

this arrangement by genre shows, but also contradictory. One may discern at least two pairs of opposite statements. The most obvious contradiction lies between the idea that Cain is made an example for murderers and the contention that he acts as a model of repentance. Also, in early rabbinic literature “sun” and “leprosy” (the latter amounts to social shunning) commonly connote excellence and worthlessness respectively (see for example the statements in *QohR* 8:2; *WayR* 20:2). A third contradictory parallelism may be hidden in the sayings attributed to Rav and Yose. If Cain’s dog would serve for protection, as Mellinkoff suggests (see also the mention of a dog protecting Abel’s corpse in *PRE* 21), Cain’s horn represents animalization, as the legend about Cain’s death at the hands of Lamech indicates. As the sayings attributed to Hanin and Rav show, these contradictory interpretations of the mark of Cain should probably be read in conjunction with the conflicting traditions about Cain’s repentance (cf. *bSan* 101b; *WayR* 10:5; *Tan Bereshit* 9; *TanB* Bereshit 25; *PRE* 21). On the one hand, Cain is described as not repenting truthfully (*bSan* 101b). On the other, just as Rabbi Hanin would have it, Cain is portrayed as the prototype of repentance in *BerR* 22:13.

An equally positive interpretation of the mark of Cain emerges in *Tan Bereshit* 10, according to which the word “Sabbath” was written on Cain’s face, after the Sabbath pleaded with God for the forgiveness of Cain. In a similar tradition, *TPsj* at Gen 4:15 mentions a letter of the divine name being inscribed on Cain’s face. This tradition should probably be read in conjunction with *PRE* 21, which mentions a letter of the alphabet being written on Cain’s arm (*Shinan*: 148–50). Clearly both texts read *’ôt* in Gen 4:15 as “letter.” According to another explanation, the mark consists of all the letters of the alphabet, which are inscribed on Cain’s hand or face (*PRE* 11).

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Silviu N. Bunta

III. Islam

The biblical mention of the mark of Cain (Gen 4:15) finds no counterpart in the Qur’ān nor, according to Bork-Qaysieh, does it appear in Islamic exegetical or popular traditions. One important exception is *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, which incorporates the Jewish tradition and includes a translation of the following biblical passage: “God put a sign upon Cain so that those who found him would not kill him ...” (Rosenthal: 142, 312).

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Göran Larsson

IV. Visual Arts

After God curses Cain (Gen 4:11–12), the primeval murderer receives a “mark” or “sign” or “omen” (MT *’ôt*) “lest any finding him should kill him” (v. 15). Given the ambiguity of the Hebrew word and what exactly marks Cain as he sets forth into exile, it is not surprising that visual art has rarely focused specifically on it, but rather on the larger story of which the “mark” is part.

Occasionally, artists approach suggesting the imposition of that mark. Thus the Florentine Bartolomeo Bandinelli, in a pen and ink drawing from ca. 1550, shows Cain being cursed by God, with Abel lying on the ground nearby, and the divine hand extending toward Cain’s brow. Conversely, a complex ca. 1850 etching by the German Jewish Eduard Julius Friedrich Bendemann presents Cain covering his brow as God points to his exile, Abel lies dead, and Adam and Eve gesture in despair; one could infer that the mark is suggested as placed on the forehead obscured by his forearm.

Even images of Cain as an isolated figure only infrequently give him a mark, as in the cowering 1898 plaster work, *Cain Pursued by Heavenly Revenge*, by the French sculptor Camille Alaphilippe, or the fierce, expressionistic 1917 painting, *Cain*, by the German Lovis Corinth.

By the 19th and 20th centuries we finally see some specific focus on Cain’s mark, as in the ca. 1826–27 drawing by William Blake of *God the Father Marking Cain’s Forehead*, or the *Mark of Cain* by the contemporary graphic artist, Duncan Long.

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Ori Z. Soltes

See also → Cain (Person); → Cain and Abel, Story of

Cain and Abel, Story of

- I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- II. Judaism
- III. New Testament
- IV. Christianity
- V. Islam
- VI. Literature
- VII. Visual Arts
- VIII. Music
- IX. Film

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

The story of Cain and Abel (Gen 4) is part of the non-Priestly primeval narrative. It is a psychologi-

cally complex account of the Bible's first homicide that includes a cautionary charge about sin. Cain, the firstborn of Adam and Eve is an agriculturalist, while his younger brother Abel is a shepherd. Both brothers bring an offering to God, who prefers Abel's offering of the firstborn of the flock and its fat over Cain's offering of the fruits of the land (vv. 3–4). Cain's disappointment drives him to murder Abel. God investigates and punishes the sin, cursing Cain from the land, and then provides protection for Cain against killers (v. 15).

The name Cain (MT *Qayin*) is given a folk etymology by Eve, who claims "I have gotten (MT *qān-itt*) a man from the Lord" (v. 1 [KJV]); linguistically, the name means "metalworker". Cain's mental state drives the narrative: his fallen countenance (v. 5) leads to the killing (v. 8), which he denies (v. 9), and his agonized plea in response to his punishment (vv. 13–14) solicits God's protection. In contrast, the character of Abel is opaque. Abel's name (MT *Hebel*) means "vanity, breath," evoking the tragic brevity of his life. He never speaks in the narrative. Only his spilled blood cries out on his behalf (v. 10), and at the end of the story, his absence is reiterated: Adam and Eve bear a third child, Seth, "instead of Abel, because Cain killed him" (v. 25).

Several cruxes riddle the text: First, why does God prefer Abel's offering? Traditional interpretations have held the offerings to represent the different moral qualities of the brothers, while socio-anthropological interpretations suggest that God's preference bespeaks a struggle between settled farmers (Cain) and nomadic shepherds (Abel). Second, what is the meaning of the notoriously problematic charge to Cain about sin (v. 7)? Sin (MT *ḥaṭ-ṭā't*) is hypostatized "at the door" as either a crouching animal (MT *rōbēš*), or as a demon (related to Akk. *rābišu*), which Cain must (or might?) control, introducing elements of both divine assurance and personal responsibility. Third, what is the meaning of the mark on Cain (v. 15)? While the nature of the sign (MT *'ōt*) is unspecified, it is God's provision for Cain's shame and fear, and it has an apotropaic effect against potential killers.

The story transitions from the first humans to the genealogy of Seth and the increasing population and wickedness before the flood accounts (Gen 4–6). It takes up the themes of transgression and punishment from Gen 3 and anticipates subsequent stories of divine favor for later-born sons (Gen 21, 25, 27, 37, 48).

