several previously unknown examples have been discovered among the DSS, extending the list of extant Jewish court tales to include: Genesis 37-50, Exodus 7-9, Daniel 1-6, *4QPseudo-Daniel*$^{a-b}$, *4QFour Kingdoms*, *4QAramaic Apocalypse*, *4QPrayer of Nabonidus*, *4QJews in the Persian Court, GA* 19-20, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, *Life of Daniel*, 1 Esdras 3-4, Esther, Letter of Aristeas, and Jannes and Jambres.

In Chapters Three and Four, I demonstrated how the Jewish court tales frame their victories within the broader context of Israel's narrative of sin, punishment, exile, and restoration. In particular, the court tales respond to the question of what sort of restoration in exile the Judeans should expect to experience, and they assert victory through the demonstration of the personal successes of their featured court heroes, and, in some instances, through communal restoration. In this chapter, I review key findings from the previous chapters, describe the historical contexts within which the court tales sought to evidence their forms of victory, and consider the relationship between the Jewish court tales and apocalyptic literature.

As noted in Chapters One, Three and Four, the communities that composed the Jewish court tales address several existential questions, such as: How could God's elect people be subject to foreign rulers, who (seemingly) did not revere the God of Israel? Had God abandoned his elect people? Was life in exile solely a place of punishment or was it possible to thrive in this context? What might restoration look like for the Judean

communities in the Diaspora? In this way, the themes of sin, punishment, repentance, and restoration were of paramount concern to the Judeans who composed the court tales. Though court tales were a well-established Near Eastern literary tradition as demonstrated in Chapter Two, these themes were atypical of the ancient Near Eastern court tales. Thus, by imbuing the court tales with these themes, the Jewish tales embody uniquely Jewish concerns. As evidenced in Chapters Three and Four, the adoption of this court tale tradition was purposeful, and was utilized as a vehicle to highlight the religious and cultural victories of Jews in exile. The question arises then: What kind of social context would have led to the creative decision in Jewish scribal circles to employ this literary form?

The Jewish court tales share a concern in demonstrating the victories that the Jewish community experience in exile. However, as discussed in Chapters Three and Four, individual tales employ a variety of themes and tropes from the Near Eastern court tales, including court conflict, court contest, skill themes (healing, reading enigmatic writing, etc.). Some tales (particularly those of Josephus) also employ court themes to interpret history, a strategy employed by Herodotus. Some Jewish tales attempt to reimagine famous Hebrew heroes (e.g., 1QapGen ar) as courtiers within imperial court systems, who wield immense power, second only to the foreign king. Other tales feature lesser-known Hebrew courtiers within the context of exile (e.g., Patireza and Bagasraw). Though these various tale clusters evidence variety in their employment of the court tale traditions, they all provide frameworks for understanding the nature of restoration in the context of foreign rule.

5.2. The Adoption of the Court Tales in a Jewish Social Context

While the Jewish tales feature ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian courts, it is the fourth century BCE that evidences a burgeoning production of Jewish court tales. However, Jewish interest in the preservation and transmission of court tales dates back even earlier. Evidence for this is found in the preservation of the Assyrian *Aḥiqar* episode at Elephantine and Aswan, dating to the fifth century BCE.[443] This suggests that Jewish interest in court tales can be traced back to at least the Persian era. Though *Aḥiqar* was originally an Aramean composition, the extant Elephantine edition preserves no overt reference to the religious peculiarities of its titular hero, which is in conformity with other Near Eastern court tales that generally prefer to emphasize the role of the courtier over religious sensibilities. Could *Aḥiqar*'s omission of overt religious concerns have made *Aḥiqar* a more palatable tale to the already syncretistic Jewish community at Elephantine and Aswan, which had made its ways to Egypt as early as the time of the United Monarchy?[444]

A brief discussion of Jewish life at Elephantine provides an example of a social setting, wherein Judeans found it fit to exhibit and preserve court tales such as *Aḥiqar*. The administrative documents found at Elephantine demonstrate that its Judean community-maintained relations with their kin in Samaria and Yehud, who occasionally attempted to exert religious and social influence over them, as suggested, for example, by their attempt to guide the Elephantine Jewish community's practice of Passover (cf. "The Passover Letter" in *TAD* A4.1). As noted earlier in this dissertation, several of the Jewish court tales

[443] See Holm, *Of Courtiers and Kings*, 85.
[444] Cyrus H. Gordon, "The Origin of the Jews in Elephantine," *JNES* 14.1 (1955): 56-58.

emphasize the important relationship between the Judean community which dwells in exile and the community in Yehud. Some from the Judean community at Elephantine served as troops on the southern front, but the region was relatively peaceable and so they would profitably cultivate fields in the region, with some even having become quite wealthy.[445] Following the destruction of the Kingdom of Judah in 597 BCE and the assassination of the Judean governor Gedaliah, many Judeans fled to Egypt (cf. 2 Kgs 25:26, and Jer 43:5-7), suggesting that, for some Judeans, life in Egypt was considered preferable to life in Judea under foreign rule.[446] Accordingly, living in the Diaspora, at least for some Judeans who dwelled in Elephantine and preserved *Aḥiqar*, might be considered a choice, albeit one made under unfavorable political circumstances. Despite a relatively peaceable existence in Egypt, the Jewish community in Elephantine and Aswan also had political enemies. In 401 BCE, the centre of their community, the Temple situated in the fortress of Yeb, was destroyed at the behest of the priests of Khnum (*TAD* A4.7 v.5), evidencing the precarity of the living conditions in exile.[447] Evidently then, the fortunes of Judean communities in exile could change swiftly under the influence of certain well-positioned hostile foreign officials. A key to Judean survival in exile would be to wield political influence and power.

