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Autor: Schwartz, Joshua
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The *Encaenia* of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Temple of Solomon and the Jews

Attempts have been made to trace the possible Jewish antecedents of the feast of the *Encaenia* (=dedication) of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the possible influence of Jewish festivals and religious practices on this feast and its subsequent development.¹ There have also been attempts to examine the extent of Jewish influence on Christian traditions in general pertaining to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.² Few scholars, however, have thought to ask what the Jews thought about all of this. The neglect of this question undoubtedly stems from the impression that there were no Jews at this time in Jerusalem and its environs and, thus, the Jews would not be terribly aware of the intricacies of Christian borrowings of Jewish motifs.³ The Jews, however, had every opportunity to learn of these developments. It has been shown that there was a Jewish community, albeit small and relatively unimportant, in Jerusalem during most of the Roman-Byzantine period⁴ and in any event, it is inconceivable that knowledge of Christian borrowing and transference of Jewish motifs, some of which were quite prominent as we shall see below, would not filter back eventually to the Jews of Palestine. It is our contention that at some time, whether directly or indirectly, knowledge of details connected in some form or manner to Jewish motifs and incorporated into the *Encaenia* festival reached certain Rabbinic circles in Pal-

¹ See M. Black, The Festival of *Encaenia Ecclesiae* in the Ancient Church with special reference to Palestine and Syria, *JEH* 5 (1954) 78–85; J. Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land*, Jerusalem² 1981, 298–310 (=“Jewish Influences on the Jerusalem Liturgy”).

² Wilkinson, *ibid.*

³ This conception is based on Hadrian's purported decree, in the wake of the Bar-Kochba revolt (132–135 C.E.), which forbade Jews to live in or even approach Jerusalem from a distance. The decree is found in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* IV, 6 (312–313, ed. Loeb) who quotes Aristo of Pella. See also R. Harris, Hadrian's Decree of Expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem, *HThR* 19 (1926) 199–206. Cf. J. Prawer, Jerusalem in Jewish and Christian Thought of the Early Middle Ages, *Cathedra* 17 (1980) 57 (Hebrew): “The process of transforming Jerusalem, Aelia Capitolina, into a Christian city met with only minor opposition because the pagan population did not introduce any obstacles to this development, while the Jews were prevented from living in the city since the days of Hadrian.”

⁴ See S. Safrai, The Holy Congregation in Jerusalem, *ScrHie* 23 (1972) 62–78. See also our re-construction of the history of the Jewish community in Jerusalem during this time in J. Schwartz, Jewish Settlement in Judaea in the Roman-Byzantine Period, Jerusalem 1986, 183–191 (Hebrew).

estine and that this knowledge prompted a response in aggadic literature. We shall examine this response within the framework of the *Encaenia* feast of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem during the Byzantine period and, to some extent, within the greater framework of Christian borrowings and transference of Jewish motifs to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

I. *The Encaenia of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*

The feast of the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was instituted on 13 September⁵ 335 C.E. That particular date also marked the *tricennalia* of Constantine. None of the sources which describe the dedication, both the initial dedication and the subsequent celebration of the feast during the Byzantine period, offer a complete picture. The dedication itself is described by Eusebius in the *Vita Constantini*⁶, but his description, far from satisfying scholars has aroused a tremendous degree of controversy. His description does not even present a clear picture as to which parts of the Holy Sepulchre complex were completed by September 335.⁷ Some of the events surrounding the *Encaenia* as described by Eusebius, however, are less problematical. Constantine's envoy Marianus spared, at the Emperor's behest, no expense to make the occasion magnificent. There was free distribution of alms and Jerusalem became the gathering point for distinguished prelates from the entire Christian world who were entertained at expensive public banquets and celebrations. The religious rites or ceremonies were not unusual and in addition to the celebration of the Eucharist, consisted of prayers, reading of Scripture, the singing of Psalms and a fairly good amount of speech-making in praise of Constantine.⁸

Eusebius gives no indication that the festival was to be celebrated annually. Later descriptions, however, make it clear that such was the case. Egeria, writing in the late fourth century offers the most complete description of the festival:

⁵ The *Chronicon Paschale* (Ed. Dindorf), 531 states that the dedication took place on 17 September.

⁶ IV, 43–47 (138–140, ed. Winkelmann, GCS, I. 1).

⁷ This question is also important in relation to our discussion of the Rabbinic material and we will, therefore, deal with it there.

⁸ See Black, *The Festival of Encaenia Ecclesiae*, (see n. 1 above), 78. Cf. H. A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine. A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations*, Berkeley 1976.

