DEMONSTRABLE INSTANCES OF THE USE OF SOURCES IN THE PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

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The question of the relationship between Aramaic Levi Document (ALD), Jubilees and the Greek Testament of Levi (TPL) has long intrigued scholars. A number of more or less detailed comparisons of the relationship between ALD and TPL have been undertaken and most conclude that TPL stands in some sort of literary dependence on ALD.¹ In contrast, there is no general consensus regarding the connection between Jubilees, ALD and TPL.² Earlier studies were


impeded by the fragmentary state of the Qumran Aramaic Levi material (1Q21, 4Q213–14, 4Q540). Two monographs published in 2004, one by Greenfield, Stone and Eshel, and the other by Drawnel, along with Kugler’s book of 1996, alleviate this problem. They clarify the relationship between the Geniza and the Qumran Aramaic Levi fragments and present all the fragments as parts of a single document that we entitle ALD. As a result, it is now easier to analyze ways in which later authors adopted and adapted source material.

There are two facets to an analysis of the relationship between texts. On the one hand, one must account for shared features, on the other hand, for divergences. For example, the ordering of events and explicit citations reflect the direct dependence of TPL on some form of ALD. Similarly, overlaps between ALD and Jubilees, particularly in the Levi section of Jub. 30:1–32:9, suggest that Jubilees also may have been “dependent on Aramaic Levi or on the tradition that lies behind it.”


1 The fragmentary state of ALD caused many uncertainties about its form and stages of transmission. Consequently, studies have focused on the reconstruction, translation and interpretation of ALD.

2 Greenfield, Stone and Eshel, Aramaic Levi; Drawnel, Wisdom Text.

3 Kugler’s reconstruction, which was made before the Qumran fragments were published, has met with some resistance, see for example M. Morgenstern, “Review of R. A. Kugler, From Patriarch to Priest, Atlanta, 1996,” JSS 44 (1999): 135–37.

4 The amount of secondary literature on ALD and the relationship between it, Jubilees and TPL is copious and dissenting. I have chosen to use the 2004 edition of ALD by Greenfield, Stone and Eshel as my primary witness for this work.

5 A number of extra-biblical motifs in this section are also attested in ALD; for example, Levi’s appointment as a priest, Jacob’s sacrifice to Levi, and strong teaching of endogamy in the same context. See J. VanderKam, The Book of Jubilees (Guide to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 138.

6 VanderKam, Jubilees, 138. Kugel (Levi’s Elevation and “How Old is the Aramaic Levi Document” DSD 14 [2007]: 291–312) holds that Jubilees served as a source for ALD. While interesting, his opinion is based on the creation of two hypothetical documents, “Levi’s Apocalypse” and “Levi’s Priestly Initiation” in order to explain the exegetical traditions that he presumes lie behind ALD and Jubilees. I see no reason to