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Elaine James

II. Judaism

■ Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism ■ Rabbinic Judaism ■ Medieval Judaism

A. Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism

While the biblical story initially passes no moral judgment on Cain and Abel's character from birth, the ancients did not hesitate to do so. A need was felt to explain why Cain's offering was rejected and Abel's was accepted and what that said about them and about God. The earliest attempt to account for the differential treatment shown the two brothers is in the Septuagint, which characterizes Cain's offering as *θυσία*, a sacrifice meant to be shared between God and the individual making the sacrifice, while Abel's offering is called *δῶρα*, or gifts, intended entirely for the deity. This implies a certain lack of generosity on the part of Cain. The result was that God looked upon (*ἐπεῖδεν*) Abel's gift, but paid no attention (*οὐ προσέσχεν*) to Cain's. The LXX's rendition of Gen 4:7 follows this line of interpretation, implying that Cain sinned in his improper apportioning of the sacrifice (Hayward: 104).

In Philo's allegorical interpretation of Genesis, which was probably based at least in part on the Septuagint, Abel is the God-loving principle of the soul and Cain the self-loving principle. The name Abel means "one who refers all things to God" (*Sacr.* 3–4). Cain's name means acquisition, a self-loving creed (*Worse* 32). Cain stands for vice, Abel for virtue. Though Cain is older, when the brothers' occupations are mentioned, Abel is mentioned first, since with respect to value and honor, virtue takes precedence over vice (*Sacr.* 11–14). Abel, who refers all that is best to God, is called a shepherd, while Cain, who refers them to himself, is called a tiller of the soil (*Sacr.* 51). Cain is criticized because he brought his sacrifice after some days, rather than right away, and because he offered fruits, not the first fruits. In both cases, Cain was honoring himself, or something created, before God and therefore was guilty of impiety (*Sacr.* 71–72). Abel behaved completely differently. Abel's offerings were living, Cain's lifeless. His were first in age and value, Cain's second. His had strength and superior fatness, Cain's only weakness. Abel thus already fulfilled the commandment in Exod 13:11–13 to bring the first born in a timely fashion (*Sacr.* 88–89). Abel's offering from the fat shows that one should set apart for God the gladness and richness of the soul, everything that protects and gives joy (*Sacr.* 136).

According to Philo, Cain invited his brother to come with him to the plain (*sādeh*), a detail that is lacking in the Masoretic Text. Cain wished here to engage his brother in a disputation (*Worse* 1–31). Abel should not have accepted Cain's challenge, because he had no training in rhetoric. He should have exercised caution and retreated. But God would not let him be defeated and the words "Cain

rose up against Abel his brother and slew him" (Gen 4:8) really mean that Cain slew himself. For a soul without the love of virtue is dead to the life of virtue. Paradoxically, Abel has been put to death but still lives, since his voice cries out the wrongs he suffered at the hands of his wicked brother (*Worse* 47–48). Abel is still alive to the incorruptible life while Cain is dead to the life of virtue.

Thus, God's question to Cain, "What have you done?" (Gen 4:10) is an expression of both indignation and mockery: indignation at the treachery of Cain's act and mockery at the futility of his action, for he really acted against himself, and accomplished nothing (*Worse* 69–71). Indeed he slew by guile that which could have enabled him to live a guiltless life (*Worse* 78). Cain is cursed by God from the earth (Gen 4:11) because the earth, the seat of the senses, is the source of our most dire misfortunes (*Worse* 98). The earth opening its mouth to accept Abel's blood is symbolic of Cain who opened himself up to all kinds of outward, corrupting influences, which enabled him to facilitate the destruction of Abel, or the teaching devoted to God (*Worse* 103). The earth will never satisfy him; he may toil at it, but he will never till it in a skilled manner (*Worse* 104). Cain's punishment is to wander the earth, never finding rest with Noah, or laughter with Isaac or hope with Enos (*Worse* 120–38). He will be abandoned by God, which is worse than being punished (*Worse* 141–50). But even though Cain chose to be cut off from the enjoyment of pleasure, he was not cut off from the sight of God (*Worse* 158).

The anonymous author of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, a contemporary of Philo, attributes Cain's sin to his departure from wisdom in a fit of anger, which led him to murder his brother. He even sees this act as the cause of the flood. Cain is characterized as unjust or unrighteous (*ἀδίκος*) (*Wis* 10:3–4).

Josephus portrays the brothers as exemplars of good and evil: "Now the brothers enjoyed different pursuits. Abel, the younger, had respect for justice and, believing that God was with him in all his actions, took care to be virtuous; he led the life of a shepherd. Cain, on the other hand, was thoroughly wicked and only concerned with profit; he was the first to think of plowing the earth (*Ant.* 1.53). God favored Abel's sacrifice over Cain's because "God is honored by things that grow spontaneously, in accordance with natural laws, not by products forced from nature by the ingenuity of grasping man" (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.54). God's choice of Abel over Cain would seem to indicate an evaluation of their fundamental nature: Abel was righteous and just; Cain was wicked and unjust. Even Cain's choice of occupation is criticized as being depraved, though with seeming little justification. But Cain's evil nature is soon confirmed by his cold-blooded murder of his

innocent brother. The brothers are similarly characterized in the NT (Matt 23:35; 1 John 3:12). A new element in Josephus, found also in the Targumim and the NT, is the emphasis on deeds. Abel recognized God's presence through his deeds, while Cain looked only for profit and so his deeds were frowned upon by God (*Ant.* 1.53; cf. Hayward: 112–13).

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Barry Dov Walfish

B. Rabbinic Judaism

Genesis 4 juxtaposes Cain and Abel in their differing occupations, one a keeper of sheep, the other a tiller of the ground. This sets the scene for their conflict which culminates in God's different reactions to their sacrifices. God's unexplained preference for the offerings of Abel constituted a major interpretive dilemma for the ancient rabbis. One explanation for God's apparent capriciousness speaks of the defective nature of Cain's offerings, which consisted of remnants of his own meals and seeds of flax (*Tan Bereshit* 9; *PRE* 21) or of inferior crops (*BerR* 22:5). Abel, on the other hand, brought properly the firstlings of his sheep. Some sources date the sacrifices to the fourteenth of Nisan, as a response to Adam's request to his sons to mark the day as it would be in the future by the Jewish people (*TPsJ* at Gen 4:3; *PRE* 21; cf. *BerR* 22:4). The association of the offerings of Cain and Abel with the Passover may be reflected in early Jewish liturgical practices that possibly go back to the Second Temple period and in the early Christian practice of reading the book of Genesis during Lent (see Vermes: 111–12; Glenthøj: 41), which coincided roughly with Nisan.

Another explanation for God's preference for Abel's offerings is that Cain persecuted Abel even before they brought their offerings and God always favors the oppressed (*WayR* 27:5).