“At the time of *Encaenia* they keep festival for eight days, and for many days beforehand the crowds begin to assemble. Monks and apotactites come not only from the provinces having large numbers of them, such as Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, and the Thebaid, but from every region and province. Not one of them fails to make for Jerusalem to share the celebrations of this solemn feast. There are also lay men and women from every province gathering in Jerusalem at this time for the holy day. And although bishops are far and few between, they never have less than forty or fifty in Jerusalem at this time, accompanied by many of their clergy. In fact I should say that people regard it as a grave sin to miss taking part in this solemn feast, unless anyone had been prevented from coming by an emergency. The feast ranks with Easter or Epiphany, and during *Encaenia* they decorate the churches in the same way, and assemble each day in different holy places, as at Easter and Epiphany. On the first and second days they assemble in the Great Church, the Martyrium, in the third day in the Eleona Church...”⁹

The *Encaenia* was to be celebrated not one day, but eight. The festival drew great crowds to Jerusalem and, in fact, there was mass pilgrimage to the city to celebrate this festival. This pilgrimage continued to be quite popular. The Emperor did not have to summon people, as was the case when Constantine summoned the bishops, meeting at Tyre, to attend the dedication in Jerusalem.¹⁰

Egeria also describes a new dimension which had been added to the festival:

“The date when the Church on Golgotha (called the martyrrium) was consecrated to God is called *Encaenia*, and on the same day the holy church of the Anastasis was also consecrated, the place where the Lord rose again after his passion.¹¹ The *Encaenia* of these holy churches is a feast of special magnificence, since it is on the very date when the cross of the Lord was discovered. So they arranged that this day should be observed with all possible joy by making the original dedication of these holy churches coincide with the very day when the cross had been found.”

Although in certain rites, the festival commemorating the finding of the cross would supersede the *Encaenia*¹², Egeria still stresses the importance of the dedication itself and adds that the day of the *Encaenia* was chosen in

⁹ *Itinerarium Egeriae* c. 49 (89–90, CCSL, V. 175). The translation is that of J. Wilkinson (n. 1), 146–147. Cf. A. Bludau, *Die Pilgerreise der Aetheria*, Paderborn 1927, 185–190.

¹⁰ Eusebius, VC IV, 43 (138, ed. Winkelmann); Sozomenus, *Hist. Eccles.* II, 26 (87–88, ed. Bidez, GCS 50); Socrates, *Hist. Eccles.* I, 33 (PG 67:164). The dedication in Jerusalem was planned and the bishops obviously were aware of the forthcoming event. The council had been convened at Tyre to clear the “theological air” before the dedication. The bishops hardly had time to begin their discussions before they are summoned to Jerusalem.

¹¹ Egeria believed that the entire Holy Sepulchre complex was completed and dedicated in 335. See n. 7 above and our discussion of Rabbinic literature below.

¹² See Black (n. 8), 89–80. This second festival is beyond the scope of our study.

particular to coincide with the very day that Solomon consecrated his temple:

You will find in the Bible that the day of Encaenia was when the House of God was consecrated, and Solomon stood in prayer before God's altar, as we read in the Books of Chronicles (II Chr 6, 12).

Sozomenus corroborates many of the elements found in Eusebius such as the magnificence and pomp of the occasion, as well as elements mentioned by Egeria, such as the annual celebration of the eight-day festival and the extensive pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate it. He also adds that new Christians were formally initiated into the church in the course of this festival.¹³

II. Jewish Motifs

From the above descriptions it is possible to discern two prominent Jewish motifs. Egeria introduces the Solomon-Constantine imagery which implies a similar relationship between the Temple and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The eight days of the *Encaenia* festival would certainly bring to mind Biblical and Jewish precedents, as we shall see.

The Solomon-Constantine image and its corollaries undoubtedly were used before Egeria. Thus, twenty years before the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, we find Eusebius at the dedication of the church at Tyre eulogizing the bishop Paulinus and asking rhetorically whether he should call Paulinus "a new Bezalel, the architect of a divine tabernacle, or Solomon the king of a new and goodlier Jerusalem, or even a new Zerubbabel who bestowed upon the Temple of God that glory which greatly exceeded the former."¹⁴ Many of the ideas found in the discourse at Tyre became stock motifs in later works describing Constantine,¹⁵ and even if Eusebius does not explicitly mention the Solomon-Constantine image it would seem likely that it was used or at least already known by then.

Eusebius does, however, use the Temple-Holy Sepulchre imagery¹⁶ and thus the "New Jerusalem" which was built "over the true memorial of

¹³ See n. 10 above.

¹⁴ *Hist. Eccles.* X, 4, 3 (p. 399, ed. Loeb). Later on in the discourse Eusebius refers to him as a "new and goodly Zerubbabel" (X, 4, 36) and as "our most peaceful Solomon, who builded the Temple of God" (X, 4, 45).

¹⁵ Drake, *In Praise of Constantine* (see n. 8), 43.