[445] Karel van der Toorn, Karel, *Becoming Diaspora Jews: Behind the Story of Elephantine*, ABRL (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2019), 93.
[446] Bob Becking, *From David to Gedaliah: The Book of Kings as Story and History*, OBO 228 (Fribourg, Switzerland: Academic Press Fribourg/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 173. Notably, van der Toorn speculates that the community at Elephantine was founded prior to this time. See van der Toorn, *Becoming Diaspora Jews*, 90.
[447] Reinhard G. Kratz**,** "Arameans and Judeans: Ethnography and Identity at Elephantine," in *Israel in Egypt: The Land of Egypt as Concept and Reality for Jews in Antiquity and the Early Medieval Period*, eds. Alison Salvesen, Sarah Pearce, and Miriam Frenkel, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 56–85.

The Assyrian *Aḥiqar* episode evidently appealed to the Jewish community at Elephantine, whose degree of autonomy remains a matter of debate.[448] Similarly, the Assyrian *Aḥiqar* episode highlights the precarity experienced by the courtier, Aḥiqar, a foreigner in Assyria, whose fortunes suddenly turn, is sought to be killed and is later reinstated again. Both Aḥiqar and the Jewish community at Elephantine experienced a rollercoaster of success, alongside persecution.[449] The eclectic cultural nature of Elephantine made it an apt locale for the Judean community to encounter *Aḥiqar*, as well as Egyptian court tale traditions featuring famous magicians, as discussed in Chapter Two. At a minimum, the presence of *Aḥiqar* at Elephantine evidences a Diasporic Jewish community's interest in and familiarity with ancient Near Eastern court tale literature as early as the fifth century BCE and suggests that something would have seemed relatable and compelling in those works to Judean exilic audiences in this period.

5.3. The Jewish Court Tale Worldview: Exile, Foreign Rule, and Ahistoricism

Chapters Three and Four noted that the shared literary features in the Jewish court tales suggest a distinctive underlying 'court tale' worldview (or *Weltanschauung*). A worldview consists of a community's fundamental belief system, by which that community understands and interprets the world, experiences, and reality. On a fundamental level, worldviews address concerns regarding what is, what was, what will be, what is good and

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[448] Alison Salvesen, Sarah Pearce, and Miriam Frenkel, "Introduction," in *Israel in Egypt: The Land of Egypt as Concept and Reality for Jews in Antiquity and the Early Medieval Period*, eds. Alison Salvesen, Sarah Pearce, and Miriam Frenkel, Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 4.

[449] On Aḥiqar's success, persecution, and subsequent vindication. See Niditch and Doran, "The Success Story," 182-5.

what is evil, how to act, and what is true and false.[450] The worldview espoused within the Jewish court tales is eclectic, having been influenced by the diverse court tale literary traditions of the ancient Near East, as well as by the inherited traditions of Israel. Some constituent elements that comprise the Jewish court tale worldview that I discuss here include: 1) a pragmatic view of life in exile in the present; 2) a framework for understanding and interpreting why foreign kings rule; and 3) ahistoricism, which evidences a lack of concern with historiographic detail and instead highlights particular periods of Judean prosperity and decline. This Jewish court tale worldview was found to inform both the court tales preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as among other Jewish court tales not preserved among the DSS.

Carol Newsom has discussed the role of hybridity within the Danielic traditions.[451] In this context, hybridity can be understood as the mixing of elements of various cultural traditions by the colonized, even if resulting in the upholding of seemingly contradictory notions. For example, Daniel evidences ideological and theological resistance against foreign rule, yet one that, simultaneously, attempts to undermine foreign rule by appealing to its power. In this way, Daniel exhibits a degree of accommodationism, alongside of its attempt to resist complete assimilation. Newsom's work on hybridity in Daniel has some important implications for understanding the worldview of the court tales more generally.

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[450] Clément Vidal, "Wat is een werelbeeld? (What Is a Worldview?)" in *Nieuwheid denken. De wetenschappen en het creatieve aspect van de werkelijkheid*, eds. H. Van Belle, and J. Van der Veken (Leuven: Acco, 2008), 3-5.

[451] Carol A. Newsom, ""Resistance is Futile!": The Ironies of Danielic Resistance to Empire," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 71.2 (2017): 167-77.

Chapter One outlined a history of the different ways that exile had been presented within the inherited literature of ancient Israel. In this survey, three distinctive views of exile emerged: 1) exile as a form of punishment for disobedience, with several texts also hoping for a possible future restoration; 2) a pragmatic view of exile, whereby Judeans are encouraged to settle down in exile until an eventual restoration; and 3) the view that having a Judean presence in exile is politically, socially and religiously advantageous on an international level. The most well-attested of these views is that living in exile is a form of punishment caused by Israel's disobedience towards God and transgression of his covenants. This interpretation of exile is found in much of the literature that bears Deuteronomic and Priestly influence. Underlying this perspective is a sentiment that the zenith of Israel's political and religious existence resides in the past, while exile is indicative of a state of decline. Sometimes this view is coupled with a hope of a future restoration when Israel will repent and be restored (cf. Deut 30:1-4).[452]

Other works, such as Jeremiah 29:4-10, provide a set timeline for a restoration—in this case seventy years—and simultaneously espouse a pragmatic solution to the problem of exile: settle down and adapt to exilic life. In this case, the focus is not on the community's distant future (restoration), but rather upon their present survival.[453] While Jeremiah proffered a specific timeline regarding exile and a future restoration, other prophetic writings are more ambiguous about the specifics of a possible restoration.[454]

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[452] Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomic Historical Work," 99-100. This is the only instance in the Deuteronomic historical work that refers to a specific return to the land.
[453] Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 342-367.
[454] Rom-Shiloni, "Deuteronomic Concepts of Exile Interpreted in Jeremiah and Ezekiel," 101-123.