The omission in the biblical narrative of an explicit motive for the murder of Abel invited speculation. The most readily available explanation for the murder of Abel, namely, the mere fact that Abel's sacrifice was accepted while Cain's was not, does not figure prominently in rabbinic sources (cf. *PRE* 21). Instead early rabbinic literature offers several more creative explanations. For one, several

texts mention that God's acceptance of the sacrifices of Abel generated a heated theological dispute between the two brothers (e.g., *TPsJ* and *TFrag* at Gen 4:8; see the review of this tradition in Vermes: 114–16). In this dispute Cain contended that the divine love, with which the world was created, was only a form of arbitrariness and personal preference. In response Abel argued that the divine love did not function independently of justice. Abel's more or less covert accusation was that Cain did not bring his sacrifices properly and was justly underserving of divine favors. According to this tradition, it is this statement of Abel that provoked his murder (see also Vermes: 114; Kugel 1989: 177–78).

According to another midrash, the conflict between Cain and Abel originated in their partition of the world (mentioned in *BerR* 22:7). According to one variant the brothers agreed to split the world, Cain taking the land, and Abel the sheep and other portable items. But Cain wouldn't let his brother stay on his land and Abel wouldn't let Cain wear his clothes which he claimed were his own (*BerR* 22:7; *ShemR* 31:17). Their inability to share their property inevitably led to their bloody encounter. According to another variant, they agreed to share the world, Abel even agreeing to Cain having a double portion as first-born, but when Cain insisted on taking the land on which Abel had made his sacrifice, Abel refused (*Tan Bereshit* 9).

Yet another opinion sees their dispute as having a religious foundation: they were arguing over whose land would be used for the building of the temple (*šādeh* understood as alluding to the temple [*Tan Bereshit* 9; *BerR* 22:7]).

Another school of thought describes the murder of Abel as a crime of passion. Cain was jealous of Abel because of the beauty of the latter's twin sister and wife (*PRE* 21) or because he desired the extra twin sister that Abel was born with (*BerR* 22:7). The rabbis seem to be suggesting that the most likely causes for murder are disputes over property, ideology/religious belief, or possession of a woman.

The murder weapon is alternatively identified as a rock, a club, or a sword (*BerR* 22:7; *bSan* 37b; *PRE* 21; *Tan Bereshit* 9). One particularly gruesome description has Cain inflicting wounds all over Abel's body until he found the place from where his brother's soul would depart, which proved to be the neck (*bSan* 37b; *Tan Bereshit* 9). According to another midrash, in committing this first murder Cain had to learn how to kill and slew Abel the way in which he had seen Adam sacrifice oxen (*BerR* 22:7).

Some sources read Gen 4:13 as stating that Cain made penitence for his sin (*BerR* 22:13; *WayR* 10:5; *Tan Bereshit* 9; *TanB* 1.25; *PRE* 21), although other interpretations question the sincerity of his repentance (*BerR* 22:13; *bSan* 101b). According to *Tan Bereshit* 9, Cain blamed his transgression on

God for having endowed him with an evil inclination and for enraging him by accepting only the offering of Abel.

The Cain and Abel story is frequently cited in Jewish sources as a cautionary tale about the horror of murder. The Mishnah (*San* 4:5) teaches that witnesses in capital cases should be reminded of this story in order to warn them against putting someone to death unjustly. Doing so removes not just one person from the earth, but also all of his or her potential descendants. The unusual language of the verse (4:10), "the bloods (*demei*; plural) of your brother," is cited, signifying both his blood and the blood of his unborn descendants (see also *BerR* 22:9; most Targumim at Gen 4:8, for which see Vermes: 117). Moreover, *elai* in this verse was read as 'alai and the complaint rising from Abel's blood was seen as directed not only against Cain, but also against God (*Tan Bereshit* 9).

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Silviu N. Bunta

C. Medieval Judaism

Jewish works of law, thought, and exegesis understand the story of Cain and Abel in many different ways, but virtually all of them attempt to introduce a moral lesson into the text. They are troubled by why God preferred Abel's sacrifice over Cain's, why the murder was committed, and other questions left unanswered by the Bible.

The more common exegetical tradition (e.g., Rashi, commentary to 4:3, following *BerR* 22) is that Cain had a lax attitude to sacrifices. Noticing that Abel's sacrifice included "the fat" (i.e., the most desirable parts of the animal), exegetes inferred that Cain's sacrifice did not. Cain "may be compared to an evil sharecropper who eats all the (choice) early crops himself, and gives the late crops to the landowner" (*BerR*, *ibid.*). In fact, a number of exegetes, led by Nahmanides (commentary to 4:3) see this story as proving the intrinsic value of sacrifices and refuting the theories of rationalists like Maimonides who saw sacrifices as having utilitarian value only, as a way to wean human beings from idolatry. Some modern readers agree with Nahmanides, noting that the text "assumes the willingness to sacrifice and worship to be innate in man, to be the utterly natural, instinctive and spontaneous expression of the spirit of religious devotion" (Sarna: 29).

The targumic and midrashic traditions also struggle to find a motive for the crime of murder, apparently unsatisfied with the simple explanation that jealousy about the sacrifices was the cause. Most of the different targumic versions and fragments redefine the dispute between Cain and Abel as one of theology. In one version, Cain says, “there is no judgment, there is no judge. No good reward will be given to the righteous ... The world was not created by mercy.” Abel answers, “I see that the world was created by mercy and is governed according to the fruit of good deeds.” Scholars argue about which specific contemporaneous heresies the Targumim were attributing to Cain (Levine; Bassler).

There is not one agreed-upon definition of “the mark of Cain” in the Jewish tradition, and the symbol does not play a central role in Jewish thought. Opinions are divided even about whether its primary function was protective or punitive (*BerR* 22).

Much of rabbinic tradition portrays Cain as suffering a fate worse than what might appear from the biblical narrative. God forgave him only until the seventh generation and then wiped out his line, (see e.g., Rashi, commentary to 4:24) just as Abel’s (potential) line was wiped out. (Of course a simple reading of the biblical text suggests that the line of Cain came to an end shortly thereafter, with the flood.)

Yet a parallel Jewish tradition of interpretation (e.g., Nahmanides and Ibn Ezra’s commentaries to 4:13) sees Cain as the first true penitent, interpreting his words to God as a statement of contrition – “My sin is too great to bear” – rather than a complaint – “My punishment is too great to bear.” While some see Cain as offering only a “repentance of trickery” (*BerR* 22), others view him as sincerely remorseful. His repentance is even mentioned as a model for later generations in the liturgy for the High Holidays, for example in the prayer, *Horeta derekh teshuvah* (Goldschmidt: 154).