¹⁶ Cf. *Hist. Eccles.* X, 4 on the dedication at Tyre.

salvation.... facing the far-famed Jerusalem of old time”¹⁷ refers to the new Temple of Christian Jerusalem which was built across the Tyropoeon valley and opposite the Jewish Temple.¹⁸ Further corroboration of this image is found when Eusebius refers to the Cave as the “holy of holies.”¹⁹

As to the second Jewish motif, extending the proceedings of the “*dies encaeniarum*” to eight days would find Biblical precedent in the Feast of Tabernacles, celebrated for seven days and followed on the eighth day by a “holy convocation”²⁰. The holiday is celebrated in *Tishri* (September) and Solomon’s dedication, to which Egeria refers actually took place during this festival.²¹ The dedication may have, therefore, been arranged in mid-September to correspond with the date of the Jewish festival.²² Moreover, the eschatological connotations of the future events to take place on Tabernacles may also have influenced the Christian choice. The book of the prophet Zecharia states: “Then every one that survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles” (14, 16). This Jewish festival signified the universal recognition of God and the dedication of the Holy Sepulchre, certainly construed as such, would, therefore, be most fittingly celebrated at this time.²³ The second Jewish festival which may have served as a precedent for the eight day celebration of the *Encaenia* was *Hanukkah*, the eight day festival of dedication²⁴ and, more-

¹⁷ VC III, 33 (99, ed. Winkelmann). Cf. Rev. 21, 2–26.

¹⁸ Cf. Wilkinson, Egeria’s Travels, 302–303.

¹⁹ VC III, 28 (96, ed. Winkelmann). Cf. Wilkinson, *ibid.*, 165, n. 4.

²⁰ Lev. 23, 33–36.

²¹ See I K 8, 65–66; II Chr 7, 8–10. These verses seem to imply that the dedication of the Temple took place during a seven day festival before the Feast of Tabernacles. See, however, I K 8, 2: “And all the men of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the feast (= Tabernacles) in the month of Ethanim, which is the seventh month.” From this verse it is clear that the dedication of Solomon’s Temple took place during the festival. The other verses cited above represent later traditions or glosses which, it seems, were not familiar with the possibility of the dedication taking place during a festival. This, however, resulted in other difficulties, since a seven day celebration before Tabernacles would mean that it took place during the Day of Atonement, observed five days before Tabernacles. In any event, this was to become the Rabbinic interpretation of these events. See Babylonian Talmud, *Moed Qatan* 9a. Cf. J. A. Montgomery, The Dedication Feast in the Old Testament, JBL 29 (1910) 29–40.

²² Wilkinson (n. 1), 199. Cf. I K 12, 32 ff. Jeroboam dedicated the shrine at Bethel during Tabernacles, although he switched the festival from the seventh to the eighth month.

²³ Cf. B. Bagatti, E. Testa, *Il Golgota e la Croce*, Ricerche storico-archeologiche, Jerusalem 1970, 78–79.

²⁴ See Black (n. 8), 84.

over, the prescribed reading for the *Encaenia* was a passage from John (10, 22–42) referring to this Jewish festival.²⁵

It is most likely that the transference of both of these motifs to the Holy Sepulchre would not have met with Jewish approval. It is true that the eight day celebration of the *Encaenia*, and perhaps also the celebration in September may also have Christian, or at least non-Jewish roots. Christ's two Resurrection appearances were separated by eight days (John 20, 26) and Egeria states that both Easter and Epiphany were also celebrated for eight days.²⁶ The 13th of September also had a long history of temple dedications. The Ides of September was the beginning of the civic year in Rome and was the *dies natalis* of the Capitoline temple.²⁷ This too, then, may have influenced Constantine's choice of date, substituting, as it were, one temple for another. It stands to reason, though, that the clear-cut Solomon-Temple motif would have heightened Jewish sensitivity to any other element associated with the Holy Sepulchre which may have been rooted in Judaism, even if the source of these elements may be explained differently. Likewise, an eight day dedication festival would conjure up in the Jewish consciousness similar eight day Jewish festivals, not the Resurrection appearances of Jesus. Moreover, the Jews probably were familiar with 13 September as the *dies natalis* of Capitoline Jupiter, but this would not have eased their discontent over Christian transference of Jewish motifs. If anything, it would have only increased their irritation.

It is of course impossible to actually know to what extent the Jews were familiar with details of the *Encaenia* and Christian transference of Jewish motifs. It is also impossible to know whether they would have opposed all borrowings, or whether they would react only to the negative connotations implicit in some of these borrowings. One element of the *Encaenia* which specifically embodied a Jewish backdrop and a negative connotation was the choice of John 10, 22–42 for the Gospel selection read at the *Encaenia* festival.

On the surface, the passage may have been chosen because the events related there took place during *Hanukkah*, the feast of the dedication of the Temple.²⁸ The events related in John, however, do not revolve around

²⁵ Armen. Lect. 67 (ed. Renoux, *Patrologia Orientalis*, V. XXXV, fasc. 3). See also our discussion below.

²⁶ See E. D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the later Roman Empire AD 312–460*, Oxford 1982, 109–110.

²⁷ See W. W. Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic*, London 1899, 215.

²⁸ Cf. II Macc 2, 8–12.

Hanukkah. Rather they tell of Jesus preaching at the Temple, specifically in the Portico of Solomon²⁹, and the attempt of the Jews to stone him and later to have him arrested. These events forced Jesus to leave Jerusalem. The symbolism of this reading at the Holy Sepulchre must have been profound. The Jewish Temple had been replaced by the Holy Sepulchre and Jesus returns victorious to Jerusalem and to a new temple. The Jews chose to make a final break with Jesus at their feast of dedication³⁰ and as a result must suffer a new dedication celebrating the temple that replaced their own. The symbolism operates within a sphere of Jewish symbols, yet the outcome of events represents the negation of those very symbols. As stated above, it is impossible to determine to what extent the Jews were familiar with particular details. The general sentiment, however, was well known.

