Regular Article

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Greek Gospels and Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls: Compositional, Conceptual, and Cultural Intersections

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Abstract: The Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls expanded the scope of authoritative and parascriptural traditions that reimagine the lives and times of ancestral figures. In several cases, these Aramaic writings include birth notices or narratives. The Genesis Apocryphon and Aramaic Levi Document portray the patriarchs receiving divine revelations regarding the genealogy and destiny of their progeny. Parents in both texts respond with awe yet keep the knowledge to themselves, reflecting on it in their “heart.” This article brings the revelatory tradition and terminology of the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls to bear on Mary’s responses to claims of Jesus’ messianic potential (Luke 2:19) and otherworldly paternity (Luke 2:51). The study underscores the importance of the Qumran Aramaic texts for evaluating Lukan special material and points to the relevance of these writings for recovering the Second Temple contexts of the thought, practice, and literature of the early Jesus movement. The focused case study concludes with methodological recommendations for renewed joint research on Qumran and emerging Christianity. The prescribed approach strives to avoid both “parallel-o-mania” and “parallel-o-phobia” by accounting for the complex compositional, conceptual, and cultural dynamics of both collections.

Keywords: New Testament, Luke 2, Jesus, Mary, Dead Sea Scrolls, Aramaic Levi Document, Genesis Apocryphon, Enoch, Watchers, dreams

1 Religious relics, Russian propaganda, and Aramaic inroads into Gospel traditions

This article is based on the premise that the Dead Sea Scrolls are not only about lost or forgotten *texts*. They also provide new *contexts* for previously known writings that emerge in, or are informed by, Judaism of the Second Temple period. Taking the understudied Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls as a departure point – particularly samples from Genesis Apocryphon (GenAp) and Aramaic Levi Document (ALD) – I explore the potential of these materials for a cross-section of New Testament traditions: Luke’s special materials related to Jesus’ early years.

These three writings all feature distinct formulae emphasizing the hiddenness of revealed knowledge in one’s heart. While the surface-level similarity of phrases initially captures our attention, I argue that it is the shared use of the idiom in settings related to the paternity and destiny of a child that matters most. This was occasioned neither by some ambiguous idea of “influence” nor by the often blunt instrument of “intertextuality.” Rather, accounting for the perceived similarities and differences within and behind this

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cluster of ancient writings requires a greater awareness of the compositional patterns, conceptual frameworks, and cultural dynamics that informed the development of ancient traditions. In this respect, the case study below provides space for methodological refinement in the joint study of Qumran texts and emerging Christian traditions. That area of study, however, has had its share of ups and downs. As such, a bit of backstory is in order.

As news of the Dead Sea Scrolls hit world media nearly 75 years ago, the question of their relevance to early Christian traditions was nearly instantaneous. Early impressions in news coverage as well as academic books and articles reveal a spectrum of rushed conclusions, hopes, and fears shot through with both sensation and suspicion. A sample of two items reveals the variety of options on offer in these first impressions.

Emblematic of the positivist pole, in the September 3, 1955, edition of *The Illustrated London News*, British archaeologist G. Lankaster Harding claimed that Jesus studied and lived at Qumran. This assertion effectively identified the very sectarian site as holy ground and elevated the associated texts to near relic status. Shortly after, a polar opposite view ran in a 1958 issue of the Russian tabloid paper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, which claimed the Dead Sea Scrolls at last proved that Jesus never existed.¹ Not all forecasts, however, were so controversial. In one of our earliest scrolls introductions, Dupont-Sommer underscored that, while the full implications of Qumran for early Christian studies are unknown, their impact will be undeniable. He wrote, “I only wish to stress for the present that the contribution of the new texts is in reality most constructive [...] Certainly many obscurities will remain, but never has such a wealth of light been offered to the Christian historian.”²

As the pace of the scrolls’ publication slowed, the Qumran and New Testament question continued with a mix of critical contributions, controversy around their unknown contents and, at times, conspiracy theory. With a growing pile of claimed parallels, methodologies of how to best account for such items often lagged.³ This is not to say that fields have stalled.⁴ It is simply to recognize a pendulum swing: collaborative research on Qumran and Christianity dwindled over the decades and is only recently reemerging. There is no single reason for this ebb and flow. But there are several contributing factors.

There is the structure of fields. The corpora of these two disciplines are generally now served by increasingly siloed scholarly disciplines, complete with their own conferences, monograph series, journals, secret handshakes, etc.

There is the shift in contextual interests and efforts. As Brooke observed, New Testament scholarship of late has “swung away from attention to the Jewish context of much early Christian expression towards more detailed consideration of Greco-Roman materials and the Roman imperial context in which the New Testament texts sprang up.”⁵

¹ This claim in the Russian tabloid was reported in the British press. For this reference, I am indebted to the treatment of Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 138.

² Dupont-Sommer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 100.

³ The charge of “parallelomania” in biblical studies was first presented as a general critique by Sandmel, “Parallelomania.” It has since come to have a particular currency in Qumran studies. Both Kraft (“Para-Mania”) and Doering (“Parallels without ‘Paramania’”) have moved beyond problematizing the issue and into prescribing more nuanced approaches that recognize similarities without rushing to conclusions in comparative studies.

⁴ I outline some of the key insights into Lukan traditions below. For recent overviews of research on Qumran and Christian origins, see Fitzmyer, “The Contribution of Qumran Aramaic;” García Martínez, *Echoes from the Caves*; Frey, “Critical Issues;” Stuckenbruck, “The Dead Sea Scrolls;” Lim, “Qumran Scholarship;” and Brooke, “New Perspectives.”

⁵ Brooke, “New Perspectives,” 267. To be sure, the metaphorical pendulum swings multidirectionally. See, for example, the recent thematic issue resulting from a symposium at Trinity College Dublin (September 12–13, 2017). As Wold reflected in his preface essay, “[r]eading the NT as a Christian canon too often results in overlooking the fact that these writings are cultural artefacts and among the best Jewish resources from the Second Temple period for informing us about ancient Jewish culture” (Wold, “Reading the New Testament,” 4).

There is the still-present misconception of the “parting of the ways” in the early centuries of the Common Era that brackets both collections and the social groups behind them.⁶ Yet as new texts demand a reorientation of the varieties and expressions of ancient Judaism, so too must we rethink the axes and interactions of Christian origins in that matrix.

There is the availability or publication of texts. There may be an impression that with the full publication of the Qumran fragments we now know all that what we need to know. End of story. From the perspective of Dead Sea Scrolls studies, however, the publication signals but the beginning of the journey.