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Martin Lockshin

III. New Testament

The story of Cain and Abel plays only a minor role in the NT; Matt 23:35 = Luke 11:51 (traditionally assigned to Q) refers to the blood of Abel. This is immediately followed by a reference to the blood of Zechariah. If this is the Zechariah of 2 Chr 24:20–22 (a disputed point), the line may reflect a Bible

that, like the Masoretic Text, concludes with Chronicles (cf. *bBat* 14b), so that Cain and Zechariah are the first and the last in a series. Whether or not that is the case, the gospel text clearly harks back to Gen 4:10, where God says to Cain, “your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground!” – words to which Jewish scholars paid much attention (for early commentary on them see *mSan* 4:5). Jesus’s saying may also, at least in Matthew, assume the extracanonical tradition that Abel was stoned, for in the First Gospel the lines about Abel and Zechariah are followed by a reference to stoning (23:37), and although Gen 4:8 says only that “Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him,” some ancient readers inferred from the setting – “they were in the field” (Gen 4:8) – that it must have been a stone (e.g., *Jub.* 4:31; *TPsJ* on Gen 4:8; *PRE* 21).

A second gospel text to make use of the story of Cain and Abel is Matt 5:21–25, although here we do not have explicit reference or quotation but rather an allusion. Jesus equates anger with murder and then illustrates his imperative by telling his hearers that, if they are offering a gift upon the altar and there remember that their brother has something against them, they should leave their gift before the altar and first seek reconciliation with their brother; only having done this should they offer their gift. A number of exegetes, beginning with Cyprian in the 3rd century CE, have understandably associated Matthew’s words with Gen 4. The two texts are linked in several ways: both have murder as their subject; both associate murder with anger (cf. Gen 4:5; Wis 10:3); both are about brothers; and both depict individuals at a sacrificial altar.

Genesis 4:1–16 also gains passing notice in Heb 11:4, where we read that Abel offered his gift by faith, which seemingly explains why his offering was more acceptable than Cain’s offering. This goes beyond the letter of Genesis, but later tradition understandably tended to exalt Abel, and targumic traditions made him a man of strong religious faith (e.g., *TPsJ* on Gen 4:8). Hebrews again mentions Abel, or rather his blood, in 12:24. Some commentators see Abel here as the first martyr, whose death had atoning effect; others set the cry for vengeance associated with Abel’s blood over against the reconciling effect of Jesus’s death. In either case, the point is to stress the overriding value of Jesus’s sacrificial death. As with Matt 23:35 and Luke 11:51, Gen 4:10 is in the background.

1 John 3:12 speaks of Cain, who murdered his brother “because his own deeds were evil and his brother’s righteous.” In accord with Matt 23:35 and Heb 11:4 and much Jewish tradition, Cain and Abel are presented as sinner and saint (cf. Wis 10:3; Philo, *QG* Gen 8.12.21; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.53; *T. Benj.* 7:4). Moreover, if in Matt 5:21–25, anger is

equated with murder, in 1 John 3:11–17, hatred is equated with murder. It is possible that 1 John 3 depends upon the tradition behind Matt 5:21–27.

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IV. Christianity

This entry considers the story of Cain and Abel as a whole in ancient and medieval Christian interpreters. The narrative was important in fashioning Christian identity with respect to sacrifice. Eusebius links the story with the sacrifice of Christ, which calls for the cessation of sacrifice among Christians. Justin Martyr and Tertullian use the passage to argue against the necessity of circumcision, suggesting that otherwise God could not have viewed Abel's sacrifice as pleasing (*Dial.*; *Adv. Jud.*). The discussion of faith and sacrifice is critical to the Reformation, where Luther and Calvin cite this passage as confirmation of their doctrine of *sola fidei* (*Gen.*).

The nature of sin is also a prevalent theme, and especially the transmission of original sin. Augustine determines that both brothers are born of Adam carnal and evil, but Abel is elected by grace as a member of the heavenly city, while Cain establishes the earthly city (*Civ.*). Bede explains Gen 4:1 as the dissemination of sin through conception (*Gen.*). Luther uses the "crouching" imagery of Gen 4:7 to describe the nature of sin, unable to long remain hidden in the conscience. Calvin, among others, believes that Cain reacts to his punishment out of desperation for his life, rather than out of remorse. Most interpreters also seek to preserve God's omniscience when God questions Cain about his sin. Ephrem, for example, asserts that God does not approach Cain unaware, but in kindness, seeking his repentance (*Gen.*). Jerome observes that God committed Cain to the same punishment that Cain inflicted upon Abel, but God extends his life and his affliction (*Epist.*).

Spiritual readings are also common in the tradition. Early interpreters, such as Irenaeus, link Cain's insincere sacrifice with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (*Haer.*). Ambrose, in his sermonic work on Cain and Abel, provides an extended spiritual interpretation styled after Philo's *On the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel*. For Ambrose, the two brothers function as consistent types: virtue and vice, orthodoxy and heresy, Christians and Jews. Isidore also represents this strong typological interpretation, where Cain's obstinacy and rejection of Abel is linked with the attitude of the Jews toward Christ (*PL* 83). Bede makes similar associations: Cain and the Jews are the first-born, while Abel and the Gentiles are second; the sacrifice of Cain is the carnal works of the Jews, while the sacrifice of Abel is the prayers of the saints offered up in love of God. From Irenaeus onward, most interpreters mention how the innocent martyrdom of the shepherd Abel prefigures the sacrificial Lamb of Christ. Isidore also connects

Cain's toiling on the earth to the flesh of Christ that works for the salvation of his people. Other mystical interpretations include that of Meister Eckhart, who compares Cain to the evil, sensual part of the human that overtakes Abel, the rational part (*Ex.*).

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Stephen O. Presley

V. Islam

The biblical account of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1–16) also finds expression in the Qur'ān (S 5:27–32), where the two brothers, who are not named, "offered each a sacrifice and it was accepted from the one ... [but not] ... the other" (S 5:27). This unequal treatment is generally explained by the fact that one brother, named Hābil later in Muslim tradition, was God-fearing, while the other, named Qābil, was not. However, it has also been linked to Cain's rejecting the plan to marry Abel's twin sister because he wanted to marry his own, more beautiful, twin instead (cf. al-Ṭabarī: 307–17).

The narrative addresses important ethical concerns and includes the oft-quoted passage about the value of even one human life (S 5:32): "Whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whosoever saveth the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind." There are, however, passages that appear to contradict standard Islamic understanding. In S 5:29, for example, Hābil hopes that if Cain kills him, Cain will become liable for both their sins. This seems to go against the general Islamic notion that one cannot bear another's burden of guilt (cf. S 6:164). In order to resolve this contradiction, one Ḥadīth argues that "a murderer will be charged with the sins of his victim" (Busse: 271).

The example of Cain and Abel has been employed throughout Islamic history, including present day writers such as Naguib Mahfouz in the book *Children of the Alley* (*Awlād ḥaratinā*).