By the time of the Persian era, some Judeans had already experienced a return to Israel.[455] Others, who had been living in exile for many years, would continue to do so. The eastern exilic community became physically and ideologically divided, with some Judeans returning to Israel and others choosing to continue to live in exile.[456] Ezra-Nehemiah proffered a new view regarding exile, recognizing that having Judeans living both in Israel and in the Diaspora was advantageous. The dispersed Judeans within the ancient Near East had developed an international social network.[457] Some Judeans had aspired to positions of prominence within the Persian administrative system, such as Nehemiah (fl. 465-424 BCE) who had risen to the rank of 'cupbearer' to the king.[458] Such well-placed Judeans had the potential to help provide resources and political advantages for those attempting to restore Judea, as depicted in 1 Esdras 3-4 where the reestablishment of the Temple cult hinges on the success of the courtier, Zerubbabel.[459]

The court tales offer a variety of responses to the problem of exile: 1) some depict exile as a long-term situation wherein pious Judeans can thrive and are protected by the God of Israel; 2) some highlight the significance of the actions of the exilic Judean community for national and cultic efforts at restoration; and 3) others are more focused on

[455] Kessler, "The Diaspora in Zechariah 1-8 and Ezra-Nehemiah," 119-45.
[456] Gary N. Knoppers, "Exile, Return, and Diaspora: Expatriates and Repatriates in Late Biblical Literature." in *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts*, ed. Louis C. Jonker, Forschungen zur Alten Testaments II 53 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2011), 29-61, here 47-53.
[457] Knoppers, "The Construction of Judean Diasporic Identity," 20.
[458] There were two types of 'cupbearers'—those who held the royal office of 'cupbearer to the king', which was usually held by members of the royal family, and 'cupbearers' who served the king at his table but were not considered Persian nobility. Nehemiah seems to have been the latter, which would still have granted him special access to the king. See Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second: volume 1: Yehud A History of the Persian Province of Judah*, LSTS (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 295.
[459] Fried, "Why the Story of the Three Youths in 1 Esdras," 83-92.

future restoration. In those tales where exile is depicted as a long-term situation, attention is often shifted away from Jerusalem (cf. Hebrew Esth) and, instead, is focused on the ongoing prosperity that can be experienced by Judeans in exile. This perspective is a striking departure from earlier interpretations of exile as a place of punishment. Still other court tales, particularly those imbued with apocalyptic themes, employ the court setting as a means to discuss a future national restoration.

In the court tales, exile serves as a locus in time, closely associated with the ongoing relationship between the Judean courtiers and the God of Israel. An important consideration in this relationship is the status of the community's past, present, and future: can Judeans thrive in exile as they had in Israel, or is a future national restoration necessary? In order to facilitate their analysis of the relationship between diaspora and restoration, the court tales literarily situate their narratives within well-known experiences of exile from Israel's past (Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian). In employing this literary setting, the court tales are generally less interested in historiography than in providing a theological explanation for the experience of foreign rule. In this capacity, the court tales, with few exceptions, can be described as ahistorical, focusing on the deeds of emblematic heroes of the community and less so upon mundane historical reconstruction. Daniel 1:1-2, for instance, situates the text within the third year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, yet is less interested in historical accuracy than in conveying God's role in the Babylonian exile (delivering Jehoiakim to the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar).[460] Another example of the court tales' ahistoricism is Daniel 5's reference to King Belshazzar as the son of

[460] Valeta, "Court or Jester Tales?" 317.

Nebuchadnezzar. In reality, Belshazzar was the son of the last Neo-Babylonian king, Nabonidus, and never actually became king.[461]

Just as the court tales employ creative license in their ahistorical depictions of exile, so too do they recharacterize the monarchs featured within them. The court tales are particularly interested in famous kings of the past, such as Nebuchadnezzar, rather than outlining the proceedings of lesser-known ones. As discussed in Chapter Three, *4QPrayer of Nabonidus* stands out in this regard. Though Daniel 4 may not be directly literarily influenced by *4QPrayer of Nabonidus*, it lacks some of the details surrounding Nabonidus' exile, opting instead to feature the more famous Nebuchadnezzar.[462] Darius the Mede, featured in Daniel 5-6, is not even an historical king.[463] Indeed, the employment of symbolic ciphers for foreign rulers is a common feature in this literature.[464] As noted in Chapter Three, at the heart of these tales is not only their own worldview, but also the tension that is set-up between conflicting foreign worldviews. The court tales challenge the perception that the foreign king or any false god has sovereignty over the exiled Judeans or the God of Israel.[465]

By extension, the depictions of kings in the court tales are rather simplistic, generally providing few historical details regarding their rule. Instead, the inclusion of these

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[461] Valeta, "Court or Jester Tales?" 317-8.
[462] Collins, "4QPrayer of Nabonidus ar," DJD XXII, 86.
[463] Harold H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel: A Historical Study of Contemporary Theories* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1935). However, the Persian King Darius may serve as a model for this figure. See Smith-Christopher, "Daniel," 88. Another proposal is that Darius is a composite figure. See Lester L. Grabbe, "Another Look at the Gestalt of 'Darius the Mede,'" *CBQ* 50 (1988): 213.
[464] Collins, *Daniel*, 166-170; and Valeta, "Court or Jester Tales," 318.
[465] Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 20, & 42.