These reflections are particularly relevant for one cross-section of the Dead Sea Scrolls collection that is only recently coming to the fore in research: the Aramaic texts among the Judaean Desert discoveries. The Aramaic GenAp from Qumran Cave One was among the first texts discovered and published. Publication of the rest of the Aramaic corpus, however, was less prompt. The majority of the Cave Four fragments, for example, were published as late as 2001 and 2009.⁷ This ranks the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls among the *latest* published and *least* studied items of the entire Qumran collection. It also means many scholarly first impressions based on partial data of the Aramaic writings have persisted in research without critical reevaluation. Why does this matter for the present topic? Simply put: just as the energy and interest in Qumran and Christian origins declined, the awareness and availability of the Aramaic writings increased.

2 A brief overview of the Aramaic corpus among the Dead Sea Scrolls

So what are these Aramaic texts and what new intersections do they present for comparative or contextual studies of emerging Christianity? The Aramaic writings among the Dead Sea Scrolls include copies of 30 literary compositions from the mid-Second Temple period. This represents upward of 13% of the overall Dead Sea Scrolls collection.⁸ The compositional dates of some Aramaic texts suggest this area of the Qumran collection includes some of the oldest materials among the Dead Sea Scrolls, of course, after the earlier traditions for many writings of the Hebrew Scriptures.⁹ Though the authorial origins of all of the Aramaic texts are technically unknown, it is generally thought that they reflect the belief, culture, and practice of expressions of Judaism beyond Qumran. That is, they are not “sectarian” in the traditional

⁶ For example, Kraft commented, “[p]rior to the emergence of self-conscious ‘Christianity,’ and even after that, there was significant diversity within the seedbed from which classical Judaism emerged” (Kraft, “The Weighing of the Parts,” 92). For a review of major contributors to, and the open questions of, this debate, see Bauckham, *The Jewish World*, 175–92.

⁷ Avigad and Yadin (*A Genesis Apocryphon*) promptly published the then known materials. The most complete and current edition of GenAp is now by Machiela and VanderKam (“Genesis Apocryphon”). Eventually, the bulk of the other Aramaic texts were published across several later volumes of the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert series. For a comprehensive list and bibliography, see now Tov, *The Texts from the Judaean Desert*. As with GenAp, however, some of the Cave Four Aramaic Enoch fragments remain outside this “official” series, though a few have been included in the form of reeditions. While his synthesis of the compositional structure of Aramaic Enoch at Qumran is generally not accepted, Milik’s presentation of Cave Four fragments in *The Books of Enoch* remains essential.

⁸ Given the nature of the fragmentary evidence, statistical tallies for the Dead Sea Scrolls are always tricky. The figure above is drawn from the manuscript count by Dimant (“The Qumran Aramaic Texts,” 199; cf. García Martínez, “Scribal Practices,” 330). See also the slightly lower figures of 10% in Berthelot and Stökl Ben Ezra (“Aramaica Qumranica,” 1) and 12% in Tigchelaar (“The Dead Sea Scrolls,” 12). Though difficult to include in statistics due to their hybridity, the scope of the Aramaic texts should also include the fragments of Aramaic content in both Daniel and Ezra. Additionally, the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls fragments in private collections present both opportunities and obstacles for studying Aramaic texts. Given concerns over the provenance, authenticity, and chain of custody of these items, I neither engage them in statistics nor integrate them in the study that follows. Increasingly, these items are found to be forgeries and have proved to be a distraction.

⁹ The oldest Aramaic traditions represented at Qumran include Astronomical Enoch (ca. third century BCE), ALD (ca. late third-early second century BCE), and Tobit (ca. late-third to early-second century BCE).

sense.¹⁰ This, however, remains an open question that is best pursued on a case-by-case basis.¹¹ While we do not know if some of the Aramaic texts were written or copied at Qumran, their presence in the collection confirms they were all read and received there. These materials, then, are a convenient space for hosting conversations in, between, and among various scribal cultures of Second Temple Judaism occasioned by a common imperial language of the ancient Near East: Aramaic.¹²

Ongoing research has revealed both unity and variety across the Aramaic corpus. This is true, for example, of the predominant literary settings of the Aramaic texts in either the antediluvian past or exilic period.¹³ Additionally, in both form and outlook many of the Aramaic writings are apocalyptic and have a penchant for dream-vision episodes, allusions, and interpretations.¹⁴ There are also key themes, such as endogamous marriage (i.e., unions within one's kinship group), that are present in various forms across the collection. Finally, at the level of philology, the Aramaic texts are not only relatively unified in their linguistic representation of "middle Aramaic" (ca. 200 BCE–200 CE), they also feature a conspicuous number of terms, phrases, and idioms that recur in several texts.¹⁵ For these reasons, while the study of so-called "Qumran Aramaic" begins with language, the convergence of such literary and ideological items indicates they were created by one or more scribal groups who embraced the imperial idiom as their language of choice.¹⁶ When I refer to Aramaic scribal culture in ancient Judaism, then, it is with this larger social and intellectual construct in mind, of which we still have a great deal to learn.

In view of this Aramaic cultural space between the Qumran texts and early Christian traditions, the pages that follow chart a course through three waypoints. First, I establish where recent scholarship has already identified particular interactions between Lukan tradition and writings or concepts represented among the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls. I will document how many proposals cluster around shared structures, terms, and motifs of Luke 1–2. Second, I overview the representation of Aramaic *Wunderkind* narratives in a group of Aramaic texts from Qumran. Of these, GenAp and ALD are the most relevant. These both feature idioms of "heart-hiddenness" in response to dream-vision revelations about the otherworldly association and/or destiny of a child. Third, I use this Aramaic matrix to rethink the compositional, conceptual, and cultural context of Mary's heart-pondering responses in Luke 2:19, 51.

¹⁰ Milik (*Dix ans de découvertes*, 95–6) and Segert ("Die Sprachenfragen") were the early advocates for bracketing the seemingly outward-looking Aramaic texts from the more inward-focused Hebrew writings of Qumran. Though routinely cited in the history of scholarship as an accepted fact, García Martínez ("Sectario, No-Sectario, o Qué?" 384; "Scribal Practices," 439) is certainly correct that this social segmentation along linguistic lines is an unproven assumption in need of greater nuance and interrogation.

¹¹ Perrin and Hama, "Sectarian Identities and Linguistic Intersections."

¹² Aramaic emerged as the imperial language of choice in the eighth century BCE (Beyer, *The Aramaic Language*, 9–10). Fitzmyer (*The Semitic Background*, 57–84) described the form of the Aramaic language used in the scrolls as "middle Aramaic," which reflects the styles and structures of literary Aramaic from ca. 200 BCE to 200 CE. Though Aramaic was neither fully supplanted by Greek nor made Hebrew extinct, the presence of Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew writings among the Dead Sea Scrolls underscores the multilingual nature of Judaeo culture in the Second Temple period.

