Dictionary Early Judaism

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opher Damascius, the last head of the academy in Athens, knew of a Jewish doctor by the name of Domnus (*Vita Isidori Reliquiae,* ed. Zintzen, frg. 335).

Jewish literature from the Greco-Roman period, including Philo and Josephus, but most of all rabbinic literature, is a treasure trove of medical information. Although not organized in any systematic way, these texts demonstrate acute knowledge of human and animal anatomy, medicinal plants and herbs, as well as treatment procedures of the time, especially those that emerged from the Hippocratic School in Alexandria. Books of remedies and medicine were known to Jews already in the early days of the Second Temple (*Jub.* 10:13, and see *Sefer Noah* in *Beit Ha-Midrash,* vol. 3, ed. Jellinek, pp. 155-60), and they are also mentioned in the Talmud (e.g., *b. Berakot* 10b). The most comprehensive medical document that survived from ancient Jewish circles is the text known as *Sefer Refuot (Book of Remedies),* attributed to the mysterious, perhaps legendary figure "Asaph the Jew." Written in biblical Hebrew, the book surveys the various branches of medicine and includes a discussion of 123 medicinal plants. The author also formulated a Jewish oath for doctors, which closely resembles the famous Hippocratic pledge. Unfortunately, the text does not provide clear evidence as to its dating or place of origin.

Magical practices dealing with illness and disease were also very popular among ancient Jews. Beyond the evidence relating to the figure of Jesus (discussed above), one needs only to survey the hundreds of incantations — inscribed on bowls, incised on metal sheets, or written as amulets — that were found in Jewish centers in Babylonia and Palestine, or the hundreds of pages devoted to magical spells and recipes that were uncovered in the Cairo Geniza, to realize that Jews did not refrain from magic. Second Temple Jewish literature frequently alludes to magical remedies (e.g., 4Q560; *T. Job* 47; Ps.-Philo, *Bib. Ant.* 25:12), as do the rabbis, although some of them voice their objection to certain methods (e.g., *m. Šabb.* 6:10; similar to their dissatisfaction with a total reliance on medicine).

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See also: Demons and Exorcism; Divination and Magic; Healing; Magic Bowls and Incantations; Sickness and Disease

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Melchizedek

Melchizedek is an enigmatic priestly figure who appears only twice in the Hebrew Bible, in Gen. 14:18 and Ps. 110:4. In Gen. 14:18-20 Melchizedek is introduced as the king of Salem and the priest of God Most High. He brings out bread and wine to Abraham after the defeat of the eastern kings, blesses him, and receives from the patriarch a tithe of all his possessions. The designation of Melchizedek as priest of the Most High points to a Canaanite origin for this character. His name means "my king is Zedek" and may derive from the name of a Canaanite deity (Zedek). Yet later traditions often interpret Melchizedek's name as "king of righteousness." In Ps. 110:4 Melchizedek is mentioned in the context of the enthronement of a new king. Scholars believe that here it represents a title rather than a personal name. The psalm links the motifs of priesthood and kingship, envisioning Melchizedek as an archetype of royal priesthood.

Due to the scarcity of information about Melchizedek in biblical tradition and his enigmatic priestly identity, his story became a locus of extensive exegetical elaborations in Jewish and Christian literature. In the *Melchizedek Scroll* from Qumran (first or second century B.C.E.), Melchizedek is portrayed as a celestial being, one of the *'ĕlōhîm,* who will be the eschatological judge on the Day of Atonement at the end of the tenth jubilee. The text describes him as a liberator of the righteous and a heavenly adversary of Belial and the spirits of his lot.

In contrast to 11QMelchizedek, neither Philo (*De Abrahamo* 253; *De Congressu* 99; *Leg. Alleg.* 3.79-82) nor Josephus (*J.W.* 6.438; *Ant.* 1.179-81) provides any hints about the heavenly status of Melchizedek but instead view him as a historical person, "a king peaceable and worthy of his priesthood."

In the late Second Temple period, Melchizedek's priesthood became attractive to some Jewish groups who sought to use his status as a mysterious sacerdotal figure for legitimating their priestly claims. Thus 2 (Slavonic) *Enoch,* a Jewish pseudepigraphon composed in the first century C.E., attempts to incorporate the enigmatic royal priest into the framework of a priestly Noachic tradition by transferring to him some priestly features of Noah and, more specifically, the sacerdotal characteristics of Noah's miraculous birth. Enochic authors utilize Melchizedek's priestly credentials in order to insert him into the priestly genealogy of Enoch's descendants. The ancient priestly status of Melchizedek suits well the anti-Mosaic agenda of the Enochic authors, since he held his office long before Moses received sacerdotal prescriptions on Mt. Sinai. In the Nag Hammadi tractate *Melchizedek* (NHC IX,1), a Christian

work that contains originally pre-Christian Melchizedek speculation overlaid with christological reinterpretation, the name Melchizedek is again incorporated into the list of Noah's priestly descendants.

