

PROGRAM IN JUDAIC STUDIES

LECTURE

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RABBINIC INFLUENCES ON EARLY CHRISTIAN ART

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WILSON 101

Dr. Ursula Schubert is a Lecturer at the Institute of Jewish Studies in the University of Vienna who specializes in the relationship between Judaism in Late Antiquity and early Christian art. She has published widely on topics involving the nature of Jewish art with particular attention to expressions of art in ancient manuscripts and printed books. Her published works include *Spätantikes Judentum und frühchristliche Kunst* (1974) and *Jüdische Buchkunst* (1983). She served as Curator for the exhibition on "The Judaism of Late Antiquity and Early Christian Art" which was exhibited at the Esterhazy Castle in Eisenstadt, Austria, as well as the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at Bar Ilan University.

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The influence of rabbinically Christian art

art.

The widely assumed opinion of a generalized Jewish hostility against pictorial art goes back to Ex. 20, 4-5. There we read: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." It is true this command did not hinder King Salomon to put statues of lions on the steps of his throne or to have the twelve oxen cast for the bronze sea, because this did not mean bowing down to them or serving them. But this command did prevent

But all these commandments were not intended to prevent the Israelites from worshipping the Lord their God, but to prevent them from worshipping other gods.

Two cherubim were sitting Salomo from
erecting a statue of
the Lord in the Holy of
Holies in the Temple.
There stood the ark
of the covenant with
the two Cherubim. The
Lord himself was
imagined invisible,
sitting enthroned on
the two Cherubim.

But the situation was completely changed when in 587 B.C. the Israelites were led into the Babylonian exile. Now they lived among a heathen population, and in their temples there either stood the statues of their idols or the pagan images were painted on the walls.

walls.
Most likely that didn't
fail to impress all
those among the Jewish
population who were
fascinated by the
possibility of assi-
milation.

On the other hand

The very first thing that
 I noticed when I stepped
 out of the train was the
 heat. It was a relief after
 the cold of the north.
 The people were friendly
 and the food was good.
 I was in luck. The
 weather was just what I
 needed. The people were
 kind and the food was
 delicious. I was in luck.
 The weather was just what
 I needed. The people were
 kind and the food was
 delicious. I was in luck.

the strength of the
 world is in the hands of
 the people.

this attitude aroused
 the passionate resistance
 of the conservative
 circles. For there
 existed only one possi-
 bility to prevent these
 people from being in-
 corporated in their
 surroundings, and
 that was by under-
 lying and carefully
 fulfilling all those
 laws and prescriptions
 that were peculiar
 to Jews and different
 from their neighbors.
 And one of the most
 useful commandments
 in this respect was the
 ban on images deri-
 vable from the quoted
 passage in the book
 of Exodus.

But this tension bet-
 ween representatives
 of the assimilatory line
 on the one hand and
 conservative circles
 on the other continued

representatives

also in post exilic time.
The most consequential
outbreaks of these tensions
was the conflict between
assimilatory hellenistic
and conservative
circles which led to
the insurrection
of the maccabees. Although
the hasmonean family
personally lent a willing ear to
cultural hellenistic tenden-

the religious domain the ban on images seems
to have been strictly
observed,

in the 1st cent. B.C. and
the 1st cent. A.D.
Proof of this furnishes
the palace of Herodes
in Masada, the mosaics
of which have only
geometrical pattern.
Besides it was the ban
on images that made
it possible for the
high priest in Jerusalem
to refuse the wish of
the Roman emperor
Caligula to have his
statue put up in

the holy of holies of the temple.

But after the year 70 A.D.

it was no longer necessary to take such possibilities into consideration.

According to ^{Mishna} ~~Aboda~~ zara (III, 4) Rabbah Gamliel II went to a bath in ~~Abba~~ where a statue of Aphroditē stood. He distinguished between religiously relevant and religiously not relevant pictures. From rabbinic commentaries of the 2nd cent. (Mishna Aboda zara III, 1 and others) we know that at that time such a differentiation was made already. On the other hand it was explicitly interdicted to adorn synagogues and bate midreshot (rabbinic academies) with pictorial representational art (Mishna b'achodesh 10; Lauterbach II, 282);

about the year 100 A.D.

This interdict seems
 to prove that Jews
 had already started to
 have figurative paintings
 on the walls of their syna-
 gogues. This assumption
 is also supported by the
 following report in
 Abhoda zara III, 1:
 When R. Nahum bar
 Simai died, they covered
 the images by veils
 (by rups). They said:
 As he did not want to
 look at them as long
 as he lived, he need
 not look at them
 when he is dead.
 In the second half
 of the 3rd ^{cent.} even Johanan
 bar Nappacha had to
 put up with pictorial
 narratives of syna-
 gogues. We read
 in Abhoda zara III, 3;
 and a bit later the
 same is said about
 R. Abin with regard
 to figurative mosaics
 on the floor. According

on the walls of
 according to what →
 (f = jerushalmi)

quibnato row

X

according
 to what

synagogues

Brown 4
to Targum Jonathan
to Lev. 26, 1 it is stressed
that figurative three-
dimensional art must
not be manufactured,
to adorn #; but it is
explicitly added
that figurative mosaics
on the floor are permitted.
The mosaic on the floor
of the synagogue of
Hama Tveria from
about the same time
confirms this tradition.