¹³ See Dimant, "The Qumran Aramaic Texts;" and Tigchelaar, "Aramaic Texts from Qumran." Wacholder's ("The Ancient Judaeo-Aramaic Literature") earlier attempt at situating and synthesizing the shape and scope of the ancient Jewish Aramaic literature did so in light of a much larger collection of Aramaic cultural heritage from the Near East.

¹⁴ See the varying perspectives on the apocalyptic contours or themes of the collection in studies by Dimant, "Apocalyptic Texts at Qumran," 180, 191; DiTommaso, "Apocalypticism and the Aramaic Texts," 474–76; and García Martínez, "Aramaica Qumranica Apoclyptica," 438; Perrin, *The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Revelation*, 238–46. The above recognition, along with increasing observations on the fluidity of the apocalyptic literature in light of the scrolls, suggests that the Aramaic texts provide an important space for reconsidering the evolution of the genre (Perrin, "The Aramaic Imagination").

¹⁵ For the growing catalogue of idioms that obtain across the texts, see Perrin, "Another Look at Dualism;" Perrin, *The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Revelation*, 91–119; Machiela and Perrin, "Tobit and the Genesis Apocryphon;" and Machiela, "Writing, Revelation, and Knowledge."

¹⁶ For a developing proposal of the sociohistorical location of Aramaic scribal cultures in Judaea, see Machiela, "The Compositional Setting." Note also that, while the phrase "Qumran Aramaic" has become common, this should not be defined against "biblical Aramaic." We should define linguistic studies by chronological parameters rather than the boundaries set by corpora or later canons. Daniel and Tobit are cases in point: they are Aramaic writings received in subsequent canons yet are part of the Aramaic heritage of ancient Judaism represented at Qumran in the mid- to late-Second Temple era.

3 Ancient Jewish Aramaic intellectual culture and Luke's special material

At first glance, studies on the intersection of Aramaic thought and Gospel traditions might look to commonalities in presumed or lost source materials. The degree to which Q was formed in, or informed by, Aramaic is debated. Unless they fell from the sky unscathed by the world around them, at least *some* of the early Gospel source materials must have come from spaces in which Aramaic was used for communication and/or cultivating tradition.¹⁷ While there is much ground to till between Q and Qumran, the prospect of the joint study of hypothetical materials on the one hand, and highly fragmentary ones on the other, presents major methodological challenges. As such, we might be better served finding another pairing.

The Gospel of Luke presents another frontier for exploring the potential awareness or interaction of Aramaic terms and concepts in emerging Gospel materials. Several scholars have acknowledged some of these exchanges. However, these insights are scattered and yet to be collected in one place. There are at least seven items proposed in recent scholarship that reveal a surprisingly well-traveled road between Lukan material and the intellectual world of Aramaic writings found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Four of these converge in Luke's early chapters on the birth, presentation, and genealogy of Jesus.

First, Bauckham established the Enochic character of both the numerical scheme and named figures included in Jesus' genealogy in Luke 3:23–38.¹⁸ Essential to this theory is the apparent Enochic schema of 11 sets of 7 as an apocalyptic historiographical mechanism. On this, Bauckham wrote, “[t]he author of the Lukan genealogy must have been inspired by 1 Enoch 10:12, but he will also have found elsewhere in the Enoch literature a model for a scheme of periodizing world history in units of seven generations” (cf. 1 En. 93:3–10; 91:11–17).¹⁹ Of note to the present study is that Luke's genealogy also positions Noah and Levi at critical positions (see below).

Second, both Fitzmyer and Collins emphasized the correspondences between the so-called Aramaic “Son of God” text, 4Q246, and the angelic revelation to Mary in Luke 1:32–35.²⁰ The Aramaic text in 4Q246 1 i 9–1 ii 1 refers to a likely positive eschatological agent in the following terms.²¹

ר[בא יתקרא ובשמה יתכנה

ברה די אל יתאמר ובר עליון יקרונה

[...gr]eat he will be called and by his name he will be designated

the son of God he will be called and son of the Most High they will call him.²²

¹⁷ Wellhausen (*Einleitung*) first proposed the Aramaic Q theory, occasioned in part by Papias of Hierapolis' nod to a Semitic language Matthew or *logia* source (Eusebius, *Eccl.* 3.39.14–17). Black was arguably the next major advocate of an Aramaic Q theory. He emphasized the importance of “new Aramaic discoveries, most notably at Qumrân, which are of great importance for the study of first-century Palestinian Aramaic” (Black, *An Aramaic Approach*, 35). More recently, Casey (*An Aramaic Approach to Q*, 54–60) underscored that Aramaic's anchor as an imperial language held well into the Second Temple period, as indicated chiefly by the Aramaic materials at Qumran. Kloppenborg, though highly critical of theories claiming an Aramaic original for Q, left the door open for some possible interactions or developments of material in Aramaic speaking milieus (see remarks in Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q*, 80; *The Formation of Q*, 59).

¹⁸ Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives*, 315–26. See now also, Brooke, “Aramaic Traditions,” 209–12.

¹⁹ Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives*, 320.

²⁰ Fitzmyer noted, however, that “we cannot say whether this is perchance a coincidental use by Luke of Palestinian Jewish titles known to him” or indicates Lukan dependence on 4Q246, as argued by Collins (cf. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 61; and Collins, *The Scepter and the Star*, 155).

²¹ There is a larger discussion over the potentially negative profile of this figure. Preliminary research on the text tended toward this option, not least with contributions by Milik, “Les modèles araméens;” and Flusser, “The New Testament and Judaism.” Continued study, however, has tipped the balance toward a positive profile. For developments and bibliography of this emerging perspective, see García Martínez, *Qumran and Apocalyptic*, 162–73; and Perrin, *The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Revelation*, 221–23.

Luke features similar claims to the greatness and divine sonship language found in the above Aramaic text.

οὗτος ἔσται μέγας καὶ υἱὸς ὑψίστου κληθήσεται καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τὸν θρόνον Δαβὶδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. (Luke 1:32, NRSV)

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν αὐτῇ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ

The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.” (Luke 1:35, NRSV)

Brooke built upon this foundation, as well as integrated 4Q246 into Bauckham’s discussion of the Enochic genealogical influence, by noting how the culmination of Jesus’ genealogy in Luke 3:38 also leverages “son of God” language.²³ Given the already documented interaction with this terminology in 4Q246, it seems that key elements of the substructure of Luke’s Christology are informed by Aramaic expectations and expressions.