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Göran Larsson

VI. Literature

The Genesis-based story of Cain and Abel has been described as a key myth in Western literature. Among the earliest treatments is that in the Old English *Genesis A*, which is essentially a versification of the Vulgate text of Gen 4. Quite different is *Genesis B*, which both engages with the blood-feud diction of early heroic literature and transcends it by casting Cain as a figure moving towards damnation.

The Old English poem *Beowulf* is the story of Cain's evil progeny, focalized in the monster Grendel, whose defeat by Beowulf represents the hope of civilized values in a violent world. Dante's *Inferno* inherits the exiled Cain, the alienated city-dweller.

European medieval drama elaborates on such details as the weapon used in the murder of Abel and the nature of the mark placed on Cain, but it is in the English mystery plays that Cain becomes first a comic figure and then (in the Wakefield *Mactacio Abel*) a demonic villain. A Florence play dramatizes the legend of Lamech's accidental slaying of Cain while hunting. Both Cain and Abel are finally led away by devils to hell in the Anglo-Norman *Adam*, though Abel is treated less harshly.

Luther's commentary on the passage in Gen 4 takes a proto-novelistic interest in the emotional background to the first murder, arguing that God rejected Cain's offering not because his sacrifice was inferior but because of Cain's inner disposition.

The Romantic period saw a renewed interest in the story, with Gessner's *Der Tod Abels* (1760) pioneering the transformation of Cain from villain to object of sympathy. In 1798 Coleridge and Wordsworth agreed to collaborate on a poem on the death of Abel. The only direct outcome was Coleridge's gothic prose fragment *The Wanderings of Cain* (finally completed in 1828), but *The Ancient Mariner* (1798) was deeply influenced by the theme. Byron's *Cain, a Mystery* (1821) presented Cain as a Promethean figure, prompted by Lucifer to defy the destructive God of creation. Cain's abhorrence of animal sacrifice tragically makes him death's agent, as he reflects in his despairing soliloquy after the murder. The work's pessimistic cosmic vision attracted fierce controversy, leading Blake to publish his short scene *The Ghost of Abel*, ambiguously addressed "to Lord Byron in the Wilderness." Here both

Abel's offering and Cain's murder of Abel were sacrifices to a heathen god, prompting the "true God" to intervene to halt the cycle of violence by setting the mark on Cain. Blake's watercolor *The Body of Abel Found by Adam and Eve*, with Cain fleeing in tormented horror, has achieved more currency than his playlet. Clough's poem *The Mystery of the Fall* has a Cain overwhelmed by guilt after the so-easy first murder, but comforted by Eve who reveals to him the "mighty mythus of the Fall."

Willkie Collins's *Legacy of Cain* (1888) is a cliff-hanger about whether the daughter of a murderer will inherit her characteristics. It turns out that free will is stronger than heredity, prompting the narrator-character to ask, "where is the trace that reveals that the first murder in the world was the product of inherited crime?"

Baudelaire's "Abel and Cain" in *Fleurs du Mal* (1857) typically reverses the name-order in its title even as it reverses the cultural standing of Cain in relation to Abel in a revolt against God. Hugo's Cain in *La Conscience* (1856) is pursued by the divine eye, which even the construction of a high-walled city fails to thwart. The grave cannot shelter Cain from the eye. Set against a background of antisemitism, Maxim Gorky's short story *Cain and Artyom* (1898) is a disturbing tale of an outcast Cain who rescues the village bully after he has been almost beaten to death, enjoying the bully's temporary protection until the mood changes and Cain himself faces the renewed threat of violence from the mob. Within First World War poetry, Siegfried Sassoon's *Ancient History* (1920) has Adam lamenting the death of both of his sons, but contrasting noble Cain ("the grandest of them all") with the soft and fair Abel: "Afraid to fight; was murder more disgrace? ... God always hated Cain."

The story has been identified as a major motif in modern literature, notably as a study of moral degeneracy in Melville's *Billy Budd* (ca. 1891) and of ethical transcendence in Conrad's *The Secret Sharer* (1912). Hermann Hesse's *Demian* (1920) has as its main protagonist Emil Sinclair, whose alter ego Demian (Abel) must die in the trenches of World War I before Emil can achieve integration as the type of a new man. Unamuno's *Abel Sanchez* (1917) and *El Otro* (1932) are important reworkings, the first exploring the origins of envy in a "country of hatreds," the latter involving twin brothers who marry twin sisters; the nature of human identity is interrogated in the puzzle over which is the surviving brother. In James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* (1939) Shem-Shaun are one duality among others.

The Second World War connects the story again with the experience of annihilation on a large scale. Anne Ridler's verse drama *Cain* (1943) echoes the tone of *Murder in the Cathedral*. Demetrios Capetanakis's poem *Abel* (1944) has Abel welcoming his brother through the gate of death: "I am my

brother opening the gate.” Edith Sitwell’s major poem *The Shadow of Cain* (1947) was a response to reading eye-witness accounts of the effects of the Hiroshima bomb.

Herman Wouk’s *The Caine Mutiny* (1951), a very popular World War II naval thriller, plays upon Cainite themes, but rather superficially. John Steinbeck’s expansive novel *East of Eden* (1952) draws on the author’s acquaintance with midrash (through reading Ginzberg’s *Legends*) and fascination with Hollywood to produce a biblical epic set in the Sierras Valley. The plot was greatly simplified for the film rendition starring James Dean. Two later novels by Michel Tournier, *The Ogre* and *Gemini*, integrate the story more reflexively into narratives driven by the French experience of World War II.

References in Samuel Beckett’s works mostly center on Cain’s exile. In *Malone Dies* (1956), mention of the moon “where Cain toils bowed beneath his burden” recaps medieval legend, as do lines in *Dante and the Lobster*.

Kolakowski’s whimsical “Marxist” interpretation of the story forms a section of *The Devil and Scripture* (1957), in which Cain’s failing is his inability to accept the economic fact that market-prices are not related to the amount of work put into the production of different goods, leading him to take out his frustration on his fellow-worker. Hildeheimer’s novel *Tynset* (1965) has the first-person narrator questioning the justice of the Gen 4 story and placing the mark (“a heavy burden, a sign, a stain on the forehead”) on God instead of on Cain. Borges’ *Legend* (1969) is an ironic conversation between Abel and Cain after Abel’s death. Camus’ *A Happy Death* (published posthumously, 1971) replicates the economy of the biblical narrative in its story of Mersault’s murder of Zerkow, in which the murderer finally experiences a sense of brotherhood with his victim on his own deathbed, whereas Gregor von Rezzori’s novel *The Death of My Brother Abel* (1976) is an expansive disquisition on survivor-guilt. Dan Pagis, in his poem *Autobiography* and elsewhere, relates the story devastatingly to the Holocaust. Patrick Creagh’s *To Abel by Day* (1970) is a monologue about the desolation of the modern city, addressed by Cain to the dead Abel. Ivan Vladislavic’s South African short story *The Brothers* (1992) merges the story in postmodern fashion with the St. Christopher legend. Finally, Brad Meltzer’s *The Book of Lies* (2008), a mass-market thriller, treats the comic-book Superman legend as an antidote to elements of Cain-lore and José Saramago’s final novel, *Cain* (2011), extends Cain’s wanderings extravagantly to his intervention at the Aqedah and as a passenger in Noah’s ark.