rulers serves the literary purpose of either being supportive of the Judean courtiers, or antagonistic towards the Judean courtiers. Moreover, the examples of the foreign rulers fit into an overarching pattern, which explains the conditions that permit foreign rulers to have authority. Those kings that acknowledge the sovereignty of the God of Israel are permitted to live and rule. These kings are generally benevolent towards their Hebrew courtiers, grant them gifts, and provide them with special privileges. Those rulers that do not acknowledge the God of Israel are swiftly deposed. Moreover, they are depicted as inept, foolish, unaware of their courtiers' conspiracies, and quick to anger.[466] These portrayals address the underlying question regarding why foreign rulers are permitted to rule over Judeans; in particular, they are permitted to rule if they acknowledge the sovereignty of the God of Israel. The resulting effect serves to reinforce the worldview that the God of Israel is in control, even in instances of foreign rule. As Alexandria Frisch notes: "[i]t isn't that imperial power aligns with divine power—there is no imperial power without God."[467] Moreover, this explanation of the conditions that permit for foreign rule also provide a model for the present and future rulers. Those rulers who do not acknowledge the sovereignty of God will be deposed, while those who do acknowledge God's sovereignty are permitted to rule. As Carol Newsom notes "The very mechanism of the king's confession serves to legitimate the empire's claims to power."[468]

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[466] Michael Chan, "*Ira Regis*: Comedic Reflections of Royal Rage in Jewish Court Tales," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 103.1 (2013): 1-25; and Newsom, ""Resistance is Futile!"," 167-77; Valeta, "Court or Jester Tales?" 310. Valeta notes that the humour, particularly the use of satire, in Daniel 1-6 is a form of resisting the oppressive foreign realities that the community of Daniel 1-6 faced.

[467] Alexandria Frisch, *The Danielic Discourse on Empire in Second Temple Literature*, JSJSup 176, (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017), 112.

[468] Newsom, ""Resistance is Futile!" 171.

Another element that informs the worldview within these texts is the ongoing protection of Hebrew courtiers by the God of Israel. The characterization of the courtiers is also relatively simple—the Hebrew hero demonstrates greater wisdom and skill over their foreign counterparts and piety towards God despite adversity.[469] Though the ancient Near Eastern tales depict the courtiers as largely functioning via their own personal agency and wisdom, the Jewish court tales generally emphasize that their deeds should be attributed to the God of Israel. Even in seemingly dire circumstances, where the Hebrew courtiers are persecuted and perhaps even at risk of being killed, God protects them from foreign kings, rival courtiers, and other forms of adversity. In this manner, the court tales suggest that Judeans can aspire to heights of prominence and influence within foreign imperial administrative systems. The prosperity of these Diasporic Judeans evidences a continuity of the protection experienced by the heroes of Israel's past.

Accordingly, the Jewish tales propose a theological solution to the interrelated problems of exile and foreign rule (Ptolemaic, Seleucid, and Roman) for their Greco-Roman era Jewish audiences.[470] Foreign rule is temporary and endures if rulers acknowledge the sovereignty of the God of Israel, and God permits them to have authority.

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[469] Valeta, "Court or Jester Tales," 321-2.

[470] Some, such as Lester Grabbe, still maintain that, despite its various reconstructive issues, "one of the best overall studies on Palestine in the Ptolemaic period remains Victor Tcherikover's 1937 article in the long-defunct journal *Mizraim*." Lester L. Grabbe, "The Ptolemaic Period: A Dark Age in Jewish History?" in *Times of Transition: Judea in the Early Hellenistic Period*, eds. Sylvie Honigman, Christophe Nihan, and Oded Lipschits. Mosaics: Studies on Ancient Israel 1 (Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns, 2021), 27. See Victor A. Tcherikover, "Palestine under the Ptolemies (a Contribution to the Study of the Zenon Papyri)," *Mizraim* 4-5 (1937): 9-90.

Meanwhile, faithful Judeans are protected from harm and rewarded with positions of authority and other magnificent gifts for the display of their skill and wisdom.

5.4. The Decline of the Jewish Court Tales

None of the extant Jewish court tales postdates the First Jewish-Roman War (67-74 CE), which resulted in the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans, the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE), as well as the destruction of Qumran and defeat of Masada (73 CE).[471] The war was devastating for the Jews of Judea. Along with the destruction of the Temple, the administrative authority of the Sanhedrin disappeared, as did the Sadducean, Essene, and Zealot parties.[472] The Pharisees, who survived the war, were forced to adapt to a radically new social situation and would gradually develop into Rabbinic Judaism.[473] While Jewish literary production continued after the war, the composition of Jewish court tales did not, signaling that a shift had occurred by the time of the First Jewish-Roman War—the influence of the Jewish court tale worldview was waning.

The decline of Jewish court tale production in the Roman era leads to some important considerations: Why did the production of this literature decline in this period after having enjoyed several centuries of popularity?[474] Given the presence of a vibrant Jewish literary production during this period and beyond, it stands to reason that the court tales diminished in popularity in the Roman period. This is supported by the fact that many

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[471]Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 61.
[472] Peter J. Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2003), 132.
[473] Schäfer, *the History of the Jews*, 133.
[474] Though several issues regarding the religious, cultural, and political status of late Second Temple Period Judaism remain debated, for a general introduction please see Schafer, *The History of the Jews*.