Third, Bovon noted the similar phrasing of Zechariah’s angelic encounter in Luke 1:19 and Tob 12:5.²⁴ Though the latter is not extant among the Qumran Aramaic materials, given their textual proximity to the longer Greek tradition, the exemplar of Codex Sinaiticus helps draw the comparison.²⁵

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν αὐτῷ ἐγὼ εἰμι Γαβριὴλ ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἀπεστάλην λαλῆσαι πρὸς σὲ καὶ εὐαγγελίσασθαι σοι ταῦτα

The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.” (Luke 1:19, NRSV)

ἐγὼ εἰμι Ῥαφαὴλ εἷς τῶν ἐπτὰ ἀγγέλων οἱ παρεστήκασιν καὶ εἰσπορεύονται ἐνώπιον τῆς δόξης κυρίου

I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who approach and enter before the glory of the Lord. (Tob 12:15, G^{II}, NETS)

Given the established interaction with terms and themes from the Aramaic literature in the early chapters of Luke above, it is possible that the proximity of these angelic proclamation sayings is yet another feature of Lukan indebtedness to Second Temple Aramaic scribal culture. Of course, as Skemp observed, in many instances Tobit and Luke’s angelologies draw upon and extend “stock motifs of angelic appearances,” which cautions against forcing direct connections on the basis of one item.²⁶ However, a second interaction between Tobit and Luke strengthens the connection.

Fourth, Law briefly noted the similarity between Luke 2:29 and Tob 11:9.²⁷ The analogies, however, extend to Luke 2:28–30. In this scope, there are three features shared by the scenes where Simeon remarks at the dedication of Jesus and Anna exclaims at the homecoming of her son, Tobias. Both begin with a physical embrace, mention seeing the revealed or returned figure, and feature a statement that the adult is now comforted to accept even death. The texts read as follows, again with G^{II} representing the Tobit tradition in lack of Aramaic from Qumran.

²² Aramaic text from Puech, “4Q246,” 168–69. My rather rigid English rendering attempts to capture the verb-late constructions of the poetic text.

²³ Brooke, “Aramaic Traditions from the Qumran Caves,” 209–10.

²⁴ Bovon, *Luke 1*, 39. Loisy (*L’Évangile selon Luc*, 82) first noted this parallel.

²⁵ On the textual character of the Qumran Tobit texts, see Fitzmyer, “The Hebrew and Aramaic Fragments.” For the texts themselves, see Fitzmyer, “4Q196–4Q200: Tobit.” The Greek Tobit texts here are from Hanhart, *Tobit*.

²⁶ Skemp, “Avenues of Intertextuality,” 57. For methodological considerations on pairing these works, see also Docherty, “The Reception of Tobit.”

²⁷ Law, *When God Spoke Greek*, 98.

καὶ αὐτὸς ἐδέξατο αὐτὸ εἰς τὰς ἀγκάλας καὶ εὐλόγησεν τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἶπεν νῦν ἀπολύεις τὸν δοῦλόν σου δέσποτα κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ ὅτι εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου τὸ σωτήριόν σου

Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation.” (Luke 2:28–30, NRSV)

καὶ ἀνέδραμεν Ἄννα καὶ ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτῆς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Εἶδόν σε παιδίον ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀποθανοῦμαι καὶ ἔκλαυσεν

Then Hanna ran up and fell on the neck of her son and said to him, “I see you, my child; from now on I am ready to die.” And she wept. (Tob 11:9, G^{II}, NETS)

This instance involves narrative–thematic similarities, not tight terminological parallels. Nonetheless, the growing cluster of shared items between sources originating in Aramaic and the early chapters of Luke suggests it deserves reconsideration. These last two examples, then, also underscore the importance of rethinking Tobit not only as *received* in the Deuterocanon but now as *conceived* within an Aramaic scribal culture of the Second Temple period.

Fifth, at least two Lukan healing or exorcism scenes have clear analogies to postures for apotropaic prayer found in GenAp. To dispel the unclean spirit from Pharaoh and his house, Abraham relates,

וסמכת ידי עַל [ר]אִישָׁה ואתפלי מנה מכתשא ואתגערת [מנה רוחא] באישתא

And I laid my hand upon his [h]ead. Then the affliction was removed from him, and the evil [spirit] was expelled [from him.] (1Q20 20:29)²⁸

Fitzmyer remarked that “[t]he closest NT parallel to this passage is Luke 4:40–41, where ‘rebuking’ [ἐπιτιμῶν] and the ‘laying on of hands’ [χεῖρας ἐπιτιθεὶς ἐθεράπευεν αὐτούς] both occur, but in none of the NT passages does a prayer accompany the rite, as here [in GenAp].”²⁹ Machiela extended this comparison by noting that several narrative and terminological features of Luke’s account of healing the crippled woman in Luke 13:10–13 are also likely informed by GenAp.³⁰

Sixth, Anderson perceived critical theological and cultural developments in Aramaic writings from *sin as weight* toward understandings of *sin as debt* (Dan 4:27; Tob 4:5–11; 12:8–10; 14:8–11).³¹ Machiela added that the Aramaic צדקה, typically rendered “righteousness,” also occurs as a term for personal piety paired with almsgiving in ALD 85 (cf. 4Q213 1 i).³² I add that Words of Qahat (4Q542 1 i 12) retroactively applies this term and concept onto the patriarchal past as a virtue. How does Luke enter the equation? Anderson proposed that “[i]n the New Testament the metaphor of sin as debt was ubiquitous” but had a particular impact in Gospel traditions of the Lord’s prayer.³³ He underscored the necessity of the Aramaic framework for understanding ἀφίημι (“to remit”) and ὀφείλημα (“debt”) in Matt 6:12 (cf. Did. 8.2c). The expressions in Luke 11:4, however, arguably indicate a more direct link between sin and debt, which is incomprehensible without the prior developments of Aramaic intellectual culture.

²⁸ GenAp texts and translations are from Machiela and VanderKam, “Genesis Apocryphon.”

²⁹ Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon*, 213. Flusser observed the uniqueness of GenAp’s formulation beyond those of the Hebrew Scriptures, as it is the first ancient Jewish text to feature this posture of apotropaic prayer (Flusser, “Healing,” 107–8).

³⁰ Machiela, “Luke 13:10–13.”