10705 10586
The mural paintings
of the Synagogue of D.E.
of the middle of the 3rd
cent. certainly going
back to older pictorial
models, were made at
a time when the syna-
gogues were conceived
as $\lambda\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma$ $\tau\omicron\tau\omicron\varsigma$, respectively
as $\kappa\lambda\iota\pi\pi$ $\kappa\tau\omicron\kappa$, respectively
as *sancta synagoga*. This
conception - characteristic
of Hellenistic time - is
founded on the rabbinic
view that the shekhina
followed Israel into
the exile. We have a re-
spective saying already

in the 2nd cent in Megilla
29a from Simon bar
Yochai. But the discus-
sion about the correct
interpretation of Ps.
11, 4: "The Lord is in his
holy temple; the Lord's
throne is in heaven,"
in Midrash Tehillim
points to the fact that
on the other hand
several sages held
the opinion that the
shekhina remained
at the western wall of
the destroyed temple.
Yet at any rate the
shekhina was imagined
as not constrained to
one place. Especially
the synagogues as
L'YOC TOTO were the
favourite residence of
the shekhina. In Mishna
bachodesh 11 (Lauter-
bach II, 287) it is said:
"When 10 men enter
a synagogue, the
shekhina is with them."
According to Megilla
29a the shekhina is

- 1) D.E. Westward
- 2) D.E. Toru shrine

not at the same time
here and there but
once here and once
there.

This is the Toru shrine
in the synagogue of
D.E. and only if the
synagogue is comprehended
as a substitute for the
destroyed temple, as a
ἑὸς τόπος, we can under-
stand the correct meaning
of the paintings above the
niche of the toru-shrine.

Immediately above the
shrine, from left to
right: Menora, temple
façade, Abraham's
sacrifice.

The temple façade portrays
the façade of the destroyed
temple of Jerusalem.

This is a coin of Bar
Kochba, and on the ob-
verse there is a picture
of the façade of the temple.
We see, the two pictures
are very similar.

The 7-branched candel-
stick was in the temple

the destruction of
the temple

- 3) Bar Kocha - Münze

- 4) D.E. Toru shrine

5.) Titusbogen

6.) Abraham's sacrifice

7 of D.E.

as well. The candel-
stick from the temple
is represented on the
triumphal arch of the
roman emperor Titus
in Rome.

Abraham's sacrifice is
the oldest figurative re-
presentation in the syn-
agogue; apparently
because of the ban on
images the painter avoi-
ded to reproduce the
human face and Abra-
ham as well as Isaac are
pictured from behind. In
the foreground the ram
tied to the tree. Above the
altar the legend of the
lord and Abraham look-
ing up to it.

Now we must ask the question:
what does the represen-
tation of Abraham's
sacrifice mean just
beside the facade of the
temple and above the
niche of the Torah shrine?
According to rabbinic
tradition it was on
Mount Moria, where
later on Salomo built

7.) Rezedes über Tori schrein -
Nische (schw./w.)

8.) Rezedes bottom
9.) 3. Schicht
(mit u. oliv. Farb)

Brown 6
the temple. And the
substitute of the destroyed
temple became the syn-
agogue.

On top of the panel
above the Tori shrine
two panels feature
messianic scenes.

Bottom left: Jacob's blessing

over the 12 tribes; the
David - Orpheus figure

above and the
lion of Judah in the
middle connect this
picture with the blessing

given to Judah in Gen.
49, 10: "The sceptre shall
not depart from Judah,
nor a lawgiver from
between his feet, until
Shilo come; and unto
him shall the gathering
of the people be."

Bottom right: Jacob's
blessing over the 2

souls of Josef: Ephraim
and Manasse. This

corresponds to a
rabbinic concept
current by the middle
of the 2nd cent. A.D.,
of a Messiah, the

10.) Peredok, top

11.) D.E. Jacob in Bethel

12.) Toroschein-Nische
ganz

13.) Moses, burning
bush

son of David and a
Messiah, the son of
Josef. The latter has
the role of a suffer-
ing Messiah, the
former is a victorious
triumphant Messiah.
The scene in the top panel
features most likely
the Messiah of the End
of Days surrounded
by the ministering
angels. These young
men must certainly
be interpreted as angels;
we have an analogous
representation of angels
on the heavenly ladder
in the picture of Jacob's
dream in Bethel in
the same synagogue;
they have no wings -
as usual in the 3rd cent.