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Anthony Swindell

VII. Visual Arts

1. Description of Normative Figure. The biblical account of the first instance of sibling rivalry leading to the first murder (and leading, by way of the failure of Cain to accept responsibility for his act of murdering his brother, to his being marked as a fugitive and a wanderer) has yielded a range of artworks focusing on different aspects of the narrative, from act of murder to aftermath.

2. Attributes and/or Symbols. The closest to an attribute is the upraised weapon typically in Cain’s hand.

3. Frequent Iconographic Motifs and Works. Lorenzo Ghiberti’s 1425–52 bronze panel on the Florentine baptistery doors presents the entire sequence of events in an oblique pyramidal mountain setting. At the summit, the two brothers offer their gifts to God (Gen 4:3–5). At the next level down, Abel grazes his sheep to the left, while to the right he is shown begin slain (Cain wields an enormous pike). Along the base, to the left Cain plows with his oxen, while to the right (directly below the murder; Gen 4:8) he departs in banishment, twisting and looking up to an admonishing God (Gen 4:10–12) swooping out at him (and at the viewer) from the clouds.

Jan and Hubert van Eyck, in their 1432 oil-painted Ghent Altarpiece, offer two grisaille scenes fitted into the curved frame above the full-length figures of Adam and Eve. Above Adam, Abel holds aloft his offering as Cain bends to lift or place a sheaf of grain, looking over his shoulder enviously at his brother (see fig. 19.a). Above Eve, Abel cries out as Cain pushes him down by the throat with one hand and raises a sickle-like weapon above his head with the other (see fig. 19.b).

Albrecht Dürer’s 1511 woodcut presents the stark murder: a vertically surging Cain, his shovel-like weapon raised above his head, is about to bring it down on an Abel twisted horizontally in an odd perspective, his back to the viewer.



Fig. 19.a J. and H. van Eyck, "The sacrifice of Cain and Abel" (1432)



Fig. 19.b J. and H. van Eyck, "Cain kills Abel" (1432)

Among the instances of what became a popular subject in 19th-century art, William Blake's ca. 1826 ink, tempera, and gold image depicts Adam and Eve finding the body of Abel. Eve bends over her fallen son, her hair streaming down onto his chest, her arms shaped as an oblique circle to encompass his head and hers; Adam rises behind them on his knees, his form echoing the rocky darkness behind him, as he leans slightly to his right and looks to his left where, across the picture plane, Cain flees, pursued by a hail of flame. His figure marks a long diagonal from his right elbow down to his extended right back foot, the tip of which is obscured by the lip of a rectangular hole in the ground (there is a shovel next to it, its blade near Cain's foot: both murder weapon and grave-digging instrument?) – simultaneously the grave dug for Abel and the spiritual grave of Cain and his descendants.

William-Adolphe Bouguereau's 1888 oil on canvas, *The First Mourning*, presents this same moment as a pieta. Abel lies stretched across Adam's knees, Eve crumples against Adam's chest, weeping, while Adam, his face in shadow, inclines his head toward Eve and places his hand against his heart, the splay of his fingers a subtle counterpoint to the splaying of everyone's limbs from the center of the composition in Adam's wrenched gut.

By contrast, James Tissot's ca. 1886 watercolor, *Cain Leads Abel to Death*, chooses a preliminary moment, in which the older Cain, his head framed by wild red hair and beard, a primitive axe in his right hand, holds a beardless, almost child-like Abel by the wrist, pulling him forward to his demise.

In Jewish art perhaps the earliest representation is on the frontispiece of the ca. 1290 Schocken Bible from southern Germany, where the third in a series of tiny tondos framed in gold leaf depicts Abel re-

clining along a hillock as a hatted Cain brings a mattock inexorably down toward his brother's head. Whereas the hat might reflect the obligatory "horned hat" required of Jews associated with both Satan and Cain by the church, among 20th-century Jewish artists the subject would become popular particularly after the Holocaust with an opposite understanding: the victim, Abel, became the Jew.

Among the important recent Jewish artists who address the subject are Jack Levine (in whose 1961 and 1983 images we recognize a confused look on Cain's face after the death of the prostrate Abel, as if Cain doesn't fully comprehend what he has done) and Ben-Zion, whose 1983 work presents a post-murder Cain simply going about his farming as if unaware of what he has done. Archie Rand's acrylic painting from 2000 translates the murder to a contemporary city street, with cops, doctors, a photographer, and Abel's wife in a distinctly comic-book style.

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Ori Z. Soltes

VIII. Music

The Cain and Abel narrative was sometimes represented as a part of the larger narrative of Adam and Eve (see "Adam and Eve, Story of") as for example in the 12th-century spoken *Ordo representationis Ade* or *Play of Adam*, where also one of the included responsories specifically regard the Cain and Abel narrative. Similarly, it also had its place in spoken English mystery cycles (containing also some, now often unknown, music): in the York Cycle, the earliest extant (15th cent.), there was a special Cain and

Abel play (now incompletely preserved) which show connections to the Septuagesima Sunday Gospel reading (King: 57–58). In the Chester Cycle, preserved from ca. 1600, there is a reference to minstrels playing after the murder when God comes back to ask Cain for his brother (Mills: 45).

More commonly in oratorios since the 17th century, the story of Cain and Abel was treated separately (although Adam and Eve would normally appear in the story). Important examples are Alessandro Scarlatti's oratorio *Il primo omicidio* (Venice 1707, The first murder), where the librettist is unknown and Metastasio's libretto *Morte d'Abele* (1732) which was set by a number of composers during the 18th and even into the 19th century (Francesco Morlachi in 1821).

Also operas on the theme have been written: Johann Philipp Förtsch's opera *Cain und Abel: Oder der verzweifelnde Bruder-Mörder* (Cain and Abel: Or the despairing Brother Murderer) by Johann Philipp Förtsch to a libretto by Christian Heinrich Postel for the Hamburg opera in 1689. Very recently, the Danish composer Bent Lorentzen has written a free (non devotional) operatic version of the biblical narrative *Kain og Abel* to his own text, performed at the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen, in 2006.