³¹ Anderson, *Sin: A History*, ix, 15–6, 27–8, 174. See now also the work of Giambrone (*Sacramental Charity*), who pressed further into Luke’s appropriation of Jewish debt-credit tropes in the construction of his Christology. For the Matthean tradition, see also Eubank, *Wages of Cross-Bearing and Debt as Sin*. On the efficacy of almsgiving in the Daniel and Tobit traditions, see also Newsom, *Daniel*, 145. The concept of storing up “good treasure” in heaven via almsgiving is now evident in the earliest known rendering of Tobit into Hebrew from Cave Four, which reads שִׂמָּה טוֹבָה at 4Q200 2:9 (Tob 4:9). The language and idea of storing up treasures in heaven appear also in the Mark-Matthew dual traditions or their shared source (Mark 10:21b; Matt 19:21b; Matt 6:19–20). For the proposed source, see Robinson et al., *The Critical Edition of Q*, 328 (Q 12:33).

³² Machiela, “Charity as a Theme.”

³³ Anderson, *Sin: A History*, 31.

The seventh, and final, feature is a yet unrecognized item of potential Lukan awareness or interaction with Aramaic terms and thought. When relating implications of the parable of a dishonest manager, Luke 16:8–9 features two curious phrases: τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ φωτός (“sons of light”) and τὰς αἰωνίους σκηνάς (“eternal home”). Though it is widely recognized that duality or binary language such as this was a core part of Hebrew, largely *insider* literature of Qumran, few have recognized the inclusion of such language in but a single Aramaic, likely *outward*-looking or originating, text. The fragmentary text of 4Q548 1 ii–2 16 references בני נהורא (“sons of light”). The second phrase in Luke also finds an approximate counterpart in another Aramaic text. In describing a postmortem abode, 4Q549 2 6 references בית עלמה (“the eternal home”).³⁴ The precise identification and relationship of these two fragmentary Cave Four items are unknown. Yet the clustered references in Luke hint that, once again, Aramaic terms or traditions provided a framework for the ancient formation of Lukan material.

This catalog of seven items suggests the confluence of, or conversations with, Aramaic expressions and thought in Luke’s special materials. Some cases, such as those in 4Q246, were to a degree that does suggest some sort of source interaction. Others, such as the postures of prayer in GenAp, are more likely due to a shared basis in the religious thought or practice of ancient Judaeon culture. In light of these already studied examples, I now turn to explore the relevance of Aramaic *Wunderkind* traditions among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Establishing the scope and detail of these Second Temple Aramaic traditions will provide another avenue into Gospel materials, particularly Luke 2:19, 51.

4 Gobsnacked parents and *Wunderkinder* in the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls

Tales of miraculous births feature across cultures and corpora of antiquity, with a particular concentration in classical sources.³⁵ Stuckenbruck observed that miraculous birth narratives often relate to exemplary or controversial figures.³⁶ While none of these include the specific response of heart pondering or hiddenness, Suetonius notes the fright of Vittelius’ parents at the astrologers’ predictions and calculations of the time of birth (Vittelius 3). Plutarch relates a series of parental revelations and portents regarding the conception and future of Alexander (Alex. 2–3). We should bear in mind, therefore, that our ancient Jewish and emerging Christian writings are also speaking into and out of Hellenistic culture.

The Aramaic corpus at Qumran includes at least four compositions that feature birth notices and narratives of infant prodigies. These include: 1 En. 106–107, Birth of Noah (1Q19; 4Q534–536), GenAp (1Q20), and ALD (1Q21; 4Q213, 4Q213a, 4Q213b, 4Q214, 4Q214a, and 4Q214b). The majority of these pertain to the birth of Noah, which connects with a much larger body of traditions among the Dead Sea Scrolls associated with Genesis’ flood hero.³⁷ Though Noah’s birth notice in Gen 5:28–29 is brief, several Aramaic traditions evolve from this unassuming mention. These forecast Noah’s salvific role as captain of the ark and emphasize that his parentages are not of the watchers and women casually mentioned in Gen 6:4.³⁸ Noah will save humanity and his paternity is human.

³⁴ Tob 3:6 hints at a likely second occurrence of the phrase in the Aramaic literature. Yet the Qumran fragments are damaged at this point. The Greek traditions here read: τὸν τόπον τὸν αἰώνιον (“the everlasting place”). See also Eccl 12:5; Ps 49:12.

³⁵ Stuckenbruck, *The Myth of Rebellious Angels*, 145–6.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ For treatments of Qumran materials set in orbit around Noah, see Peters, *Noah Traditions*; Amihay and Machiela, “Traditions;” and Weigold, “Aramaic *Wunderkind*.”

³⁸ Amihay and Machiela (“Traditions”, 65–6) noted that the motif of Noah as “survivor who is savior” emerges early, and extends broadly, in reception history of Noachic traditions (Ezek 14; 1 En. 67:1; 80:1–9; 106:15–18; Sir. 44:20). Stone (“The Axis”) emphasized that Noah becomes an axial “bridge” of sorts for knowledge from the pre- to postdiluvian worlds.

Though known in but a few Aramaic fragments at Qumran, the fuller Ethiopic content of 1 En. 106–107 portrays Lamech's fright and confusion over Noah's birth.³⁹ The lad emerges from the womb with long curly white locks, skin that was at once white as snow and redder than a rose, eyes that set the entire house aglow, and the instant ability to stand in the palm of the midwife and proclaim praises to God (1 En. 106:1–3). Naturally, Lamech is in shock at the spectacle. He remarks, "A strange child has been born to me [...] I think that he is not from me, but from the angels" (1 En. 106: 4, 6). Lamech, via Methuselah, eventually receives confirmation from Enoch that is both negative and positive. The child is *not* conceived by a watcher; he is indeed Lamech's own. But the youth is remarkable, his destiny is to survive the deluge, blameless in a world drowning in iniquity (1 En. 106:15–19).⁴⁰

While the so-called Birth of Noah texts (1Q19; 4Q534–536) do not technically name Noah as the infant, the analogies with other known Noachic infancy narratives, like 1 En. 106–107, point in that direction. Here too, focus falls on the newborn's unnatural capabilities and bodily features (4Q534 1 i 1–3). As Popović established, the youth's body bears physiognomic marks that signify his special role as the בחר אלהא ("elect of God," 4Q534 1 ii 10).⁴¹ The youth also has exceeding wisdom, knowledge, and revelation, gleaned in part from his access to ancestral booklore (4Q534 1 ii; 4Q536 2 ii + 3).