III. Jewish Temple – Christian Temple

The Jewish response to the *Encaenia* cannot be divorced from the overall Jewish response to Christian theology regarding the Temple. This is particularly so because of the Temple imagery which, as we have seen, plays a part in the *Encaenia*. Nibley has shown that the Temple represented a problem for Byzantine and Medieval Christianity.³¹ It could not be denied that much of Christianity was rooted in ancient Judaism. There was a strain of Christian theological thought that looked upon the history of the Temple somewhat favorably and even expressed some envy, to use Nibley's phrase, of the rites and rituals of this institution. This school of thought may have also been influenced to some degree by the tendency of lower classes of Christian society to preserve and adopt Jewish motifs.³² However, the more vigorously intellectual circles of the Church attacked the Temple and, in effect, everything that it stood for. The attack was carried out on two fronts. On one hand, the tendency to spiritualize the Christian roots of Judaism necessitated the negation of everything connected to a material temple. On the other hand, the building of the Holy Sepulchre, which was

²⁹ Generally assumed to be on the eastern side of the Temple Mount and attributed by the ancients to Solomon. This part of the Temple Mount was a favorite meeting place of early Christians. Cf. Acts 3, 11; 5, 12.

³⁰ Cf. R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, Philadelphia 1971, 361 n. 3; W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land*, Berkeley 1974, 294.

³¹ H. Nibley, *Christian Envy of the Temple*, JQR 50 (1959/60) 97–123; 227–240.

³² See J. Schwartz, *Jerome and the Jews of Judea*, Zion 47 (1982), 190 (Hebrew).

the material answer to the Jewish Temple, and the transference of Jewish motifs to this church naturally required that the importance of the original Temple be downplayed. The first sphere of attack was theological.³³ The second, however, was more practical in the sense that the common people could be wooed away from their acceptance and cultivation of Jewish motifs.³⁴

It is hard to know whether those Christian traditions somewhat favorable to the Temple would have made a positive impression on the Jews. Perhaps the tendency of some Christians to adopt Jewish motifs would have made for such a possibility.³⁵ Certainly the Jews would have been happy to know that there were Christians who like themselves believed that the Temple would be rebuilt.³⁶ They would have been less happy, however, to learn that some Christians thought that this Temple would be the seat of the Antichrist and its building be considered one of a series of cataclysmic events before the second coming of Christ.³⁷ Even many of the supposed compliments vis-à-vis the Temple were, in effect, quite backhanded. Jerome may explain to a friend that the Jews thought that the Holy of Holies in their Temple was a wondrous thing, but then quickly add that the Sepulchre of the Lord would appear more worshipful.³⁸ Solomon's Temple was magnificent and opulent and this might even have brought one to the conclusion that his temple should be the house of God, but his generation was not worthy and the Second Temple, likewise opulent, was condemned by Jesus.³⁹ Solomon may have received divine instruction and the component parts of the Temple may be outstanding symbols of God's providence toward's His people, but the people who actually worshipped there

³³ Nibley, *Christian Envy*.

³⁴ D. Bowden, *The Age of Constantine and Julian*, London 1978, 157. The substitution of Christian festivals for pagan ones was offered a means to combat the attachment of the common people to pagan festivals. The same was undoubtedly true vis-à-vis Jewish festivals and beliefs.

³⁵ However, ultimately, things may have boiled down to the sentiment aptly described by M. Simon: "Aux yeux des Juifs le Christianisme est une usurpation." See M. Simon, *Verus Israel. Étude sur les relations entre Chrétiens et Juifs dans L'Empire Romain*, Paris 1948, 165.

³⁶ Hieron, *Comm. in Jerem.* XXXI, 37 (PL 24:886): *Judaei videlicet et nostri judaizantes conantur ostendere... ibi dicunt sanctuarium Domini, id est templum esse condendum, mansurumque in perpetuum.*

³⁷ See A. Linder, *Jerusalem as a Focal Point in the Conflict between Judaism and Christianity*, in: B. Z. Kedar (ed.), *Jerusalem in the Middle Ages*, Jerusalem 1979, 11 (Hebrew).

³⁸ Hieron, *Epist.* XLVI (CSEL 54:334).

³⁹ Zeno, *Tract.* I, 14 (PL 11:355).

proved themselves to be unworthy of the Temple⁴⁰ and Solomon may even have prophesied the future destruction of the Temple.⁴¹ The Jews can hardly have considered these sentiments in a favorable light, even if there was at times some positive Christian feeling regarding Solomon. Suffice it here to mention the biting comment of Theodoretus who, in comparing the Holy Sepulchre complex with the ruined Temple, wonders how the Jews have the effrontery to remain at all in Jerusalem.⁴² As stated above, the Jews may not have been familiar with all the details, but the general drift of the message had to be known.