The 1945 collaborative *Genesis Suite* (see again "Adam and Eve, Story of") included as its fourth element *Cain and Abel*, written by the French composer Darius Milhaud (1892–1974) in which Gen 4:1–16 is recited. The British composer Sir John Tavener composed a cantata *Cain and Abel* in 1965 based also on the York Mystery Cycle.

Works: ■ *Genesis Suite* (1945): A Musical Collaboration by Arnold Schönberg, Nathaniel Shilkret, Alexandre Tansman, Darius Milhaud, Mario Castenuovo-Tedesco, Ernst Toch, and Igor Stravinsky. Conducted by Gerard Schwarz (Milken Archive of American Jewish Music and Naxos 2004).

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Nils Holger Petersen

IX. Film

The biblical story of Adam and Eve's sons, Cain and Abel, is the basis for many films about brothers and rivals.

1. Biblical Films. It is surprising that there are not more films that portray Cain and Abel. The best known is John Huston's *The Bible: In the Beginning ...* (1966), which includes episodes from Genesis, from the creation stories to Abraham and Sarah. The

Cain and Abel episode is brief and direct, much as we would expect from a visualizing of the Genesis verses. While Franco Nero is a strong screen presence as Abel, it is Richard Harris as a rather histrionic Cain who makes the greater impact. He has little time to communicate his jealousy but there is a DeMille-like storm with lightning to brand his forehead with the mark. There is a touch of pathos in having Adam and Eve bury Abel.

Cain also makes a brief appearance in Ermanno Olmi's *Genesis: la creazione e il diluvio* (1994) which also includes episodes from the creation through the Noah story, including a stylized Cain and Abel story. Historical lists and databases include a French silent version, *Cain et Abel* (dir. Henri Andréani, 1911); a Greek film, *Kain kai Abel* (dirs. S. Dirmikis/Kimon Spathopoulos, 1931); and a Mexican version of the story, *Cain y Abel* (dir. Rene Cardona, 1954).

A documentary on Cain and Abel appeared in Elie Wiesel's 1993 series *Great Figures of the Bible*. In published interviews by Richard Heffner, Wiesel appeals to talmudic interpretations and adds a psychological observation, asking whether Cain and Abel were really one person and Cain killed the Abel within himself (Heffner: 3–15). Bill Moyers also conducted a series of discussions on biblical texts including the story of Cain and Abel, *Genesis: A Living Conversation* (1996) for PBS with Mandy Patinkin reading a paraphrase of the text and a wide-ranging group of interested parties (rather than experts) involved in discussing the usual issues.

There is a 40-minute animated version of the story, the sons of Adam, Habil, and Qubal. This is a Muslim version of the story in 3D animation and color, based on the writing of Sayyid Qutub and derived from the Qur'an.

The Simpsons included an episode, entitled "Homer and Ned's Hail Mary Pass" (dir. Steven Dean Moore, 2005), which drew on the Cain and Abel story. When Rodd and Todd Flanders ask their father many questions, he helps them make their movie of the story. Reverence is not of the essence.

2. Fraternal Rivalry. Not all fraternal rivalry is necessarily an image of the Cain and Abel story – but it could almost seem not too far-fetched a possibility. Jeffrey Archer was quite clear in conferring the title *Kane and Abel* upon his novel about two rivals (not blood brothers) born on the same day, one in the U.S., the other in Europe, who vied with each other in the world of business. In this work, which was filmed as a miniseries in 1985 (dir. Buzz Kulik), Kane is a Boston banker and Abel a refugee from Russia who finally owns a chain of hotels. Theirs is a fratricidal struggle for power and wealth. The Philippines' most prominent director, Lino Brocka, filmed a contemporary Asian version of the struggle of two brothers, Ellis and Loren. The film is *Cain at Abel* (1982).

On a more apocalyptic level, the story forms a basis for the supernatural thriller *Megiddo: The Omega Code II* (dir. Brian Trenchard-Smith, 2001). The *Omega Code* films, like the *Left Behind* series, draw on literalist interpretations of texts from the book of Revelation and the prophet Ezekiel. Advertized as a Cain and Abel story, *Megiddo* structures its apocalyptic crisis around two male rivals who compete over the affections of a woman and the fate of the world.

Romantic rivalry for the same woman is also the highly melodramatic struggle at the core of King Vidor's 1945 *Duel in the Sun*, with Gregory Peck as the Cain figure and Joseph Cotton, the Abel. This film was seen as provocatively lurid at the time, especially the mountaintop fight between the brothers over Jennifer Jones. A 1986 Hindi film, directed by Mrini Sin, *Genesis*, uses the same plot device, the rivalry for a woman. This time a farmer and a weaver are friends until their lives are disrupted by the arrival of a woman.

Commentators like to use the Cain and Abel archetype when writing about brothers and rivalry in cinema. Films which have been scrutinized in this way include *Rated X*, the story of the pornography film producers, the Mitchell Brothers (2000), in which Emilio Estevez directed himself and his brother, Charlie Sheen, as the Mitchells. More extensive were the comments on John Hillcoat's 2005 frontier epic about Australia in the late 19th century, *The Proposition*. This time the (comparatively) good brother, Guy Pearce, is trapped by the authorities with the threat of execution of his younger, mentally impaired brother so that he will seek out his renegade and vicious older brother, Danny Huston. Abel here has to betray Cain and hand him over to the law. The archetypal story seemed to offer a basis for interpreting the drama and the family dynamics of the screenplay.

These two brothers come from Irish migrant families. These are the same origins for the two brothers in Daniel McCarthy's *Irish Eyes* (2002), which presents the world of the Boston Irish mafia where, for an obvious dramatic Cain-and-Abel clash, one brother becomes the DA (John Novak) and the other, the head of the gangsters (Daniel Baldwin).

The Matrix trilogy (dirs. Andy and Lana Wachowski, 1999–2003) draws on all kinds of religious and mythical traditions and the exegesis has provided websites with long and detailed discussion. Two of the thugs for the Merovingian king are named Cain and Abel. Discussion focuses on the biblical Cain and Abel as being good and evil, not both evil as in *The Matrix*. One solution is that some gnostic tales have both Cain and Abel as sons of demons. Perhaps the Wachowski brothers were, as with so many other ingredients in their screenplay, just playing and tantalizing.

3. Fratricide. The rivalry between the Cain and Abel figures does not always lead to fratricide. Often, or perhaps usually, it does. One of the ever-popular genres in cinema is that of the struggle between twins, the good twin and the evil twin. Clearly, this is Cain and Abel archetypal material. Prominent examples of this kind of twin struggle include Olivia de Havilland's tour-de-force in *The Dark Mirror* (dir. Robert Siodmak, 1948) and Bette Davis twice, in both *A Stolen Life* (dir. Curtis Bernhardt, 1946) and *Dead Ringer* (dir. Paul Henreid, 1964). At a deeper level of personal identity, David Cronenberg explored the interactions of twins, one introverted and one extraverted, in *Dead Ringers* (1988).