The final two texts in this roster – GenAp and ALD – are also part of this complex of Aramaic *Wunderkind* traditions. Their formal and philological detail, however, makes a more focused contribution to this study. Both writings include responses to dream-visions revealing the genealogical position or destiny of progeny using Aramaic idioms for concealing revelation within one's heart.⁴²

Following two highly fragmentary columns that pertain in some way to watchers or giants traditions, GenAp col. 2 includes another take on Noah's birth. Though incomplete in several sections, 1Q20 2:1–26 features a scene of passionate debate between Lamech and Batenosh regarding the question of Noah's parentage (cf. Jub. 4:28). While Lamech is suspicious of Batenosh's fidelity, she assures him that her sexual pleasure was the guarantee that the child is legitimately Lamech's (1Q20 2:9–10).⁴³ Motifs of Lamech's internal reflection and turmoil feature throughout the scene. Note, for example, his cognitive and emotional state at the outset of the account in 1Q20 2:1–2.

הא באדין חשבת בלבי די מן עירין הריאתא ומן קדישין זרעא ולנפילין

ולבי עלי משתני על עולימא דנא vacat

Then suddenly I thought in my heart that the conception was from (the) Watchers, and the seed from (the) Holy Ones and of (the) Nephil[...]

and my heart wavered concerning this infant. vacat

Despite Batenosh's orgasmic assurance of paternity, Lamech remains unconvinced. His response in 1Q20 2:11 reads simply לשגי לבי עלי אדין אשתני ("And then my heart wavered greatly within me"). As with the above

³⁹ Content from 1 En. 106:13–107:2 is fragmentarily represented in 4Q204 5 ii (see Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, 209–10).

⁴⁰ As Stuckenbruck (*1 Enoch*, 608) remarked, for this Enochic tradition, "the figure of Noah is a symbol of the righteous few who, in the course of eschatological events, will be rescued from divine destruction when it comes upon the wicked."

⁴¹ Popović, *Reading the Human Body*, 281–5.

⁴² The emotional response to revelation is a relatively common feature of awakenings presented in the ancient dream-vision literature. For statements of the internalization of revelatory knowledge in other writings in the Hebrew Scriptures and ancient Judaism, see Gen 37:11; Dan 7:28; 4Q561 11:9; Add Esth A 10 (Alpha), 11 (Old Greek); 4 Ezra 14:8; 2 Bar. 19:4; and Apoc. Abr. 1:4; 2:7; 23:3; L.A.B. 9:10. For commentary on this formal feature across the dream literature in ancient cultures, see Bar, *A Letter That Has Not Been Read*, 35–43, 70–7; Hanson, "Dreams and Visions," 1412–3; Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 91; Perrin, *The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Revelation*, 110–4. The example in Dan 7:28 is particularly relevant to the present case as it also features heart-hiddenness language. In that context, the response is to revelation regarding imperial history. This suggests that there was a broader appropriation of the motif even in Aramaic scribal cultures.

⁴³ In this instance, GenAp embraces a prescientific perspective that associated a woman's orgasm with conception (Frölich, "Medicine and Magic;" van der Horst, "Bitenosh's Orgasm").

citation, this response ends a sense unit signaled by a half line *vacat* in the fragmentary manuscript. At two points in this scene, then, Noah's paternity is clouded by a potential negative otherworldly interference and identity. In both, Aramaic idioms of reflection within a parent's heart conclude the section.

A few columns later, and after the shift to Noah telling his own tale starting in 1Q20 5:29, our flood hero emphasizes his righteous persona and revelatory prowess. One section merging both of these elements pertains to Noah's efforts to assure endogamous marriages – unions within the kinship group – for his sons in light of the illicit acts of the watchers. The reader/hearer is told this is in accordance with the *דת חוק עלמא* ("the custom of the eternal statute," 1Q20 6:8). But when the time came to actualize this matchmaking, Noah experiences a revelation, which he recollects in a short form in 1Q20 6:11–12.

[ואתחזי לי מרה] שִׁמְיָא בחזיון חֲזִייתִי וְאַחֲוָא⁴⁴ ואודעת בעובד בני שמין ומא כֹּל

[...] שִׁמְיָא וטמרת רזא דן בלבבי ולכול אנוש לא אֲחֻוִּיתָה *vacat*

[and the Lord of] Heaven [appeared to me] in a vision. I looked and was shown and informed about the work of the sons of heaven and what all

[...] heaven. And I hid this mystery within my heart, and did not make it known to anyone. *vacat*

No longer the object of suspicion, Noah is now the parent in an episode that, once again, affirms the integrity of the family line down here against the potential mixing with the errant watchers from up there. As Falk observed, the Lamech and Noah sections are bound both by a common interest in Gen 6:1–5 and "are further tied together by visions of the sins of the Watchers."⁴⁴ It is safe to say, therefore, that this concern is pervasive in the literary and ideological substructure of GenAp. As seen in the fragmentary lines above, the full content of the revelation is unknown. It is an allusion, not a full episode. Yet the reference to Noah's revealed knowledge of the watchers and women paired with the awakening formula of heart-hiddenness is intriguing. This is particularly so given the claims and implications for future generations. Noah's new divine knowledge both cautions against illicit intermingling with otherworldly parents and provides a better model of endogamous marriage by virtue of his understanding of a divine statute. Finally, here too the formal feature of the response formula is matched with a material philological one: the note of hiddenness in the heart ends a unit and is accompanied by a *vacat*.

The current in all of the above Aramaic Noah-as-miracle-child traditions, and the one Noah's-children-as-unmiraculous-offspring tale, is the effort to address any potential confusion over paternity or pollution by an otherworldly source. Whether it is Noah or his progeny, these Aramaic traditions affirm that they are not children of the divine. It is also noteworthy that, of the several dream visions in GenAp, only these feature this awakening formula.⁴⁵ This suggests the response is not to revelation in general, but to particular types of revelation.

Our final Aramaic text, ALD, is less concerned with the negative implications of the Watcher's myth than in leveraging positive angelic associations for an earthly priestly progeny. Not unlike GenAp's redrawing of the patriarchs as dreamers, ALD develops Levi into an active otherworldly sojourner. The formal feature that closes Levi's first dream vision of priestly elevation is remarkably reminiscent of those studied above in GenAp. Levi ascends to the heavens, encounters an angel approving his priesthood, and, upon his awakening, remarks the following in ALD 7 (Bodleian A; overlaps with 4Q213b 1:3 underlined).⁴⁶

אדין אמרת חזוא הוא דן וכדן אנה מתמה די יהוי לה כל חזוא וטמרת אף דן בלבי ולכל אינש לא גליתָה

⁴⁴ Falk, *The Parabiblical Texts*, 30.

⁴⁵ The number and extent of dream-visions in GenAp are difficult to determine. It seems that there are between six and eight episodes or allusions to revelatory experiences. Given the fragmentary nature of the text, not all of the awakening scenes and formulae are extant for all episodes. For a synopsis of their number and features of revelatory references in GenAp, see Perrin, *The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Revelation*, 52–7.

