

INTRODUCTION

This book is a joint enterprise emerging from Michael Stone's senior seminar during the years 2003–2005.¹ The seminar was devoted during those two years to a study of the traditions about a book or books of Noah and about Noah himself. The subject is enormous, as will be seen from the chronological and geographical range of the material assembled here. Two questions were defined that focused the discussion and, consequently, the material presented in this book. The first was to assess references to a Noah writing in the Second Temple period, including segments of existing works that scholars had in the past attributed to a Noah writing. As a corollary of this, the traditions of Noah in other Second Temple period works were studied, first, to gain insight into their character and, second, to see whether distinct enough traditions survived in those, often incidental, references to witness to the existence of a Noachic writing or writings.

The second main purpose of the papers presented was to examine Noah traditions and documents after the destruction of the temple. On the one hand, once again the purpose was to get a picture (this time, in view of the enormous amount of material surviving, a less exhaustive one) of how Noah and Noah writings were portrayed in a series of Jewish, Christian, gnostic, Samaritan, qur'anic and other sources. The role of the Noah traditions in early modern discussions of geological strata and the seemingly eternal search for Mount Ararat and Noah's ark have not been documented here, nor have rabbinic and medieval Jewish sources squeezed until the last drop of juice was extracted. The Muslim tradition is represented basically only by the material in the Qur'an proper. The medieval Christian sources, too, are rather sampled than exhausted. Doubtless, the learned reader will find other, glaring omissions.² In addition, comparative material from the ancient Near East and the

1. A previous publication of the seminar is Stone, Wright, and Satran 2000.

2. The work by Dorothy M. Peters, *Noah Traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Conversations and Controversies of Antiquity* (SBLEJL 26; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), appeared too late to be taken into account.

classical tradition has been introduced by the various authors but has not been the object of an independent study.

The reason for this is the nature of the volume. It was written and edited by members of the senior seminar, but no compromises were made on this account with scholarly standards. However, the human resources required to study the complete range of everything ever said about Noah were not available, nor could they, in all likelihood, have been assembled at any other university. We aspired to be as exhaustive as feasible as far as the predestruction sources go, but only to provide a responsible representation of the later sources. Even then, some essays by former members or nonmembers of the seminar were included.

A former member, Erica Martin, contributed the chapter on the qur'anic materials. Albert Geljon of Leiden kindly answered our invitation to write on Philo's Noah, and Benjamin G. Wright III, another former seminar member, contributed the study of Noah in the Septuagint. All other essays were written by members of the seminar.

The three editors shared the work, and they share the responsibility for the imperfections, such as there are. Aryeh Amihai served as secretary both of the seminar and of the editorial board and kept us all in control of the very complex material and coordination. Vered Hillel worked on bibliography and knocked a very diverse series of essays into a standard format and shape. Michael Stone did the first scientific editing of the manuscripts, guiding their transformation from seminar presentations to scholarly chapters. Amihai, Hillel, and Stone read and edited all the manuscripts. Thanks are expressed to Ruth Clements, who assisted in many ways, particularly in questions of format and bibliography. Lauren Stevens was responsible for the final updating and polishing of the manuscript and pounced on many inconsistencies that slipped by the editors. Thanks are duly expressed to them.

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(Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999) page 91E, from verse 49:2 “Michael the arch-angel” until verse 50:2 “will be fired.”

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