EXEGETICAL NOTES ON 4Q225 “PSEUDO-JUBILEES”

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The texts 4Q225–227 “Pseudo-Jubilees” were published by James VanderKam and J. T. Milik. These texts were classified as “Pseudo-Jubilees” because, while not part of the book of Jubilees itself, they share certain characteristics with that book, notably the reference to Satan as Mastemah, that is, “the angel of loathing” (שמם המס llegm šmn čm), and the dating of events with reference to the number of jubilees. One part of 4Q225 deals with the famous story of Abraham’s offering up of his son Isaac as a sacrifice (Genesis 22), and this section has already been the subject of several studies. Despite this


2 Some translators have rendered שָׁמִי here as “prince,” but clearly the word means “angel,” as in, for example, Dan. 10:13, 20–21, 12:1. This usage is generally understood as a development of late biblical Hebrew, but it may have earlier roots: Ps. 82:7 seems to refer to shooting stars (understood to be falling angels) as סָגָרְיָה. This sentence is reminiscent of numerous rabbinic texts that associate the name “Satan” with the verb פָּשֵׁר, for example, the early post-biblical liturgical poem with its line, פָּשֵׁר לְשָׁנָה יִלְטָה יַעֲנֵיה, “Seal up Satan’s mouth and let him not incite against us” (cf. Zech. 3:2). The verbs פָּשֵׁר and פשִּֽית are rather similar in biblical Hebrew, though the former is rarer and is not found in late biblical Hebrew. Does Jubilees’ use of the name “Mastemah” represent a suggestion that the name פשִּֽית is derived from it? Such a possibility is to be weighed in the light of the well known phenomenon of the interchange between final mem and nun in Hebrew and Aramaic sources from the Second Temple period—including the Qumran Scrolls. See E. Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* HSS 29 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986) 27.

3 As the editors and others have observed, 4Q225 offers an etymology of the name “Mastemah” (which Jubilees itself does not): ריבא שְׁמֵי וְשָׁמִי[s] הֵא אֶלֶף וְשֵׁיָא הֵא מִשָּׁלי וְשָׁמִי בַּסֵּר. This sentence is reminiscent of numerous rabbinic texts that associate the name “Satan” with the verb פָּשֵׁר, for example, the early post-biblical liturgical poem with its line, פָּשֵׁר לְשָׁנָה יִלְטָה יַעֲנֵיה, “Seal up Satan’s mouth and let him not incite against us” (cf. Zech. 3:2). The verbs פָּשֵׁר and פשִּֽית are rather similar in biblical Hebrew, though the former is rarer and is not found in late biblical Hebrew. Does Jubilees’ use of the name “Mastemah” represent a suggestion that the name פשִּֽית is derived from it? Such a possibility is to be weighed in the light of the well known phenomenon of the interchange between final mem and nun in Hebrew and Aramaic sources from the Second Temple period—including the Qumran Scrolls. See E. Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* HSS 29 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986) 27.

attention, there remain a number of issues that may deserve further comment. In the following I would like to address a cluster of issues related to 4Q225 and the biblical exegesis underlying it.

The section dealing with the offering of Isaac begins in fragment 2, column i and continues in fragment 2, column ii. I will reproduce the text along with the proposed readings of the two editors and their translation:

column i

9. [to Abraha]m, and he named him Isaac. Then the Prince of the Ma[s]temah came

10. [to G]od and he accused Abraham regarding Isaac. And [G]od said

11. [to Abra]ham: Take your son, Isaac, [your] on[ly one whom

12. you [love] and offer him to me as a whole burnt-offering on one of the [high] mountains

13. [which I will designate] for you. And he got [up and w]ent from the wells up to M[t. Moriah]

14. [ And Ab[raham] lifted

column ii

1. [to] [Abraham] and he named him Isaac. Then the King of the [Ma]thalah came

2. [to God] and he accused Abraham regarding Isaac. And God said

3. [to Abraham]: Take your son, Isaac, your only one whom

4. you [love] and offer him to me as a whole burnt-offering on one of the [high] mountains

5. [which I will designate] for you. And he got [up and w]ent from the wells up to M[t. Moriah]

6. And Abraham lifted

7. [to God] and he accused Abraham regarding Isaac. And God said

8. [to Abraham]: Take your son, Isaac, your only one whom

9. you [love] and offer him to me as a whole burnt-offering on one of the [high] mountains

10. [which I will designate] for you. And he got [up and w]ent from the wells up to M[t. Moriah]

11. And Ab[raham] lifted