Then I said, “This is the vision, and at this I was amazed that I had any vision!” And I hid this too in my heart, and did not reveal it to anyone.

In near isomorphic parallel to the above example in 1Q20 6:12, Levi responds with awe and internalization: the revelation of his angelic priestly investiture is tucked away in his heart. In this case, the phrase also comes at the logical end of a sense unit, since ALD 8 commences the narrative progression of Levi’s travel itinerary to visit Isaac. In the larger scope, ALD extends Levi’s otherworldly priestly endorsement to include his offspring in future generations. In fact, Levi later alludes to yet another revelation regarding the direction of the priestly line among his own children (ALD 63–67). The heart-hiddenness motif, therefore, has implications for both Levi’s investiture and the inheritance of this otherworldly association by his offspring.

In these ways, although Levi’s revelation first pertains to his foundational position in this heritage endorsed from on high, it directly relates to the ongoing cohesion and continuity of the progeny in light of this angelic association. They may not be sons of the divine, but their priestly role associates them within that fraternity.

5 Revisiting Mary’s reactions in Luke in light of Aramaic revelatory responses

Mary is presented with knowledge of Jesus’ otherworldly ancestry or claims to his remarkable future on two occasions in the Lukan materials. How do these texts sound differently in the context of Aramaic *Wunderkind* traditions and revelatory reactions?

The first response comes in Luke 2:19. The shepherds receive an angelic visitation regarding the salvific potential and messianic identity of Jesus, a child whom they will simply recognize when they encounter him (Luke 2:8–15). When these matters are relayed manger-side to Mary, we hear: ἡ δὲ Μαριάμ πάντα συνετήρει τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα συμβάλλουσα ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς (“But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart,” Luke 2:19, NRSV).

The second response occurs in Luke 2:51. On a family road trip to Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph lose track of Jesus only to find him dialoging with elders in the temple. After a little parental confusion, then scolding for the fright caused, the boy Jesus responds that Mary and Joseph should have known to check the temple because, after all, it’s his father’s house (Luke 2:46–49). As the family makes the return journey to Nazareth, Luke includes an aside to Mary’s internalization of the event and, presumably, in response to Jesus’ words. Luke 2:51 reads καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ διετήρει πάντα τὰ ῥήματα ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς (“His mother treasured all these things in her heart,” NRSV).⁴⁷

Despite the particularity of Luke’s traditions related to the boy Jesus, and the conspicuous turns of phrase for Mary’s heart pondering in Luke 2:19 and 51, interpreters are divided or confused on the origin and intent of these sayings. Most commentators consider them from an internal exegetical perspective. The predominant explanations are *theological* (what are the impact and implications of Mary incubating a divine child?), *literary* (how should we read her response in light of birth notices of Luke 1?), *logical* (how would you react if you were told such news?), or some combinations of the above, often with little recourse to

⁴⁶ The Aramaic transcription above is from Drawnel, *An Aramaic Wisdom Text*, 112–3. Translation mine. Compare also the Greek adaptation of this terminology in T. Levi 8:19: καὶ ἔκρυψα καίγε τοῦτο ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου καὶ οὐκ ἀνήγγειλα αὐτό παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (“And I hid this in my heart as well, and I did not report it to any human being on the earth”).

⁴⁷ A variation of this lost-and-found Jesus episode, and the revelatory response, also occurs in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas 19:5a. Betsworth concluded that the rendition in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas “reads like an expanded paraphrase of Luke’s story, as if it was composed from memory” (Betsworth, *Children in Early Christian Narratives*, 155).

antecedent or contemporary traditions.⁴⁸ Interpretations of Luke 2:51 are equally varied, with few pressing beyond a “see comment to Luke 2:19” type notation.

A small number of commentators on Luke 2:19 contextualize Mary’s words in light of a limited set of wonderment responses to revelation in external writings.⁴⁹ However, the Aramaic *Wunderkind* traditions have not registered in cultural, linguistic, or theologically informed readings of Mary’s heart pondering in Luke 2:19, 51. To be sure, Qumran studies have been equally limited in efforts or explanations of the potential parallels. Yet, as established above, for all the potential ways in which Lukan materials are informed by Aramaic intellectual culture, the strongest concentration of instances occurs in the infancy materials. Both the compositional framework and interpretive prospects of Luke 1–2 must account for an Aramaic milieu, not least as it is represented by the Aramaic writings in the Dead Sea Scrolls. By taking into account this newly available perspective from ancient Aramaic intellectual culture of the Second Temple period, at least three observations point toward a new interpretation of Mary’s puzzlement and pondering of heart.

5.1 Compositional patterns

In the context of the New Testament Gospel traditions, the language of Mary’s responses in Luke 2:19, 51 seems a Lukan flare. Yet, when read in the light of the Aramaic idiomatic expressions for responding to revelation in GenAp 6:12 (cf. 2:1–2) and ALD 7, these turns of phrase require reconsideration in light of our growing knowledge of the ancient Jewish Aramaic literature and intellectual culture.

Perrin and Machiela demonstrated that the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls feature a large catalog of shared expressions, suggesting that the scribal culture(s) behind them are drawing upon, and contributing to, a fund of both motifs and idioms.⁵⁰ I suggest that the heart-hiddenness response to revelation as found in GenAp and ALD is among those items developed within the Aramaic scribal cultures responsible for these writings. Given Luke’s awareness of aspects of this Aramaic intellectual culture in his infancy–youth traditions – as demonstrated already by the contributions of Fitzmyer, Collins, Bauckham, and Brooke listed above – Mary’s heart pondering is likely another example of Luke’s appropriation of an expression from this body of ancient Jewish Aramaic tradition, thought, and terminology. If the Aramaic texts originated and/or circulated beyond Qumran (i.e., they are not “sectarian” in the traditional sense), then they contribute to the literary imagination and linguistic idioms of broader Judaism from which the writers of the New Testament drew. This is not about borrowing, use, influence, or intertextuality – which are inherently ambiguous in most cases. It is about recognizing the reach of ancient Judaeon intellectual culture into writings received in various collections. In this case, the recovery of the ancient Jewish Aramaic literature at Qumran adds to our understanding of one part of that literary, scribal, and intellectual culture.

This new perspective on a broad common basis, however, must also keep in mind the principles for comparison drawn from tradition-historical studies. Similarities might capture our attention, but differences are equally significant. These help us both understand the ongoing development of a tradition and the

⁴⁸ Compare, for example, the perspectives in Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 138; Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary*, 72; and Coleridge, *The Birth of the Lukan Narrative*, 150–1.