The same had to be true regarding the transference of Temple motifs to the Holy Sepulchre. Early Jewish tradition states that Adam was created at Mount Moriah, from the future place of the Temple altar⁴³. The *Breviarius de Hierosolyma* states that he was created at Golgotha.⁴⁴ Jewish Pseudepigraphic tradition places Adam's grave in the same site where he was created⁴⁵ and Christian tradition transfers his burial site to Golgotha.⁴⁶ Late Biblical tradition identified Mt. Moriah, the site of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac, with the Temple Mount⁴⁷ and Rabbinic tradition accepted and expanded upon this identification.⁴⁸ Christian tradition transferred the events to Golgotha⁴⁹ and most ironically, there were even

⁴⁰ J. Chrysostom, *Homilae de Statuis ad Populum Antichenum Habitaes* XVII,2 (PG 49:177).

⁴¹ Hilary, *Tract.* in Ps. CXXVI (PL 9:694–699; CSEL 22:613–622). Here Solomon prophesied the destruction of the Second Temple, not his own.

⁴² Theodoret., *In Ezech.* XLVIII, 35 (PG 81:1253).

⁴³ PT (=Palestinian Talmud) *Nazir* VIII, 56b; *Genesis Rabbah* 14:8 (132, ed. Theodor-Albeck).

⁴⁴ *Brev. de Hierol.* 2 (110, ed. Weber, CCSL 175).

⁴⁵ *Apocalypsis Mosis* 40; *Vita Adae et Evae* 48. Although both sources state that he was buried in paradise, it is clear that the intention of the sources was the Temple Mount. See L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, Philadelphia 1947, 127–128, n. 139.

⁴⁶ Origen states that this was a "tradition of the Hebrews". See Origen., *In Mt. ser.* 126 (fr. 551.II, 225, GCS, 41₁). Jerome says that he heard this tradition in church. See Hieron., *In Eph.* III, 14 (PL 26:526). See N. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews. Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third Century Palestine*, London 1976, 126–127. On the Adam traditions in general see V. Aptowitzer, *Les éléments Juifs dans la légende du Golgotha*, REJ 79 (1924) 145–162.

⁴⁷ II Chr 3:1. Cf. Gen 22:2.

⁴⁸ See S. Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, New York 1969.

⁴⁹ We are not here concerned with the question of which group originated the various theological patterns and motifs associated with Jewish and Christian interpretations of the Binding of Isaac. For a survey of pertinent literature and Christian interpretation see most recently J. Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac. A Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the Light of the Aqedah*, Rome 1981. On the transference to Golgotha in Byzantine and medieval theology see D. Lerch, *Isaaks Opferung christlich gedeutet*, Tübingen 1950.

claims that it was the Jews themselves who tied the events to this site.⁵⁰ One of the pilgrim attractions of Golgotha soon became the very altar where supposedly Abraham had intended to sacrifice his son.⁵¹ Near there according to Christian tradition was the altar where the priest Zechariah ben Jehoiada, who had rebuked the people, was stoned by orders of the king Joash.⁵² Near where the cross of Jesus was displayed, pilgrims could see the magic ring of Solomon, which had helped him build the Temple, and the horn with which David had been anointed.⁵³ The Jews were undoubtedly familiar with most of these transfers, and as we shall see, their response to the *Encaenia* was influenced by some of them.

IV. *Pesikta Rabbati and the Encaenia*

We have seen, then, that there are more than enough elements in the *Encaenia* and the attendant Holy Sepulchre rites and traditions which were rooted in Judaism and could have been an irritant to the Jews and prompted a response. Indeed, Patristic literature tells us that the Jews did respond, and sometimes mockingly, in such important matters as the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension.⁵⁴ A response in Rabbinic literature would also be in keeping with accepted Rabbinic practice or in the apt words of R. Loewe: "There are not a few rabbinic passages occasioned by

⁵⁰ Hieron, *Comm. in Marc* 15 (PL 30:638): *Et perducent eum in Golgotha, quod interpretetur Calvaria. Tradunt Judaei, quando in hoc montis loco immolatus est aries pro Isaac, ut ibi decolletur, id est, Christus a carne sua, carnali videlicet Judaei separetur.* It is most likely, however, that when the site of the Binding of Isaac was transferred by the Christians to Golgotha, they also transferred the fact that the Jews had once posited an identification for it.

⁵¹ *Brev. de Hierol.* 2 (110, CCSL 175); Theodosius, *De Situ Terrae Sanctae* 7 (117, CCSL 175); Antonini Placentini *Itinerarium* 19 (138–139, CCSL 175): *Nam et locus, ubi crucifixus fuit, paret et cruor sanguinis paret in ipsa petra. In latere est altarium Abrahae, ubi ibat Isaac offerre, obtulit et Melchisedech sacrificium; Adamai de Locis Sanctis* VI, 1, 2 (190–191, CCSL 175): *Inter has itaque duales ecclesias ille famosus occurit locus in quo Abraham patriarcha altare conpsuit, super illud inponens lignorum struem, et ut Isaac suum immolaret filium euaginatam arripuit gladium; ubi nunc mensa habetur lignea non parva, super quam pauperum elimosinae a populo offeruntur.* Cf. J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, Jerusalem 1977, 36.