Later rabbinic tradition was likely aware of these early Enochic-Noachic adaptations of Melchizedek. They try to reinsert him into the "official" sacerdotal line by identifying him with Noah's son Shem. Theological deliberations about Shem-Melchizedek are attested in targumic, talmudic, and midrashic materials (e.g., *Tg. Ps.-J.* and *Tg. Neof.* on Gen. 14:18; *b. Nedarim* 32b; *Gen. Rab.* 43:1; 44:7; *'Abot de Rabbi Nathan* 2; *Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer* 7; 27). These passages seek to bolster the priestly antecedents of Shem-Melchizedek by transferring his priestly line to Abraham. The texts reinterpret Gen. 14:19-20 by claming that the priesthood was taken from Shem-Melchizedek and given to Abraham because the former gave precedence in his blessing to Abraham over God. The tradition also reinterprets Ps. 110:4 by translating the verse, "You [Abraham] are a priest forever because of the words of Melchizedek." Thus *b. Nedarim* 32b says of Shem-Melchizedek, "He was a priest, but not his seed."

The New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews portrays Melchizedek as a priest without parents or lineage, using him to create a heavenly and eternal priesthood to which Christ belongs. Similar to *2 Enoch,* the epistle co-opts Melchizedek to form an alternative priestly trajectory more ancient than and superior to the one stemming from Moses, Aaron, and Levi. Yet even though the comparison between Christ and Melchizedek is clear in the epistle, the precise nature of that comparison and the status it assigns to Melchizedek himself remain obscure (Attridge 1989). The author appears to be deliberately noncommittal about the enigmatic priest, perhaps because he was aware of the extensive scope of Melchizedek's nonbiblical sacerdotal portfolio.

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See also: Hebrews, Epistle to the; Melchizedek Scroll (11Q13)

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Melchizedek Scroll (11Q13)

The *Melchizedek Scroll* (11Q13) is a fragmentary text from Cave 11 near Qumran. It features a heavenly figure named Melchizedek who executes divine judgment and deliverance in the context of an eschatological jubilee and Day of Atonement.

Disposition of the Fragments

Discovered in 1956, the *Melchizedek Scroll* consists of between ten and fourteen parchment fragments. Scholarly assessments of how to count and configure these fragments vary, but the consensus is that portions of three columns are extant. Of these, col. 1 is represented by only a few fortuitously placed letters. Traces of at least three letters from a supralinear notation in col. 1 remain in the right margin of col. 2 between its lines 11 and 12. This notation then continues vertically down the margin to at least line 14 of col. 2. Significantly more text of col. 3 is extant; the destruction of Belial is mentioned, but little else can be deduced about its contents. Only materials from the beginning of each line (ranging from isolated letters to several words) are preserved intact, and it is unclear whether several of the remaining fragments of the manuscript preserve portions of col. 3 or other columns. Column 2 also suffers from multiple lacunae and spans numerous fragments, yet significantly more can be said about its contents. Portions of twenty-five lines remain; none are complete, but several are missing only a few words and are easily reconstructed. Also, portions of all four margins have survived. The DJD editors estimate that the column measured 12.5 cm. high and 14 cm. wide, averaging seventy-three letter spaces per line (García Martínez et al. 1998).

Date

The *editio princeps* of 11Q13 was published by Adam S. van der Woude in 1965; he argued that the hand was Herodian and thus the manuscript should be dated to the first half of the first century C.E. Józef Milik (1972), also appealing to paleography, argued instead for a first-century-B.C.E. date, specifically 75 to 50 B.C.E. Milik further asserted that the text was part of a longer "Pesher on the Periods" (concluding 4Q180-181) written by the Teacher of Righteousness himself and thus must be dated ca. 120 B.C.E., but few scholars have concurred. Similarly, Émile Puech (1987) proposed the second half of the second century B.C.E. as the date of composition, arguing that it was penned as a polemic against Hasmonean appropriation of Melchizedek's title "priest of God Most High."

Genre

The genre of the *Melchizedek Scroll* has been variously defined as midrash or pesher. Jean Carmignac (1970) labeled the text a "thematic pesher" because it employs a number of biblical quotations while addressing a single subject, the deliverance of God's people via Melchizedek from Belial. Quotations of Scripture are numerous; in col. 2 alone, three clusters of quotations are evident, each typically concluding with a pesher on its first cited text (lines 2-9: Lev. 25:13; Deut. 15:2; lines 10-14: Pss. 7:8-9; 82:1; 82:2; lines 15-25: Isa. 52:7; Dan. 9:25; Lev. 25:9). Numerous scholars have also detected ele-