Cronenberg explored another facet of fraternal rivalry in *A History of Violence* (2005). Viggo Mortensen plays a younger brother from a Philadelphia gang who has made a new life for himself in the Midwest. His family has no idea of his origins until he is discovered and brought back to face the vindictive brother (William Hurt) whom he is accused of betraying.

In a classic film noir, *Force of Evil* (dir. Abraham Polonsky, 1948), John Garfield and Thomas Gomez play brothers locked into the mob world, as shady lawyer and as numbers' man. Rivalry and tragedy ensue, but with some hope of redemption.

This is also true of a little-seen Ingmar Bergman film, *The Serpent's Egg* (1977). The setting is cabaret and circus in Germany between the wars. The Cain-figure is Max a trapeze artist who "destroys" his brother Abel but who also kills himself. The brother is called Abel and the film focuses on his life and downfall, a perilous and difficult life after he 'survives' his brother. It is something of a "what if ...?" Abel had lived.

Another film that critics discuss in relation to the Cain and Abel story is *The King* (dir. James Marsh, 2005), with Gael Garcia Bernal as Elvis, a young sailor who returns from service to destroy the family that he blames for ruining his life. This is not so much a Cain and Abel story, despite the commentators. Rather, it is more in the tradition of the mysterious stranger who ingratiates himself into a household and diabolically wreaks havoc on each member. This figure was literally the devil in Richard Loncraine's version of Dennis Potter's *Brimstone and Treacle* (1982). Other films in this genre include Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968), Harold Prince's *Something for Everyone* (1970) and Joe Orton's *Entertaining Mr Sloane* (1970).

4. Cain's Exile, East of Eden. *East of Eden* (dir. Elia Kazan, 1955) brings to mind both the book of Genesis and John Steinbeck's novel which elaborated a contemporary American allegory of the Adam, Cain and Abel story. Raymond Massey plays the patriarch who favors his quieter son (Richard Davalos), and clashes with his willful son (James Dean). This

film, famous for its introducing James Dean to the screen, is a powerful portrait of a son who really wants the love of his stern father.

Some critics have also noted parallels between the Cain and Abel story and *Of Mice and Men*, another Steinbeck novel set to film. Lenny and George are interdependent “brothers” who live as family but fall out over Curley’s wife. They too live “east of Eden.” There have been three film adaptations by Lewis Milestone in 1939, by Reza Badiyi in 1982 and in 1991 by Gary Sinise.

One of the most interesting explorations of the Cain and Abel story in recent theater and cinema is the depiction of Mozart as Abel and Salieri as Cain in Peter Shaffer’s *Amadeus* (dir. Milos Forman, 1984). As the film opens, Salieri (F. Murray Abraham) is in an east of Eden exile in an institution condemning himself for the murder of Mozart (Tom Hulce). Critics write not merely of his jealousy of Mozart’s sublime music but of the issue of God-given talent. Mozart, undeserving, is blessed with talent as Abel was. Cain is not blessed – and this consumes him, destroying Mozart but also himself.

Cain’s answer to God after murdering Abel was to ask whether he was his brother’s keeper. “My Brother’s Keeper” and “Brother’s Keeper” have also been frequently used for film titles. They have been thrillers like George Roome’s *My Brother’s Keeper* (1947) about two convicts chained together as they escape prison. John Badham directed a serial killer thriller in 2002, *Brother’s Keeper*. Closer to the Genesis themes are Glenn Jordan’s 1995 drama, *My Brother’s Keeper*, where John Lithgow plays twins, one of whom is dying of AIDS.

The Genesis text is quoted at the beginning of an award-winning documentary, *Brother’s Keeper* (1992) directed by Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky. It concerns four brothers who lived in isolation in Munnsville, New York. When the older dies, there are accusations of murder and the film follows the trial.

Australian critic, Adrian Martin (Film and Video Cain and Abel, paper at the Melbourne International Film Festival, June, 1993), however, has a last word as he quotes Jean-Luc Godard: the clash between cinema and video is a Cain and Abel struggle. Video becomes Cain – but the struggle will end happily when the various media collaborate and mix.

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See also → Abel; → Brother, Brotherhood; → Cain (Person); → Cain, Mark of; → Capital Punishment; → Fratricide; → Homicide

Cainan

Cainan (Gk. Καϊνάμ or Καϊνάβ; Heb. *Qēnān*) is the name of two persons listed in Luke’s genealogy of Jesus (3:36–37). Cainan, son of Enos (v.37), is listed in both the MT and LXX of Gen 5:9–14 and 1 Chr 1:2. Cainan, son of Arphaxad (v.36), is found in the LXX of Gen 10:24; 11:12–13; and 1 Chr 1:18 (Codex Alexandrinus), but not in the MT. This latter Cainan also appears in *Jub.* 8:1–5, where he is said to have sinned on account of astrological teachings from the fallen angels known as Watchers.

Bibliography: ■ Jacobus, H. R., “The Curse of Cainan (*Jub.* 8.1–5): Genealogies in Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 and a Mathematical Pattern,” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 18/3 (2009) 207–32.

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See also → Kenan

Cainites

→ Gnosis, Gnosticism

Cairo

The history of Cairo stretches back to Persian times. Under Roman rule, a fort known as Babylon was established by Trajan. The name by which it is now known was given in 973 CE, after its conquest by the Fāṭimids. This name, in Arabic al-Qāhira, means “the Victorious One” in reference to the Caliph al-Mu’izz li-Dīn Allāh.

Following the Islamic conquest of Egypt of 641 CE the area of the Roman fort became an important center of the Egyptian Christians, the Copts, with many fine churches being built. Previously, under Byzantine rule, the majority of Egyptian Christians were regarded as dissidents since they repudiated the two-nature Christology as defined at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE and refused to accept the authority of the patriarchs of Alexandria imposed by the Byzantines. Originally “Copt” meant “Egyptian,” but after the Islamic conquest the term became used for what was to become the Christian minority, who preserved the ancient Pharaonic language in its final phase, continuing to use it to this day in the Coptic liturgy.

In 882 CE, Abraham ibn Ezra of Jerusalem purchased land near the Babylon fort, and the Ben Ezra Synagogue was built. This synagogue was to become famous when its genizah, or store room, was found to contain a treasure of Hebrew secular and sacred manuscripts. The discovery happened in the mid-19th century, but it was Solomon Schechter who made the finds known internationally at the end of the century, and the numerous fragments (amounting to nearly 280,000) are now housed principally at the University of Cambridge, the John Rylands Library of the University of Manches-