⁵² *Brev. de Hierol.* 3 (110). Cf. II Chr. 24: 20–22.

⁵³ *Brev. de Hierol.* 2 (110). On the Jewish traditions see G. Salzberger, *Salomos Tempelbau und Thron in der Semitischen Sagenliteratur*, Berlin 1924; Ginzberg, *Legends* (see n. 45), V. VI, 292, n. 56.

⁵⁴ See, for instance, Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* XIII, 37 (PG 33:816–817).

the need to controvert Christian dogma insofar as it claimed to be rooted in the faith of Israel.”⁵⁵

With all this information in mind, we can now approach the Rabbinic lection which represents, in our opinion, the reaction to the *Encaenia* traditions. The selection is found in *Pesikta Rabbati*, a collection of Palestinian Rabbinic discourses, each one based on a Biblical lesson appropriate for a particular Sabbath or festival. Although there has been much discussion concerning the date of the work, the general feeling now seems to be that it was composed in the late Byzantine period in Palestine (sixth-seventh centuries), although it undoubtedly includes earlier material.⁵⁶ *Pesikta* also includes passages which were part of the anti-Christian polemic. Some of these passages are direct in their criticism, while others are more oblique in their attack on Christian doctrines and beliefs. Thus, discourses in *Pesikta* attack the concept of the Son of God as Paschal lamb, Rome’s missionary activity, the idea of an intermediary between God and mankind and the Cross. The passage which we will discuss, then, should be understood in light of the polemical nature of certain parts of the work.⁵⁷

The Biblical verse which serves as the basis for the tradition which we shall study is appropriately enough I K 7:51: “Thus all the work that Solomon wrought in the House of the Lord was finished (*wtšlm*).” The discourse begins with a discussion concerning the date on which the Tabernacle in the desert was completed (Ex 39:32–33) and the period of waiting until its actual dedication (Ex 40:2)⁵⁸:

“R. Hanina said: The work of the Tabernacle was finished on the twenty-fifth of Kislev; but the Tabernacle stayed packed away until the first of Nisan.⁵⁹ For in keeping with God’s behest,

⁵⁵ See R. Loewe, *The Jewish Midrashim and Patristic and Scholastic Exegesis of the Bible*, *StPatr* 1 (1958), 494. On Rabbinic-Christian polemic in general see most recently R. Kimelman, *Rabbi Yohanan and Origen On the Song of Songs: A Third-Century Jewish-Christian Disputation*, *HThR* 73 (1980) 567–595, and the bibliography cited there.

⁵⁶ See N.J. Cohen, *The London Manuscript of Midrash Pesiqta Rabbati: A Key Text Witness Comes to Light*, *JQR* 73 (1983) 209–210, n. 1.

⁵⁷ W.G. Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati. Discourses for Feasts, Fasts and Special Sabbaths*, New Haven 1968, V. I, 11–12.

⁵⁸ *Piska* 6. The translation is from Braude, V. I, 123–126. The standard Hebrew edition is that of M. Friedmann (Vienna 1880). See 24ab–25a. A comparison of his text with a microfilm of Ms. Parma 1240 (examined at the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem) and ed. Prague (between 1653–1656) did not reveal textual variants significant for the purposes of our study. Our *Piska* does not appear in Ms. Casanatense 3324 or Ms. London.

⁵⁹ Three months elapsed between Kislev and Nisan.

Moses waited till the first of Nisan to rear it . . . And all the time that it stayed packed away Israel kept sneering at Moses, saying: "Why has the Tabernacle not been set up immediately? May it be that some fault has occurred in the making of it?" They did not know that it was God's intention to bring the rejoicing over the Tabernacle into the month in which Isaac was born and Isaac was born in Nisan. . . It did not take long. When Nisan came and the Tabernacle was set up, no man sneered at Moses any more. Now since it happened thus, did Kislev, the month during which the work on the Tabernacle was actually finished, suffer any loss? Not at all! For what can the expression *wtšlm* really intimate except that the Holy One, blessed be He, said: It is for me to compensate (*šlm*)⁶⁰ the month for its loss. And how did the Holy One, blessed be He, compensate it? By putting into it the celebration of Hanukkah under the Hasmonean house."

Hanukkah, then, or at least its future occurrence in the month of Kislev was already divinely ordained while the Children of Israel were in the desert.