The panel of the Messiah
of the End of Days is
flanked by two panels
representing two dif-
ferent events in the
life of Moses.
right: Moses and the
burning bush,
above the hand

14) D.E. Moses-Sinai

of the Lord. ^{Brown 7}
Left: Moses receiving
the two tablets with
the ten command-
ments on Mount
Sinai.

(The upper part
of the picture is
destroyed).

The two representations
of Moses are pictures of a
theophany.

In this way the panel
in the middle - the Messiah
of the End of Days - is
surrounded by two
other pictures of a theo-
phany.

But such a complicated
programme most cer-
tainly did not ori-
ginate in a small
frontier outpost on
the Euphrates marking
the border between
the Roman Empire
and Persia.

Apparently this type of
decoration was widely
used.

We find the same
programme in two

15.) Sinai, Apsis; transfiguration
(Moses - Elias)
(ss. Peter, Jacob, Joan)

Pharaoh's down

16.) Sinai, Apsis; burning bush
Moses

17.) Moses - Sinai-Tafel

how to

Christian churches of the 6th cent., belonging to the cultural background of the east-roman empire.

One church is on Mount Sinai, it is the basilica of the Monastery of Sta. Catharina. In the apse the transfiguration of Jesus ~~Christ~~ on Mount Tabor is represented with Moses and Elias appearing to the right and to the left of the transfigured Christ; in the foreground the 3 apostles Peter, Jacob and Joan.

And on the wall of the apse above on the left: Moses and the burning bush on the right: Moses receiving the tablets of the law.

That means we have here the same program as in D. E. In the middle the transfigured ~~Messiah~~ Christ

Ravenna

18.7 S. Vitale, Apse

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was seen in the apse of the church of S. Vitale in Ravenna

4 to 5000

19.1 Moses turning bush

20.1 Moses receiving tablets

flanked by the same two pictures as in D.E.

And this is the apse of S. Vitale in Ravenna. A juvenile Christ-Emanuel holding the roll with the 7 seals on his breast, is sitting between two angels on a globe. That means that also here it is not a representation of the terrestrial Jesus but of ~~the Messiah~~ ^{Christ} of the End of Days.

And on the southern wall of the presbytery: Moses and the burning bush ⊗

Northern wall of the presbytery: Moses receiving the two tablets of the law on Mount Sinai.

⊗ In this picture Moses is looking at the land of the Lord coming from the direction of the apse. These two Christian parallel cases allow us to presume that the presented programme

* for the synagogue as well as for the church

was originally featured for the synagogue and only afterwards the church took possession of it. But such an exchange was only possible on condition that the pictorial programme was used to adorn the diacuticle

in the same way

of the Lord, to adorn a εἰκὸς ζώου. And in late antiquity this was valid for the synagogue as it was for the church.

It was by comparing the decoration above the Tore ^{of D.E.} shrine of the synagogue with the respective mosaics in two christian churches that the jewish influence on christian monuments became obvious.

Another possibility to ascertain jewish influence on a biblical pictorial narrative ^{con-} consists in the fact that a scene cannot be explained with the

help of the canonical
 bible text alone, but
 very well with the help
 of traditional rabbinic
 literature; from this
 given case we can draw the con-
 clusion that the model
 for the respective picture
 might be provided
 by Jewish pictorial
 art.

Now I'll present you
 several early christian
 monuments, some pic-
 tures of which seem
 to betray an intimate
 acquaintance with the
 rabbinical interpretation
 of the respective biblical
 narrative.

A 4th cent. catacomb in Rome's Via Latina, discovered as late as 1955, turned up some surprises: besides Christian scenes and scenes from the Heracles myth it contained a great number of scenes from the old Testament, 13 of which were hitherto unknown in Rome. Some of these scenes cannot be satisfactorily explained with the help of the canonical bible text alone - the background of traditional rabbinic literature is a prerequisite. The question now arises: did Jewish pictorial art provide models or not?

21.) Abraham - Maure

Abraham and the 3 angels in Maure. To the left in the foreground Abraham - in a gesture of speech - is sitting on a rock; before the rock a small calf is standing. Opposite Abraham on a kind of terrace three young men in a gesture of speech are looking at Abraham. According to the text of Gen. 18 Abraham was sitting in the entrance of his tent, but when he saw the 3 young men visiting him, he ran towards them and bowed down to them; then he prepared a meal for them which his visitors consumed.

The picture in the Via Latina - catacomb does not at all agree with this report, in contrast to the mosaic in the nave of S. M.M. in Rome from the 5th cent. This repre-

22.) Rome, S.M.M., Abraham

23.) Abraham - Via Lahine

sensation corresponds very well to the text of the Bible.

