

A COMPARATIVE COMMENTARY ON THE EARTH'S DIVISION IN JUBILEES 8:11–9:15
AND GENESIS APOCRYPHON 16–17

The present chapter is dedicated to a thorough comparison of the division of the earth into geographic districts for Noah's sons and grandsons in the Genesis Apocryphon and Jubilees. These passages provide the most direct and extensive parallel between the two works, and may serve as an important case study against which to measure previous and subsequent comparisons. My most immediate goal in this chapter is to further our understanding, and perhaps dating, of the Genesis Apocryphon. However, in order to achieve this it has been necessary to spend significant time investigating both texts. This has resulted in a detailed commentary of the relevant passages of Jubilees, followed by a similar treatment of the Genesis Apocryphon.

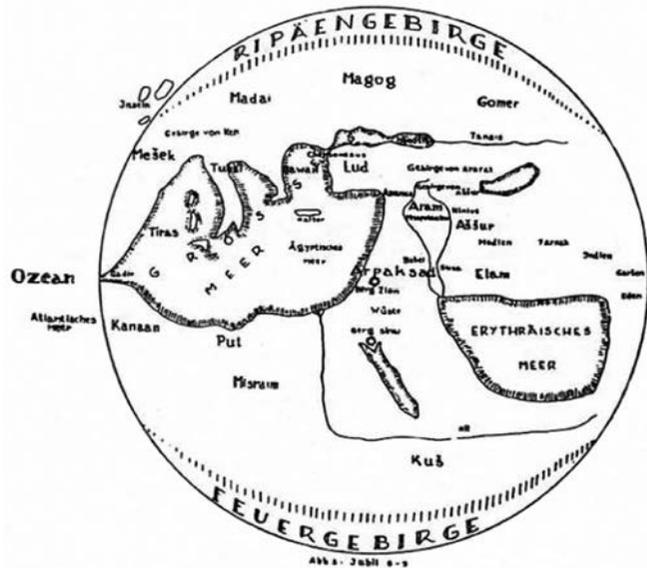
The comparison has led to the observation that the two works differ in a number of significant details, while still bearing a remarkable affinity to one another in overall design and perspective—i.e. the way in which they rewrite the Table of Nations of Gen 10. This combination most plausibly suggests that the Genesis Apocryphon and Jubilees depended upon a common cartographic source, or (less plausibly) that one author used the other from memory or an intermediate written source. If one chooses to view their relationship as one of direct dependence, then it seems preferable to conclude that Jubilees borrowed from the Genesis Apocryphon.

A detailed geographic discussion of lands and toponyms not naturally familiar to most readers lends itself easily to confusion and disinterest. For this reason, a hypothetical, reconstructed map, drawn with the present passages from both texts in mind, has been included below.¹ This is accompanied by other, previous attempts to graphically represent the map underlying Jubilees.

¹ It must be kept in mind that any such map is a fixed piece of interpretation, as the following discussion should make clear. Many parts of my map, therefore, remain less certain than they may appear. It is important to view the map alongside the (often qualifying) arguments accompanying it in this chapter. I should also stress that my own map is an effort at conflating the real or mental maps underlying the Genesis Apocryphon and Jubilees. In general, I have tried to follow the Genesis Apocryphon whenever possible, taking recourse to Jubilees where this is not possible.

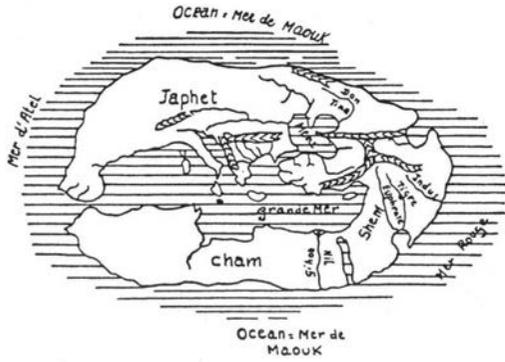


Map 1. New Reconstruction of a World Map Like That Underlying Jubilees and the Genesis Apocryphon (cf. the enlargement on page xvi)