This part of the discourse appears in similar versions, although occasionally abbreviated, in other Rabbinic texts.⁶¹ The tradent, R. Hanina was a third century Sage and although it is impossible to be sure that the ascription is historical⁶², it would seem that this part of the discourse could have little to do with the *Encaenia*. The continuation of the tradition, however, is much more relevant:

"The same sort of thing happened to Solomon. He finished the work of the Temple in the month of Marheshvan: And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul . . . was the House finished (I K 6:38)⁶³. . . But because the Temple stayed locked up for twelve months,⁶⁴ everyone was sneering at Solomon saying: 'Is he not the son of Bath-sheba? How can the Holy One, blessed be He cause His presence to dwell in the handiwork of such a man?'⁶⁵ They did not know it was God's intention to bring the rejoicing at the completion of the Temple into the month in which Abraham was born, 'into the month of Ethanim,' which is Tishri.⁶⁶ Why should the seventh month be described as 'of the Ethanim?' To tell us that Tishri (the seventh month), is the month of the birth of Abraham, who in the verse 'Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite' (Ps 89:1) is referred to as Ethan, 'the enduring rock'.⁶⁷ And during all the twelve months that the Temple stayed locked up, even though all the work of the Temple was finished, its being locked up made it seem as

⁶⁰ The root *šlm* may mean either "To complete" or "to compensate".

⁶¹ *Ex Rabbah* 52:2; *Num Rabbah* 13:2; *Tanhuma Pekude* 11; *Tanhuma Pekude*, ed. Buber 6 (65b); *Yalkut Shimoni* 417 (785–786, ed. Mosad Ha-Rav Kook); *Yalkut Shimoni* Kings 184. All of these traditions are ultimately dependent on *Pesikta Rabbati*.

⁶² In *Ex Rabbah*, for instance, the tradent is R. Johanan.

⁶³ Bul-Marheshvan-October.

⁶⁴ The dedication of the Temple was, as we have seen in Tishri (September).

⁶⁵ Ms. Parma and ecl. Prague: the Temple.

⁶⁶ I K 8:2: "And all the men of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the feast in the month of Ethanim which is the seventh month."

⁶⁷ See Braude (n. 57), 125, nn. 33–34.

though Solomon had done nothing at all. But as soon as it was opened in (Tishri) the month of the festivals, and offerings were brought and the fire came down on the altar, the Holy One, blessed be He, said: Now is the work finished: 'Thus all the work... was finished' (I K 7:51). And will Marheshvan suffer any loss? Not at all. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: It is for me to compensate (*šlm*) the month. Thus all the work... was to be compensated (*wtšlm*)."

Although the Solomon tradition is similar to the Moses tradition, there are a number of important differences. Firstly, the Solomon tradition is anonymous; no tradent is mentioned and, thus, the tradition cannot be dated through a tradent. Secondly, this tradition does not appear in the numerous parallel sources cited for the first half of the discourse and, in fact, in addition to *Pesikta Rabbati*, it is found only in the medieval midrashic compilation *Yalkut Shimoni* (in a corrupt form) and is completely dependent on *Pesikta*.⁶⁸ This fact, together with its anonymous status in a late Byzantine Palestinian midrashic work, lead to the conclusion that the Solomon tradition is later than the Moses tradition and, therefore, stems from the Byzantine period. Thus, the author of this part of the discourse could have been aware or familiar in some manner, with Christian rites and traditions.

In fact, a careful analysis of the Solomon tradition should show that the author was responding to the *Encaenia* as it had developed in the Byzantine period. Constantine, as we have seen, was compared with Solomon and his church became the Temple. We have also seen that the Solomon motif and the Biblical precedent were instrumental in the choice of the date of the *Encaenia* and that these ideas must have been generally known to the Jews. The anonymous author of the Solomon discourse in *Pesikta* manages to discredit the entire Christian interpretation of these motifs in a most ironic, if somewhat understated, manner.⁶⁹ The Christians sought to imitate Solomon, but they were mistaken. The future Temple will not be dedicated in September (Tishri), but in Marheshvan. The Christians may imitate and adopt Biblical and Jewish motifs, but their lack of the implicitly Jewish knowledge proves the absence of a divine relationship. Indeed, Solomon was willing to suffer in order to fulfill the commandment of God and, thus,

⁶⁸ *Yalkut Shimoni Kings* 184. This version begins with the Solomon tradition, without mentioning compensation for Marheshvan, then continues with the Moses tradition mentioning compensation for Kislev and only then records the future compensation for Marheshvan associated with the Solomon tradition.

⁶⁹ On understatement and polemics cf. Z. Rubin, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Conflict Between the Sees of Caesarea and Jerusalem*, *The Jerusalem Cathedra* 2 (1982) 79–105.

celebrate the dedication on the divinely prescribed date. He was, therefore, also granted a miracle in that the divine fire came down upon the altar. Constantine, on the other hand rushed to celebrate his dedication, supposedly following Biblical precedent, even though he had not completed construction of the site.⁷⁰ However, according to the Rabbis, neither he nor the Church Fathers nor the pilgrims who interpreted his motives and actions understood correctly the meaning of the Biblical verses describing the completion of the construction of the Temple and particularly the “true” dual meaning of the Hebrew *šlm* which also implied compensation.