But all the discrepancies in the Via Lahine version find an explanation utilizing sufficient commentaries. Already the ~~old~~ Targum Neophyti to Gen. 18, combines

the visit of the 3 angels with Abraham's cir-

cumcision. From the middle of the 3rd cent. there is a respective tradition of the Palestinian sage Chanina bar Chanina

in Baba Metsia 86b: "This day was the 3rd day after Abraham's circumcision."

In Pirke de R. Eliezer 29 a more elaborate tradition is reported from 1st half

3rd cent.: "Rabban Gamliel, the son of R. Jehודה Haemssi, said: '3 days after Abraham's circumcision Abraham had great pains. There

said the Holy one blessed be he, to the ministering said

angels: "Come ye, let
us descend and visit
the sick... Then the
Holy one, blessed be he,
said to the minister-
ing angels: Come
ye and see ye the
power of circum-
cision. Before Ab-
raham was circum-
cised he fell on
his face before me,
and afterwards I
spoke with him.
Now, that he is
circumcised he
sits and I stand."

of the Holy one or
of the three angels,
— the subject of the
1st verse of Gen. 18
is interchangeable.

~~angels: come ^{we want} to visit the sick. At
once the angels descended
and visited Abraham.
Come and visit the
meaning of the circum-
cision: Before Abraham
was circumcised, he
fowed down and only
then I spoke to him.
But now, after his
circumcision, he sat
and I stood because
it is said: "He sat in
the entrance of his tent"
(Gen. 18, 1), and further
on it is said: "And
he lifted his eyes and
looked up and there
stood three men stood in
front of him" (Gen. 18, 2).
That means that Abraham's
sitting in front of his visi-
tors is brought in con-
nection with Abraham's
circumcision three
days before the visit ^{of the angels}.
Besides according to
rabbinic tradition the
angels did not really
eat. Already Targ. Neo-
plagi to Gen. 18, 8 reports:~~

"It made only the impression as if they would eat and drink". And in Baka Netsia 86 b we read: "The ministering angels descended from heaven and have eaten. - What do you think! You may only say "It made only the impression as if they would eat and drink." Therefore the picture of the cell in the Via Lohua points to Abraham's hospitality, but the angels' meal is not represented.

24) S. Callisto, Sarcophagus:
Abraham + 3 angels

This is the lid of a sarcophagus from the St. Callistus - catacomb in Rome. But for the reversed direction it corresponds completely to the painting in the catacomb, and it comes from the same time, 2nd half 4th cent. Apparently respective models were at hand at that time in Rome.

25.) Via Lohine, Pinhas

Another equally convincing example for the influence of rabbinic commentaries on paintings in the Via Lohine catacomb offers the story of Pinhas killing Zimri and Kosbi during unallowed sexual intercourse to avert god's wrath from the Israelites (num. 25, 8). The hardly perceptible spear of Pinhas lies on his left shoulder. The two pierced bodies stick fast and don't bleed. This corresponds with full details to the rabbinic tradition of the miraculous spear of Pinhas.

About this spear, which Pinhas used to pierce Zimri and Kosbi, 6 or 12 miracles are reported, that the Lord worked at that hour. In Paulsen 82b we find a tradition going back to Johanan bar Nappacha, 2nd half 3rd cent. :

Brown

Brown 13

6 miracles happened
for pinhas:

- 1) Zimri might have fled; but he did not flee.
- 2) Zimri might have cried for help; but he did not.
- 3) pinhas hit the genital parts of the man and of the woman.
- 4) The two bodies did not slip down from the spear.
- 5) An angel arrived and lifted the lintel of the door (that pinhas might carry out the spear with the 2 bodies lifted up).
- 6) An angel arrived and caused a devastation among the Israelites.

In Num. R 20, 25 and in Targum Ps. Jonathan to ~~Gen~~ ^{Nm} 25, 8 instead of 6 twelve miracles are enumerated:

- 5) He gave strength to his arm, so that he could lift both of them.

6.) He gave solidity to the wood of the spear, so that it could carry both of them.

7.) They did not bleed so that pinhas was not soiled.

10.) The Holy one, blessed be he, kept them alive as long as they were on the spear so that they did not die and soil pinhas.

In Christian manuscripts ^{shown} pinhas is piercing Zimri and Kosbi lying together on their bed, instead of lifting them high up in the air.

26.) Serail - Olshakich

Serail - Olshakich: Pinhas piercing Zimri and Kosbi lying on their bed.

But in several Christian manuscripts we find the same composition as in the ~~so~~ ^{so} ~~lavor~~ ^{lavor} in the Via ~~lavor~~ ^{lavor}, in this way proving the influence of a Jewish model.

27.) 1. Pamplona - B. f. 66r

1) Sanchio el fierke - Bibel Pamplona (on the pilgrim's road) 1197 fol. 66r

Brown

5

28.) 2. Pamplona Bibel
f. 78r

29.) Serbian psalter

30.) Ashillian Bibel
2 x
31.)