Jewish court tales (*Pseudo-Daniel*$^{a\text{-}b}$, *Pseudo-Daniel*^{c}, *Four Kingdoms*, *Aramaic Apocalypse*, *Prayer of Nabonidus*, *Tales of the Persian Court*, and *GA*) do not seem to have been transmitted following the destruction of Qumran in the late first century CE. Had the court tale worldview become less compelling? Was this worldview no longer viewed as a viable solution to the experiences of living under foreign rule? The international politics surrounding the fourth-first centuries BCE had been tumultuous, with the Judeans, Judea and surrounding regions changing hands between foreign rulers many times. Presumably by the end of the first century CE, the prospect of living peaceably under foreign rule either no longer seemed desirable or possible. The Jewish revolt against the Romans (66-73 CE) seems to support this hypothesis in so far as many Judeans sought radical socio-political change. What made the Jewish experience during the Roman era particularly unique, such that the narratives of the court tales became less compelling?

Surely no one factor would have led to the decline and eventual cessation of the composition of new Jewish court tales; however, I contend that three of the most significant contributing factors to this literary shift include: 1) the end of the Jewish monarchical systems; 2) the erosion of Jewish autonomy; and 3) growth in the popularity of apocalyptic literature. I begin with the downfall of the Jewish monarchies. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, many heroes featured within the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean court tales were of royal birth (e.g., *Setne I* and *II*, and the Croesus tales preserved within Herodotus' *Histories*).[475] Similarly, some of the Jewish court tales feature Israelite courtiers of royal descent: Daniel and his friends are members of the "royal family" (ומזרע המלוכה) (Dan 1:3),

[475] Wills, *The Jew in the Court*, 20.

Mordecai and Esther are descendants of Saul (Hebrew Esth), Zerubbabel is the grandson of King Jehoiachin (1 Esd 3-4), and Archelaus is the son of Herod the Great (*J.W. II.111-13*, and *Ant. XVII.* 345-348). As demonstrated in Chapter Four, Hebrew Esther and 1 Esdras 3-4 include hopeful overtones regarding monarchic restoration, while Archelaus is depicted as a king. With the Davidic monarchy having come to an end with Zedekiah in 586 BCE, the foreign court featured within the court tales serves as a suitable literary setting to explore the continued influence of defunct ethnic monarchies.

By the end of the second century BCE, the Hasmonean dynasty was established when Simon, the son of Mattathias, became the first Hasmonean prince (142-135 BCE). Although life under Hasmonean rule was a mixed experience, the emergence of this royal line would have certainly renewed hope and kindled aspirations for many Judeans. Continued interest in royal succession is evident within the court tales until at least 142 BCE (during the Hasmonean Simon's tenure as high priest), as is evidenced by the fragmentary list of royal succession contained in *Pseudo-Daniel*^{c}, frg. 1 col. I, which unfortunately breaks off after the mention of King Joash. The relatively short-lived rule of the Hasmonean (142-37 BCE) and subsequent Herodian (37-4 BCE) dynasties would have been devastating for their supporters and others sympathetic towards the establishment of a Jewish monarchy. With the decline of the Hasmonean and later the Herodian dynasties, little room was left for speculation regarding their continued influence within foreign courts. Herod killed several of the remaining Hasmoneans.[476] The downfall of the

[476] Nadav Sharon, *Judea under Roman Domination: The First Generation of Statelessness and Its Legacy*, Early Judaism and Its Literature 46 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 164-5; and Frisch, *The Danielic Discourse on Empire in Second Temple Literature*, 181.

Hasmonean monarchy would have been particularly traumatic for those who associated them with restorative hopes.[477]

Closely intertwined with the downfall of these monarchies is a second factor that would lead to further decline of Jewish court tale production—the gradual destabilization of Judean autonomy. The Hasmoneans had established an autonomous state, centered around Jerusalem (164 BCE).[478] Undoubtedly, this would have proved to be a momentous turn of affairs for the Judeans who had not experienced national autonomy since the sixth century BCE. Jerusalem was refortified, and the Temple was cleansed. Judea experienced a religious renewal. No longer would the ancestral laws be challenged by foreign rule. Following the death of Antiochus IV, the state would be expanded, and non-Jews were expelled.[479] For instance, Josephus recounts that John Hyrcanus conquered Idumaea in 140-130 BCE, forcing the Idumaeans to adhere to Jewish law or be expelled (Josephus, *Ant.* XIII. 9, § 1; 11, § 3). Indeed, the Hasmonean state grew to its greatest extent in 103-76 BCE during the rule of Alexander Jannaeus. Jewish autonomy, however, would be challenged in 65 BCE when Pompey marched upon Jerusalem and placed Judea under the governorship of Scaurus, leaving Judea in a state between self-determination and integration into the Roman provincial system.[480] Following the death of Herod the Great, Herod's kingdom was split up between Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip, further dividing the

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[477] J. W. van Henten, "The Hasmonean Period," in *Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity*, eds. Markus N. A. Bockmuehl and James Carleton Paget (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 15-28.
[478] Schäfer, *The History of the Jews*, 66.
[479] John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE-117 CE)*, HCS 33 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 249.
[480] Schäfer, *The History of the Jews*, 78.

former Hasmonean kingdom. Moreover, Judean self-determination would be further weakened following the First Jewish-Roman War (66-73 CE), particularly with the fall of Jerusalem.[481]

I now turn to a third factor that led to the decline of Jewish court tale production: the growth in the popularity of Jewish apocalyptic literature.[482] While the oldest extant Jewish apocalyptic literature developed in the third century BCE (cf. 1 En 1-36), apocalyptic literature experienced further development and proliferation during the Seleucid period of the second century BCE.[483] While much of the Enochic apocalyptic literature of the third century BCE had been focused on heavenly ascent, the second century experienced an influx of "historical apocalyptic literature."[484] As noted above, many Jewish court tales establish a favorable view of exile with Hebrew courtiers rising to positions of prominence in foreign courts, with little indication whether a restoration for Jerusalem is on the horizon. Other Jewish court tales, however, were imbued with apocalyptic themes and eschatological fervor. The impetus of those court themes to focus on success in the 'present' seemingly stand in tension with the eschatological focus of apocalyptic literature. As John Collins notes "apocalypses, however, involve a transcendent eschatology that looks for retribution beyond the bounds of history."[485] For instance, *Pseudo-Daniel*$^{a\text{-}b}$,