⁴⁹ Marshall listed Gen 37:11; Dan 7:28; Sir 39:2; T. Levi 6:2 and recalls the potential redactional nature of the episode (Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 113–4). Fitzmyer noted the literary and linguistic relevance of LXX Gen 37:11 and LXX Dan 4:28, commenting that their similarity to Luke 2:19 is due to how these texts “show a person puzzled by what she has heard, keeping the words in mind in an effort to fathom their meaning” (Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 413). Nolland (*Luke*, 110) highlighted Gen 37:11 and Dan 7:28. Westermann (“Alttestamentliche Elemente”) considered the aspects of the early chapters of Luke in light of angelic visitation traditions and theophanies in the Hebrew Scriptures but did not engage the ancient Jewish literature.

⁵⁰ Perrin, *The Dynamics of Dream-Vision Revelation*, 91–119; Machiela and Perrin, “Tobit and the Genesis Apocryphon;” Machiela, “Writing, Revelation, and Knowledge.”

specific application of tropes, terminology, or themes in their new context. For example, unlike the Aramaic samples above which rewrite the tales of ancestral figures from the distant past, Luke features the idiom in response to revelations about a contemporary figure. Additionally, the receiver and responder to revelation in Luke is a woman, Mary, which is a rarity in the ancient Jewish literature.⁵¹ It is also noteworthy that with the watchers myth lingering in the background, the efforts of GenAp are to dissociate offspring with otherworldly paternity, whereas Luke's aim is exactly the opposite: to construct a positive association with divine parentage (see below). This list is not exhaustive but flags the type of differences that should be kept in mind in the future study of intersections between the Qumran Aramaic texts and writings of the New Testament.

5.2 Conceptual frameworks

The Lukan materials feature this motif in a *Wunderkind* tradition analogous to the miraculous birth stories of key Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls. The controversy around Noah's birth in GenAp is most relevant here: both the child's salvific potential *and* otherworldly parentage are in question. Similarly, the subsequent materials on the direction and preservation of Noah's line through his progeny are also in the context of a revelatory account. In both instances, GenAp features the heart-hiddenness motif as a peculiar response to a particular type of revelation regarding the paternity and destiny of progeny. As noted above, the ALD dream-vision traditions also interact with these concepts in contexts of establishing, or preserving, the otherworldly association of an ancestor or his offspring.

There are many moments of revelation in Luke-Acts.⁵² Yet the only items featuring the heart-pondering response are those where Jesus' otherworldly parentage is claimed through otherworldly revelation or direct disclosure. Therefore, it is not only the terminological parallel to the Aramaic literature discovered at Qumran that is significant; it is the deployment of the motif in a paralleled literary setting to make a particular theological point that suggests interaction or appropriation of concepts from Aramaic scribal culture. In short, both the idiom and its application are essential.

Furthermore, the Aramaic birth of Noah materials revealed several responses to the negative connotations or contestations that may come with otherworldly conceptions in light of the watchers myth. In view of this association, the legitimacy of a child caught up in an unusual, otherworldly conception comes under suspicion. Jesus too. Stuckenbruck emphasized that such a concern may have operated in the background of the Gospel traditions and shaped the presentation of Mary's miraculous conception.⁵³ This Aramaic framework, however, is multifaceted. While the watchers myth provides an important context for contested conceptions, it is the revelatory responses to otherworldly knowledge about the identity of the dreamer or their offspring that arguably has a more direct bearing on the cases in Luke. All of these need to be taken into account when reading Luke in light of Second Temple traditions. In this sense, it is not only the idiom and its application but also the wider ideological framework provided predominantly by Aramaic writings that matters.

⁵¹ This is particularly so in ancient Jewish texts. Miriam's dream vision of Moses' destiny in L.A.B. 9:10 is an exceptional example of a revelation received by a woman character. For additional consideration of gendered dreamers and interpreters in classical, ancient Near Eastern, and biblical materials, see: Bar, *A Letter That Has Not Been Read*, 84; Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 108; and Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes and Priests*, 33, 44–5, 79.

⁵² See Miller, *Convinced That God Had Called Us*; and De Long, "Angels and Visions." Miller ("Exploring the Function") undertook a comparative study of Abram's revelation in GenAp 19:14–21 and Acts 10:9–33. However, his observations are limited to comments on revelatory typologies and the rhetorical function of the interpretations in each narrative and have no bearing on the present study.

⁵³ Stuckenbruck, *The Myth of Rebellious Angels*, 155.

5.3 Cultural dynamics

There is a need for methodological refinement and reflection on how to best navigate the so-called “parallels” between Qumran texts and New Testament writings. The case study here, however, suggests that the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls are perhaps the most natural space to explore the shared cultural contexts of the emerging Christian literature and the Qumran collection. While the Hebrew writings among the scrolls have shed remarkable new light on select New Testament traditions, most often, these are rather distant dots not easily connected. The Aramaic literature, however, was mobile and part of the larger cultural heritage of Judaism in the mid- to late-Second Temple period. Methodologically speaking, these should be the first agenda item in the Qumran and emerging Christianity conversation. This prescription in particular provides a space for some larger methodological considerations moving forward.

6 Conclusion and course changes

Research on Qumran and early Christianity was once a well-traveled intersection. In some ways, the methodological challenges of navigating this space effectively lead to reduced traffic or at least reluctance to attempt the trip. This is beginning to change. Recent studies increasingly demonstrate a renewed interest in the comparative space between the corpora as well as exhibit greater awareness of the problems and prospects of such interdisciplinary work.

This article is emblematic of the opportunity for both new discoveries and ongoing reflection on method. Our methods will not improve if we do not press ahead with case studies. This is particularly true with the opportunity presented by the Aramaic materials among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The argument above demonstrated that response formulae referencing heart-hiddenness seem to have had a particular currency for revelations that touched on the potential association of a child with an otherworldly parent (for better or worse) and/or the projected future of that person or their progeny. This is not to underplay the importance of the particular application of this concept in the compositional settings of GenAp, ALD, and Luke. It does, however, underscore that culture is the conductor that connects authors and enables the transference of ideas. Intertextuality is insufficient. Influence is generic. Both often lead to quick conclusions that diminish the complexity of accounting for the compositional, conceptual, and cultural dynamics of the Second Temple period that shaped the literature that has come down to us in several collections and canons.

As such, future studies at this intersection should focus less on comparison in the traditional sense than on recovering cultural conversations. With this reorientation, we should be less concerned about hunting for parallels between texts than in thinking of the ways in which all of the scribe–author–editors of the Second Temple literature were participants in developing traditions and drew on these in the processes of identity formation and literary imagination.

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