32.) Seoder hippine shabbat

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2.) 2nd Bible of Pamplona,
early 13th cent.
fol. 78r

3.) Serbian psalter
around 1400; fol. 141r
(Ps. 106, 30)

4.) Ashillian Bibel of the
Duke of Alba, 1422-30
by R. Moses Arap
from Guadalupe
for Don Luis de
Guzman, head of
the Order of Calatrava

5.) Seoder hippine shabbat,
1738, Vienna
(Sally Kirschstein -
coll., Berlin)

Brown
6

7 of the 6th cent.

Brown 15

A manuscript of special interest with regard to ~~an~~ assumed Jewish influence on its extremely rich picture-cycle is the Wiener Genesis, Vienna N. L. vol. Hebr. fr. 31.

The manuscript is a copy of a far older original; as the place of origin many scholars locate it nowadays to Syria, Palestine or even to Jerusalem and no longer to Constantinople.

As many details of the illustrations can not be explained satisfactorily by the text of the Bible, yet very well by consulting a rabbinic commentary, a targum or a midrash, scholars began to investigate Jewish sources and with considerable success. It was in an analogous research work that Prof. Pacht came to the following conclusion: "Slowly we are beginning

to learn that the vast
Old Testament cycles
of Early Christian Art,
against which nothing
comparable can be
set on the New Testa-
ment side, have origi-
nated in Jewish-
Christian communi-
ties of Oriental, rather
than Classical, or even
properly Christian
character, and that
they have been con-
ceived as simple
and even naive
illustrations of bib-
lical stories and
apocryphal Jewish
legends, designed
in the spirit of popu-
lar picture chronicles.
The influence of either
such a picture chronicle
or of an illustrated
Bible, a specimen of
which is offered by
the pictures in the
synagogue of D. E.,
can be supposed

wonderful

shown now in press etc
7

33) Wiener Genesis, p. 2

2500/9/1000

Brown 16

as one of the models
of the Wiener Genesis.

I would like to show
you just a few samples.

p. 2 In the left half we
see the hand of the
lord, pointing against
Adam and Eve and
the snail, pronoun-
cing the verdict.

In the middle the
door of paradise
and in front of it
a blazing wheel in
flames and beside
it a winged angel.

To the right again
Adam and Eve led
away by a female
person.

The blazing wheel is
usually interpreted
in agreement with
Ex. 1. According to
the Jewish Merkabha-
mysticism - probably
already in the 1st and
2nd cent. - the vision
in Ex. 1 is a paraphrase
of the Lord's apparition.

sway

According to this conception we read in the very old
palestinian targum
Neophyti to Gen. 3, 24:

And he
expelled Adam and
made lie down the
magnificence of his
Shechina to the east
of paradise between
two cherubim from the
beginning!

In the Wiener Genesis
the Shechina is repre-
sented as the blazing
wheel in flames.

34.) M d C fol. 1

The wheel of Ez. 1 represen-
ting the Shechina we
find in the pen-drawing
of Moses del Castellazzo's
picture-bible of the
first half of the 16th cent.
The original woodcut
is lost but this poor
pen-drawing gives
at least an impression
of the original. ~~The~~ In
Gen. 1, 1 the spirit of God
is depicted as Ezekiel's
wheel.

35.) Maiuser Evangelien # of Mainz

And this is a picture
of the Gospels in the Hofbibliothek
of Hschaffenburg from the
middle of the 13th cent.:
The 4 evangelists in the
4 corners, the 4 rivers

of paradise, but in the middle where a picture of the Logos is to be expected we find the wheels of Ex. 1, depicting the spirit of (the Lord) god.

26) W. Genesis p. 14

On page 14 we find an unexpected detail in the story of Eliezer's waiting for Rebekka in the left corner of the lower register.

In the upper register Eliezer, behind him the 10 camels, is giving his presents to Rebekka at the well, guarded by a nymph. In the lower register on the right Rebekka is showing the gifts to her mother and her brother; and on the left side Rebekka's mother is talking to Eliezer. According to Gen. 24, 29-31 it should be Laban who went out to Eliezer, to invite him into his house. But according to Targum Jonathan to Gen. 24, 33 Bethel, the father of Rebekka, wanted to poison Eliezer; But according

34) Wr. Genesis, p. 29
17)

To the Targum he himself
ate the poisoned food
and died. Therefore
brother and mother of
Rebekka asked Eliezer
to remain with them for
the time of mourning.

p. 29 In the upper register
on the left the second
dream of Josef. On
the right Josef is telling
his dream to his father
and his brothers. But
by the side of Jacob
there is a woman sitting,
her arm raised in a
gesture of speech.

Gen. 37, 10: And his father
rebuked him and said
to him: 'Thy mother
and thy brethren come
and bow before thee to earth?'

There the mother of Josef
is mentioned, although
Rachel was dead already
since a long time.