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[481] Schäfer, *The History of the Jews*, 128.
[482] I refer to the growth in popularity of the so-called Jewish "historical apocalyptic literature". See John J. Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses," in *Apocalypse: Morphology of a Genre*, ed. by John J. Collins, SemeiaSt 14 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 21-59.
[483] Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*.
[484] On apocalypses of ascent, see Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). For a discussion of historical and heavenly ascent type apocalypses, see Collins, "The Jewish Apocalypses," 21-59.
[485] Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 11.

Four Kingdoms, and *Aramaic Apocalypse*, contain references to the establishment of an eschatological kingdom, while other court tales, such as Daniel and Esther, were supplemented with apocalyptic imagery.[486] In the latter works, Daniel and Mordecai (and Ezra in 2 Esdras), who had already been established as skilled courtiers by the second century BCE, are reimagined as apocalyptic visionaries. The production of new apocalyptic literature continued into the second century BCE-onwards, and Judean court heroes such as Daniel, Mordecai, and Ezra, thus became the mouthpieces of eschatological visions.

Surely, the fact that so many of the court tales remained mum on the prospect of a national restoration would have no longer been acceptable for many Judeans following the Antiochian persecutions of the second century BCE. This extreme suffering under gentile rule needed to be addressed in a new way to maintain the relevance of the court tales in the transitionary social era of the second century BCE. Imbuing the court tales with visions of eschatological restoration would help to support that need. Tales of relative tolerance (such as Dan 2,4-5, *4QPrNab ar*, 1 Esdras, and Aristeas) were less suitable when faced with foreign rulers of the likes of Antiochus IV, who would dare affront the Jerusalem Temple following the Sixth Syrian War (170-168).[487] This drastic escalation in tensions between Jews and their foreign rulers would naturally lead to a growth in popularity of less tolerant frameworks of understanding towards foreign rule, as evidenced by the eschatological

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[486] While there does exist a broader tradition of employing court imagery within apocalyptic literature, this dissertation is primarily concerned with those works most closely associated with the court tale literature (Dan, *4QPseudo-Dan$^{a\text{-}b}$*, *4QPseudo-Dan^{c}*, *4QapocrDan ar*, Greek Esth, and Tob). See Philip Francis Esler, *God's Court and Courtiers in the Book of the Watchers: Re-Interpreting Heaven in 1 Enoch 1-36* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2017).

[487] Anathea Portier-Younge, *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2014), 126.

interpretations of the four kingdom schemas of Daniel 2 and 7. Thus, the inclusion of eschatological apocalyptic themes is another unique contribution of the Jewish tales, since few of the ancient Near Eastern texts evidence apocalypticism.

Many Jewish court tales emphasized that obedience to the God of Israel would result in the protection of the individual in situations of foreign adversity, yet those infused with apocalyptic themes promised a coming collective restoration, free from foreign interference. While the Jewish court tales offer a variety of responses to the problem of exile and restoration, the production of apocalyptic literature outlasted the production of court tales, continuing for at least another hundred years into the second century CE.[488] This suggests that while the court tales' responses to the problems of foreign rule, exile, and restoration became less compelling by the latter half of the first century CE, eschatological responses to these problems in the apocalyptic literature became more convincing explanations in this period.

5.4.1. Daniel 2 and 7

While the fusing of court tale and apocalyptic themes has already been noted by scholars, it has been limited in scope to particular texts. John Collins, for instance, discusses how the court tales of Daniel inspired many of the themes developed in the later Danielic apocalyptic literature.[489] I have discussed the presence of apocalyptic themes in court tales throughout Chapters Three and Four, and here I present a case study on Daniel 2 and 7, as

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[488] Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 194-232.
[489] Collins, "The Court-Tales in Daniel," 218-234.

an example of the way that apocalyptic concerns became intertwined within the Jewish court tales.

In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of a tall statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, middle and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of clay and iron. A stone strikes the feet, and the entire statue falls apart. The employment of the statue to represent empires suggests that the very institution of empire itself is idolatrous.[490] Daniel reveals that each of these body parts represent the succession of a different kingdom.[491] Following the interpretation, Daniel asserts that: וביומיהון די מלכיא אנון יקים אלה שמיא מלכו די לעלמין לא תתחבל ומלכותה לעם אחרן לא תשתבק תדק ותסיף כל-אלין מלכותא והיא תקום לעלמיא ("And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall this kingdom be left to another people. It shall crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever") (Dan 2:44, NRSV). The text distinctly promises that God will establish a new kingdom that will not be destroyed, that will not be left to another, and will endure forever.[492] In other words, foreign rule will come to a decisive end. The presence of some duplication (in Dan 2:28 and 29) and some glosses (in Dan 2:41-3) suggest that the eschatology of Daniel 2 (באחרית יומיא in 2:28) may be secondary.[493] Another statement emphasizing an eschatological kingdom that shall endure forever is echoed in Daniel 7:18: ויקבלון מלכותא קדישי עליונין ויחסנון מלכותא עד-עלמא ועד עלם עלמיא ("But the holy ones of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the

[490] Newsom, "Resistance is Futile," 175-6.
[491] Collins, *Daniel*, 166.
[492] Smith-Christopher, "Daniel," 55.
[493] Collins, *Daniel*, 154; and Kratz, *Translatio Imperii*, 33-35.