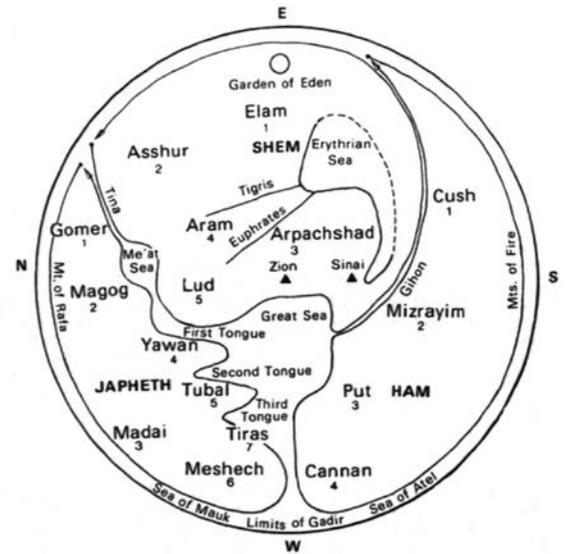


Map 2. Reconstruction of Jubilees' World Map according to Gustav Hölscher²

² From G. Hölscher, *Drei Erdkarten: Ein Beitrag zur Erdkenntnis des hebräischen Altertums* (Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophische-historische Klasse 1944/48, 3; Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1949), 58.



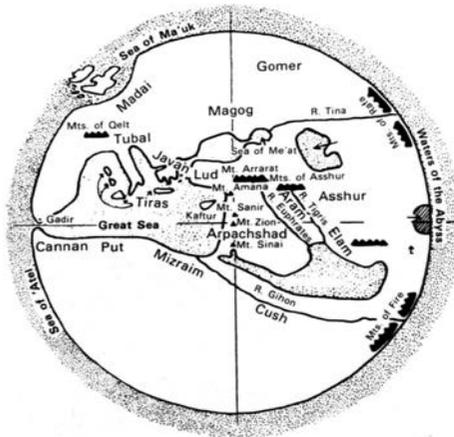
Map 3. Reconstruction of Jubilees' World Map according to Michel Testuz³



Map 6. Reconstruction of Jubilees' World Map according to Francis Schmidt⁶



Map 4. One Reconstruction of Jubilees' World Map according to Philip Alexander⁴



Map 5. Another Reconstruction of Jubilees' World Map according to Philip Alexander⁵

4.1. JUBILEES 8:11–9:15

The apportionment of the earth in Jubilees has been discussed often, but many nagging questions remain regarding the account's overall structure and a number of its details. Before a proper comparison can be made with the Genesis Apocryphon, therefore, it is necessary to undertake a detailed analysis of this passage. The account may be divided into two segments: 1) Noah's division of the earth into three parts between his sons; 2) the subsequent division of each son's apportionment between his own sons (i.e. Noah's grandsons).⁷ The inheritance of each son or grandson is comprised of a report of his apportionment's borders or general placement in relation to those surrounding it, with some allotments garnering far more attention than others.⁸ In describing the allotments the author utilizes a limited set of geographic *topoi* as reference points.

A perusal of previous attempts to grapple with Jubilees 8:11–9:15 reveals that some commentators have not adequately appreciated the broader horizon of the map on which the borders of each descendent

³ From M. Testuz, *Les idées religieuses du livre des Jubilés* (Geneva: Librarie E. Droz/Paris: Librarie Minard, 1960), 58.

⁴ From P. Alexander, "Geography and the Bible (Early Jewish)," *ABD* 2.982.

⁵ From P. Alexander, "Notes on the 'Imago Mundi' of the Book of Jubilees," *JJS* 38 (1982): 197–213 [213].

⁶ From F. Schmidt, "Naissance d'une géographie juive," in *Moïse géographe. Recherches sur les représentations juives et chrétiennes de l'espace* (ed. A. Desreumaux and F. Schmidt; Paris: Vrin, 1988), 13–30 [23].

⁷ James Scott notes that the two stage format of Jubilees (as well as the Genesis Apocryphon) finds a partial parallel in the two-stage description from the *Περὶ ἡγεσίας τῆς οἰκουμένης* of Dionysius "Periegetes". J. M. Scott, *Geography in Early Judaism and Christianity: The Book of Jubilees* (SNTS Mon. Ser. 113; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002), 32.

⁸ Generally speaking, inordinate attention is given to Shem, and more specifically to his son Arpachshad, in the Genesis Apocryphon and Jubilees.