But according to rabbi-
mic tradition the woman
by the side of Jacob
is Bilha who had
brought up Josef. Gen. R.
84, 11 (Mishna II, 19):

"R. Levi in the name
of R. Chanina b. Chanina:
Our father Jacob thought
that the resurrection

Brown

Brown 18

9 years all her

will take place during his lifetime, because it is said: "I, thy mother and thy brethren come and bow before thee to earth?" "I and thy brethren come" would be all right,

But what does it mean: I and thy mother? The mother was dead already, but it is said: I, thy mother and thy ~~brothers~~. Jacob, our father, did not know that he referred to Bilha, Rachel's housemaid, who had brought him up like a mother.

Therefore the woman by the side of Jacob is Bilha. We find her a second time on the following page in the upper register where Josef is bidding good-bye to his father.

In the lower register on the right we see Josef arriving at his brothers in Dothan.

The animal sniffing at Josef's feet is apparently not a sheep but a dog. The bible-text does not mention

38) Mr. Genesis, p. 30

argued all the way to the end of the world

now

a dog but in Gen. R.
24, 14 (Mispine IV, 21)
it is reported that
the brothers incited the dogs
against Joseph, to slay him.

39./3.) W. Genesis, p. 31

p. 31 Upper register left
the selection scene of
Potiphar's wife, Gen. 39,
11-12. Potiphar's wife
is sitting in bed pulling
Joseph's garment, while
he is rushing towards
the door.

40./4.) Sereil Obsterich f. 127v

known

Usually Potiphar's wife
is depicted as standing
in the door instead of
lying in bed. The version
of the Wiener Genesis is
confined to only a few
Christian representations
and several Sephardic
Passover - Haggadah of the
14th cent.

The rabbinic explanation
of Gen. 39, 11 in Sota 36b
is the following: "And
there was none of the men of
the house there within" (quotation of
Gen. 39, 11): "How is it
possible that in such
a big house as the house
of that evil-dweller,
there was nobody present?
In the school of R. Jis-
mael (1. half 2nd cent.)

41.7/5 W. Genesis, p. 31

Brown 19
it is taught; That day
was a holiday and all
people went to the temple
of an idol. But she said
she was ill, because she
thought there was no day
more favourable than
this one to be together
with Josef. Apparently her
being ill is represented by
her lying in bed.

The next scenes were inter-
preted as nonellistic supple-
ments, before their Jewish
background was recognized.
According to rabbinic
commentaries - for
instance Targ. Ps. Jomath.
to Gen. 41, 45 Asuah was
the daughter of Dinah
after Sichen's rape on
her, and was brought
up by Potifar's wife as
her foster-daughter.
In Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer
chap. 38 it is reported
that the raped Dinah
gave birth to Asuah.
And because Asuah
was the child of rape
Jacob sent her away;
but she was protected
by a golden diadem
or a golden plate, he had
fastened at her neck

and written on it the
sheen haunnephoresch.
Then the angel Michael
descended from heaven
and brought her to
Egypt, into the house
of Potifar, because
she was destined to be
Josef's wife. The wife of
Potifar was sterile and
Asuel grew up to be her
daughter."

And Gen. R 85, 2 to Gen. 38, 1:
"The wife of Potifar learnt
from her astrologer, that
she will have a son from
Josef; but she did not
believe, whether she her-
self or from her daughter
Asuel."

In the upper register
on the right we see:
1) A baby in the cradle
with a golden diadem
and a woman by
her side, probably
Asuel with Potifar's
wife

2) The astrologer, her
gown covered
with ^{golden} stars; on her
head she wears a
crescent and a
star; she is lifting a
spindle.

420/6 Mr. Genesis, p. 32

In the lower register ^{Brown 20}
to women with spindles,
one of them with the
footstool probably po-
tifar's wife. The two
babies might be the
sons of Yosef, the whole
scene is understood as a
vision of the future.

p. 32 In the upper register left:
Potifar is returning home;
on the right Potifar's wife talking
to three dignitaries
dressed in golden gowns
like Potifar himself.
Lower register: Potifar's
wife is showing Josef's
garment to her hus-
band, while behind
Potifar a man and
a woman seem to dis-
cuss the situation.

Again a rabbinic commen-
tary offers an explanation
to these scenes:
Midrash happened to Gen.

39, 14:
"When all the dignitaries
and their wives returned
from the Molokous festival
on the Nile, all of them
paid a visit to Potifar's
wife. . . . And then she said
to them, to the wives of

the dignitaries: if I alone
speak unfavourably
of him to my husband,
he will not believe me;
but if each of you says
to her husband: Josef
has touched me, and
also I say, Josef has
touched me, then he
will lock him up."

The two registers illu-
strate this commentary.