kingdom forever—forever and ever") (NRSV). Whether the eschatology of Daniel 2 represents a later insertion or not, the interpretation of the vision of Daniel 2 is striking given that the narrative of Daniel 2 depicts exile as a tolerable situation, where Jews can thrive, and Daniel 1-6 often depicts a tolerance that allows for foreign rule where those rulers acknowledge the sovereignty of the God of Israel. In other words, the interpretation of the vision seems to be at odds with rest of the narrative of Daniel 1-6.[494] As Justin Pannkuk observes: "once this eschatological schema was injected into the court tale of Dan 2 and took up its place in its generic host, it opened up a new way of conceptualizing the problem of Gentile empire…"[495]

The similarities between the visions of Daniel 2 and 7 are certainly not accidental. The visions of Daniel 2 and 7 would have served as thematic bookends to Daniel 1-7.[496] Both are composed in Aramaic, focus upon Daniel's service to King Nebuchadnezzar in the Babylonian court, concern the interpretation of perplexing visions, and assume a four-kingdom schema to understand the succession of world empires.[497] In this way, the author of Daniel 7 deliberately connects his vision with the material of Daniel 1-6, yet presents a strikingly different socio-religious background with traditional imagery that seem to have its origin in Canaanite mythology (e.g. the introduction of the heavenly court, the concept of the king as God's son, etc.).[498] Nevertheless, Daniel 7 retains the court setting of Daniel

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[494] Newsom, *Daniel*, 63-4.
[495] Justin L. Pannkuk, *King of Kings: God and the Foreign Emperor in the Hebrew Bible* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2021), 201-2.
[496] Collins, *Daniel*, 153-4.
[497] Collins, *Daniel*, 277.
[498] See Rollin Kearns, *Religionsgeschichtliche und Traditionsgeschichtliche Studie zur vorgeschichte eines christologischen Hoheitstitels*, vol. 3 of *Vorfragen zur Christologie* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1982), 3-82; and Collins, *Daniel*, 291-4.

1-6, and assumes that the reader already has a familiarity with Daniel, not providing any introductory explanation regarding his significance. While Daniel's miraculous deeds and accession in the foreign court are the focus of the tales of Daniel 2-6, as a collection, along with Daniel 7, they serve to introduce the conceptual frameworks of the four beasts of the sea and national restoration in the vision of Daniel 7.

Daniel 2 and 7 also share a fourfold structure of time, whereby four foreign kingdoms rise to power and succeed one another.[499] After each kingdom comes to an end, a new kingdom is established. The fourth kingdom, however, will be followed by a fifth and everlasting divine kingdom, which will bring the others to an end.[500] A four-kingdom schema is also present within *4QFour Kingdoms* and represented by four trees.[501] The interpretations provided for the eschatological visions in Daniel 2 and 7 promise that justice and national restoration will be experienced in the future, which stands in tension with those Jewish court tales that focus exclusively upon the prosperity of Judeans in exile. In other words, within Daniel 2 and 7, there is a distinctive shift from the focus of victory in the foreign court experienced by individual Judeans in the present to a communal eschatological restoration.

The concept of time evidenced in Daniel 2 and 7—represented by four kingdoms and the eschatological kingdom of God—provide a new distinctive response to the problems of exile and restoration, and a view that was atypical of the ancient Near Eastern

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[499] Smith-Christopher, "Daniel," 100.
[500] Collins, *Daniel*, 166-70.
[501] Puech, "Les Quatres Royaumes," DJD XXXVII, 64-67, and 78-80.

tales. This segmented conception of time would have been appealing to those living through periods of turbulence, such as the fifth and sixth Syrian wars, providing a schema explaining the ultimate fate of foreign imperial rule. The fact that the vision of Daniel 7 takes place during the time of Belshazzar is interesting, as he received the most negative portrayal among the kings of Daniel 1-6, further suggesting that an eschatological resolution to the problem of exile is particularly apt during periods of tribulation.[502] In summation, Daniel 2 serves to introduce Daniel as an authoritative figure, the four-kingdom schema and the coming eschatological divine kingdom. As a thematic framing device, Daniel 2 establishes Daniel's reputation and authority to deliver the visionary material of Daniel 7. Daniel 7 simultaneously employs court imagery, yet downplays its associated themes, evidencing the growth of interest in apocalyptic frameworks in this period.

Due to the reasons outlined above, Daniel served as an example of a suitable Hebrew court hero to transmit apocalyptic visions pertaining to the relationship between Jews and foreign rulers. By the time of the Antiochian persecutions, there were several Diasporic tales associated with Daniel, which helped to open the door to the production and reception of additional Danielic materials (e.g., Dan 7-12, *4QPseudo-Dan*$^{a\text{-}b}$, *4QPseudo-Dan*^{c}, etc.). Daniel already had a well-established reputation for successfully interacting with foreign rulers and interpreting their visions. However, Daniel also had a reputation as a visionary, as evidenced by his revelation of the contents of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan 2:19, and 30-35).[503] Accordingly, the production of new visionary material provided an

[502] Christopher-Smith, *Daniel*, 100.
[503] Collins, *Daniel*, 162-5.

avenue to explore this aspect of Daniel's reputation further. As Anathea Portier-Young notes: "Daniel evolved from a collection of folktales, to an apocalypse, to a novella, and finally, something very close to a saint's life. Each iteration of Daniel spoke to the needs of communities in different times and places."[504]