A Christian representation
of Potifar's wife in
bed was in the nave of
S. p. f. l. m. in Rome,
an early Christian
basilica that burned
down 1823; but the
mosaics were copied
for cardinal Fran-
cesco Barberini in
the 1st half of the 17th
cent. On fol. 46 of cod.
Barb. lat. 4406 we
see an interior and
the wife of Potifar in
bed pulling Josef's
garment. But no picture
of Potifar himself or of
the dignitaries. Yet the
in

43) / 7 cod. var. barb. lat. 4406,
f. 46

12
44.) / 8.) Chronicle of the world
of Rudolf of Eins

Brown 21

Chronicle of the world
of Rudolf of Eins from
the end of the 13th
cent. There are two
scenes of this narrative
and both of them ^{are} similar
to the Wiener Genesis.

On top again Potifar's
wife in bed pulling
Joseph's garment

Bottom: Potifar's wife
with the garment and
her housemaid stan-
ding in front of Poti-
far; but behind Poti-
far obviously three
other dignitaries who
want to pay a visit
to Potifar's wife. In some
respects the same
situation ~~is~~ found in
two Sefer die Passover
haggadah of the 14th
cent.

5.) / 9.) Golden Hag. f. 6v

Golden Hag. London,
Add. 27210, fol. 6v

6.) / 10 Or. 2884, f. 7r

London, Or. 2884, f. 7r
Potifar's wife is sitting
in bed and pulling Joseph's
garment while Potifar

47/11) W2. Genesis p. 45

is arriving at the door with one or two dignitaries behind him. Apparently the pictorial tradition based on the Jewish commentaries had not been lost at the end of late antiquity.

p. 45 Jacob blessing the two sons of Joseph in the presence of Joseph and Asnat (Gen. 48); but the text of the Bible does not mention Asnat here.

According to rabbinic commentaries Jacob was afraid to bless the two sons of Joseph because he was not sure whether they originated from a legitimately contracted matrimony.

According to Pesiqta rabbati 3 as an explanation of Gen. 48, 9: "Joseph began to implore his father and said to him: father, my sons are as righteous as I am. These are my sons whom God has given me baze (by this). What does it mean 'baze' here?"

Brown
13

Brown 22

He led Asuel, their mother,
to his father, and said:
father, I implore you
for the sake of this
righteous woman.
We find the motif of
Josef dissipating the
scruples of Jacob by
presenting Asuel to
him also in the midrash
Baggadol to Gen. 48, 9.
In the later midrashim
the importance of Asuel
is stressed always more.

48.7/12
This is the sarcophagus
of S. Collisto, which we
saw already with the
picture of Abraham
and the 3 angels.
This is a picture
of Jacob blessing
Ephraim and Manasse
in the presence of
Josef and Asuel.
+ Detail

The A. P. or P. of Tours
is an illustrated Latin
Vulgate Manuscript, but
the legends describing
the illustrations are taken
from the Vetus Latina.
The ms. is dated to the
7th cent., but its location
is absolutely uncertain;
nowadays North Africa is
suggested as place of origin.
Some scholars presume
Jewish models for
this manuscript, and
at least some details can only
be seen on a Jewish
background.

Aviano
50) A. P. f. 30r
144)

fol. 30r top: Laban
searches for the stolen

15.) A.P. Detail f.30r

gods in Jacobs tents
bottom: the covenanting
of Jacob with Laban; their
meal on the left, and their
separation.

In the middle Jacob
is setting up a pear-
shaped stone which is
fenced in with a number
of little stones; it is the
boundary-stone between
Jacob's and Laban's
land. The Hebrew word
for "stone-fence" is
"gal", circle; the Latin
uses "tumulū" - hill.
The picture corresponds
to the Hebrew word "gal".

A.P. f.44r

fol. 44r
Top: The sons of Jacob,
together with Benjamin
arriving in Egypt and
standing before Joseph.
center left: the meal of Joseph's
brethren

below: the meal of the
Egyptians. They are
seated alternately a
white man and a
black man, on
a folding chairs
around a square table.

3.)/17.) A.P.D detail fol. 44r.

Below in the extreme ^(Brown 23) foreground the servants preparing the drinking and the food for the Egyptians. Quite in the middle we see two black men, between them a kind of chair with a peculiarly shaped back, on which something like a pot is standing; the two men look into the pot. The legend for this picture "die egypti süßlaute ad pigella". What is pigella? Pigul in Hebrew means: Meat, that must not be eaten because it is unclean, not kosher; especially the sacrificial meat left over on the 3rd day is "pigul". The servants undoubtedly are preparing this unclean sacrificial meat for the Egyptians. The painter of the ms., who wrote the legend, didn't understand the meaning

all villages

elabani

of the word *piella* and wrote: the *egyphians* blew to the *piella*; on the model the servants were preparing the meal, probably.

4/18) A.P. fol. 50r

Top - fol. 50r right: The brethren of Josef imploring him not to retaliate upon them their evil deeds.

left: Pharaoh permits Josef to go to his father's burial.

Center left: Jacob blesses the two sons of Josef in the presence of Josef and Asuah, standing in the bare ground

right: The burial of Jacob in the "double cave" in spelunca duplex, Mabkela. The body wrapped in white cloth, seems to have been taken from the empty bed which stands in front. In Targum Neophyti to Gen. 50, it is said that Josef put his father on a gift bier (bi^e) inlaid with precious stones. This corresponds to the picture.

5/19) A.P. Detail f. 50r

let's go - again

I have been thinking of you
 and wondering how you are
 getting on. I hope you are
 well and happy. I am
 still the same old me.

Although most of the pictures are based on the text of the bible the enumerated characteristics which might be

Although most of the pictures are based on the text of the bible the enumerated characteristics which might be

widened out, allow
us to think of a Jewish
model.

In the end I can only
remind you of Prof.
Pacht's statement, that
the Old Testament cycles
of early Christian art
have originated in
Judeo-Christian com-
munities of oriental
rather than Christian
character. This lecture
was meant to be a small
only recent contribution to
confirm his statement.

The influence of rabbinic exegesis on early christian art

- 1) D. E. Westwand : Austrian contribution to study, Nr. 1
- 2) D. E. Toraschrein } " "
- 3) Bar Kochba } " "
- 4) D. E. Toraschrein } " "
- 5) Titus - Bogen } " "
- 6) Abrahamsopfer } " "
- 7) Toraschrein-Nische schreiuwische Via Lahiru, Portlander } Nr. 6
- 8) Toren (mit Laut) } " " Nr. 10
- 9) Toren (ohne Laut) } " " Nr. 11
- 10) 3. Schickel/nur } " " Nr. 10
- 11) " " } " " Nr. 10
- 12) Rereoles : oben } (Hebrew bible in art Nr. 10)
- 13) D. E. Jakob in Bethel } (Austrian contribution Nr. 7)
- 14) Toraschreiuwische laut } " " Nr. 7
- 15) D. E. Moses u. d. brennende Dornbusch } " " Nr. 7
- 16) Sinai, Apsis } " " Nr. 7
- 17) Sinai, brennender Dornbusch } " " Nr. 7
- 18) Sinai, Gesebestafeln } " " Nr. 7
- 19) S. Vitale, Apsis } " " Nr. 7
- 20) S. Vitale, brennender D. } S. Vitale
- 21) Moses, Gesebestafeln } " " Nr. 7
- 22) Via Lahiru, Abraham + 3 Engel } Austrian contribution
Nr. 15.) 16.) 17.)
- 23) S. M. M. Abraham } " " Nr. 15.) 16.) 17.)
- 24) Via Lahiru, Abraham } " " Nr. 15.) 16.) 17.)
- 25) S. Callisto, Sarkophag: Abraham + 3 ? : Jewish christian encounter N. 34
- 26) pinhas } Jewish christian encounter N. 35
- 27) Serait vorreich, pinhas } " " Nr. 36
- 28) 1. Pamploha B. } " " Nr. 37
- 29) 2. Pamploha B. } " " Nr. 37

- 29.) Serhan psalter Jewish christian enc. Nr. 39
- 30.) Alba - Bibel, on bed " " " Nr. 38
- 31.) " " , aufgespritzt " " " Nr. 40
- 32.) Tippune sheffel + 33.) " " " Nr. 40
- 34.) Wr. Genesis, p. 2
- 35.) M. d. C. fol. 1
- 36.) Wr. Genesis, Plier / Aschaffenburg
- 37.) Wr. Genesis, p. 14
- 37.) Wr. Genesis, p. 29
- 38.) Wr. Genesis, p. 30
- 39.) Wr. Genesis, p. 31 Jewish christian encounter Nr. 45
- 40.) Serail Obstetisch, " " " Nr. 42
- 41.) Wr. Genesis, p. 31 " " " Nr. 42
- 42.) Wr. Genesis, p. 32 " " " Nr. 43
- 43.) cod. vat. herb. lat. 4406, f. 46 " " " Nr. 46
- 44.) Weltchronik d. Rudolf v. Ems " " " Nr. 47
- 45.) golden Hag p. f. 6 v " " " Nr. 48
- 46.) Sister " f. 7 r " " " B 1.)
- 47.) wr. Genesis p. 45 " " " Nr. B 2
- 48.) Sarsophyng-deckel S. Callisto Detail " " " B 3
- 49.) " " ganz " " "
- 50.) A. P. f. 30 r (gaben searches for the stolen goods) " " "
- 51.) A. P. f. 30 r Detail ganz gastenohl d. Josef " " "
- 52.) A. P. f. 44 r Detail " " "
- 53.) A. P. f. 50 r Begräbnis d. Jakob Jewish christian encounter B 4.)
- 54.) " " Detail " " "
- 55.) " " " " "