As demonstrated in Chapters Three and Four, several Jewish court tales were infused with eschatological language (*4QPseudo-Dan*$^{a-b}$, *4QPseudo-Dan*^{c}, *4QFourKgdms*, *4QAramApoc*, and Tob), while others had eschatological material appended to them (Hebrew Esth). The employment of eschatological frameworks to understand exile and restoration evidently became so influential, as to warrant Jewish scribes to imbue these concerns into the court tales. While the production of new Jewish court tales ceased by the end of the first century CE, the popularity of apocalyptic literature continued into the second century CE with works such as 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, and the Apocalypse of Abraham. As Anathea Portier-Young notes: "understanding genre strictly as classification can give a false impression of fixed categories and forms. The reality is more fluid."[505] In other words, the example of Daniel 2 and 7 serves to demonstrate the difficulties involved in attempting to distinguish too categorically between court tale and apocalyptic, as a gradual shift in the themes of the court tales appears to have developed over time. The examination of Daniel 2 and 7 undertaken here, thus, serves to provide an example of the melding of court tale

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[504] Anathea Portier-Young, "Three Books of Daniel: Plurality and Fluidity among the Ancient Versions," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 71.2 (2017): 144.
[505] Portier-Young, "Three Books of Daniel," 150.

and apocalyptic, and highlights the gradual diminishing of the earlier ancient Near Eastern court themes in favor of a more eschatologically oriented worldview.

5.5. Final Considerations

This dissertation began with a consideration of what the Jewish court tales are, as well as the foundational impact the concept of exile had upon this literature. Namely, the ancient Near Eastern court tales provided Israel with a literary vehicle by which they could navigate the realities of foreign rule from a unique literary perspective, one in which life in exile was not solely a source of perpetual punishment. Within the Jewish tales, the foreign royal court was also a place wherein the God of Israel demonstrates his continued presence. In this way, the Jewish court tales attempt to strike a balance between idealizing Jewish life in foreign royal courts with earlier traditions depicting exile as a punishment for sin, complexifying debates on whether this literature is best understood as accommodationist or as resistance literature.[506] The Jewish court tales, thus, provide a unique contribution to the broader ancient Near Eastern court tales with this tenuous depiction of life in exile.

In Chapter Two, I discussed how the court tales emphasize the prestige of ethnic communities through the victories and display of skills by the featured hero. By extension, in Chapters Three and Four, I demonstrated that the Jewish court tales provide a framework by which to demonstrate the victory of Hebrew courtiers under foreign rule. The Jewish court tales emphasize that pious Jews gain victory over their foreign rivals (whether in the present in the foreign court or on a national level in the future). The court tales provide a

[506] Newsom, “Resistance is Futile!” 167-177.

powerful "lens" by which their communities could interpret the contours of life under foreign rule. Though Judea had been militarily defeated by the Babylonians in the sixth century, they need not fight to return to Jerusalem. Instead, they should adapt to their current situation under foreign rule and uphold the ancestral laws. Those Judeans who maintain those laws will thrive in exile and be rewarded. Foreign rulers who fail to protect the well-being of these lawful Judean subjects or attempt to prevent them from maintaining their traditions will be decisively punished by God.

This dissertation has explored the development of the Jewish court tales, in light of the additional literary examples discovered among the DSS and considered the development of the themes of sin, punishment, exile, and restoration within them. As evidenced within Chapters Three and Four, the problem regarding whether Judeans should expect restoration from exile is resolved in at least four different ways within the court tales: 1) Some texts focus exclusively on the possibility for Judeans to thrive and achieve victory within exile, without any explicit discussion of a national or cultic restoration (e.g., Dan 1, 3-6, Hebrew Esth, and *4QTales of Jews in the Persian Court*). 2) Other tales envision an immediate national and cultic restoration, with those Judeans providing support to restorative efforts in Israel (e.g., 1 Esd 3-4). 3) Another set of literature exhibits a tension between experiencing victory in exile in the present, while simultaneously maintaining that a national restoration is to occur in the eschatological era (e.g., Dan 2, Greek Esth, and Tob). Finally, 4) several tales focus upon future restoration, with seemingly little indication of the social realities besetting Judeans living under foreign rule (e.g., *Pseudo-Dan*[a-b], *Pseudo-Dan*[c], and *4QAramApoc*). Works situated within the third category likely circulated

in an earlier form(s) and were later imbued with apocalyptic imagery to update them for the interests and concerns of new audiences. The fourth category elides into the realm of apocalyptic literature. Notably, some other texts (e.g., Dan 7 and 1 En 1-36) also retain a court setting and are associated with famous Hebrew heroes, yet exhibit few features and themes emblematic of the earlier Near Eastern court tales (e.g., conflict, contest, vindication of the courtier, etc.).

Many of the Jewish court tales relied heavily upon the broader ancient Near Eastern court traditions for inspiration and employed literary patterns and tropes found in those works to interpret life under foreign rule. Generally, these narratives conclude with the success of the courtier and an amicability shared between the Hebrew courtier and the foreign king, which suggests an optimistic perspective regarding relations between the Jewish community and foreign rulers. However, this worldview became increasingly tenuous from the period of Herod's overthrow of the Hasmoneans (37 BCE) until the time of the First Jewish-Roman War (66-73 CE).

The early Jewish court tales ask that the community 'sit tight', settle down, and experience life under foreign rule, without providing a definitive solution to address shifting attitudes of foreign rulers towards the Jewish community. By contrast, the apocalyptic worldview offers a competing view of history, which has the advantage of offering hope in a decisive eschatological era and could provide a definitive sense of closure to the problems of exile, punishment, and restoration.

This revaluation of the Jewish court tales, which incorporated the evidence found among the DSS, expands the tapestry of understanding this innovative literature, its reliance upon earlier ancient Near Eastern precedents, and its incorporation of uniquely Jewish themes and concerns.

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