Ironically, the Christians could never have arrived at the correct interpretation. Thus, a teaching attributed to the fourth century sage R. Judah b. Shallum and found in an earlier discourse in *Pesikta* states:

“Moses asked that the Mishna⁷¹ also be in written form, like the Torah. But the Holy One, blessed be He, foresaw that the nations would get to translate the Torah, and reading it, say, in Greek, would declare: ‘We are Israel; we are the children of the Lord.’ And Israel would declare: ‘We are the children of the Lord.’ The scales would appear to be balanced between both claims, but then the Holy One, blessed be He would say to the nations: ‘What are you claiming, that you are My children? I have no way of knowing other than that My child is he who possesses My secret lore (lit. mystery).’ The nations will ask: ‘And what is Thy secret lore?’ God will reply: ‘It is the Mishnah.’”⁷²

The rest of the Solomon discourse is also laced with anti-*Encaenia* or anti-Holy Sepulchre sentiment. Not only are the Christians mistaken in their attempts to claim Solomon, but the same is true vis-à-vis Abraham.

⁷⁰ C. Coüasnon, *The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, London 1974, 14–15. The Rotunda around the tomb was part of the original project of Constantine, but it was completed only some years after Eusebius’ death (d. 340), and, therefore, was not mentioned in the *Vita Constantini*. This point was first made by E. Wistrand, *Konstantins Kirche am heiligen Grab in Jerusalem nach den ältesten literarischen Zeugnissen*, Göteborg 1952. See also V. Corbo, *Il Santo Sepolcro Di Gerusalemme. Aspetti archeologici dalle origini al periodo crociato*, Jerusalem 1981. Corbo claims that the Rotunda and Anastasis were completed during the reign of Constantine (d. 337). Cf, however, Z. Rubin (see n. 69 above), 80–82.

⁷¹ In this case Mishnah means the entire corpus of the Oral Law.

⁷² *Pesikta Rabbati*, *Piska* 5, 14b (ed. Friedmann; translation ed. Braude 93). In a somewhat different form in *Tanhuma Ki-Tisa* 17 (ed. Buber 58b); *Tanhuma Ki-Tisa* 34; *Ex Rabbah* 47:1. Cf. D. Rokeah, *Jews, Pagans and Christians in Conflict*, Jerusalem 1982, 79, n. 97. See also Rom 9:6 and cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* IV, 2 (PG 33:465): “... whereas they of the Circumcision deceive those who come to them by means of Divine Scriptures, which they miserably misinterpret through studying them from childhood to old age.” (translation from L. P. McCauley, A. A. Stephenson, *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem. The Fathers of the Church: a new translation*, Washington 1969/1970.

The issue, however, is more than a theological tug of war over Biblical forefathers.⁷³ Abraham in the Jewish thought of the Talmud period was to assume the role which Christian theology assigned to Jesus.⁷⁴ The insistence that Abraham was to remain associated with the Jewish Temple would strike a blow at the “new” Temple dedicated to Jesus. Moreover, the connection of Isaac to the Tabernacle, cited in the first half of the discourse, and of Abraham to the Temple might also be taken as a response to the transference of the Binding to the Holy Sepulchre. Both Patriarchs were associated with Jewish holy sites and would remain associated with them.

V. Solomon, *Pesikta Rabbati* and Polemic

The *Pesikta* discourse which we have discussed is not the only Solomon-Temple tradition in *Piska* 6, since as we stated above, the entire *Piska* is dependent upon I K 7:51 describing the completion of the Temple. All of the traditions here see Solomon’s Temple building activities and his behavior surrounding the dedication in a most positive light. There are, however, other trends in Rabbinic tradition which take a very dim view of all of this. In light of our discussion above, it would seem possible to divide the Solomon-Temple traditions into two types. The positive traditions centered around our *Piska* reflect the struggle with Christianity and the need to stress the unique and miraculous nature of Solomon’s Temple. The negative traditions were more for internal Jewish consumption and in these traditions Solomon’s activities served as thinly veiled criticism of Jewish leadership circles. We shall now discuss those positive Solomon traditions which, in our view, reflect the Jewish-Christian struggle over the Temple

⁷³ Rabbinic literature contains a number of invectives against the Christian adoption of Abraham. See, for instance, the late tradition in *Ex Rabbah* 35:5 which plays upon the accepted identification of Edom-Rome-Christianity: “‘Rebuke the wild beast that sojourns among the reeds’ (Ps 137:31), as it says, ‘The wild boar out of the wood doth ravage it’ (Ps 80:14). ‘The multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the peoples’ (Ps 68:31), namely, that kingdom that consumes the wealth of peoples, and derives support from Abraham saying: ‘I descended from them, since Esau was the son of Isaac who was the son of Abraham’.” (translation ed. Soncino, 433). Cf. sources cited in Ginzburg, *Legends* (see n. 45 above), V. VI, n. 350. Similar Rabbinic motifs are found regarding Christian attempts to claim descent from Isaac. See Palestinian Talmud *Nedarim* VI, 38a.

⁷⁴ See A. Altman, *Homo Imago Dei* in *Jewish and Christian Theology*, JR 48 (1968), 251.

and Holy Sepulchre and for the sake of completeness, briefly discuss the negative traditions intended for internal Jewish usage.

Thus, another tradition in *Piska* 6 states:

“*wtšlm* is taken to mean (not was finished, but) ‘proceeded in peace’ (*šlwm*), while the workmen were building it not one of them took sick. No trowel nor axe was broken, not an eye felt pain, not even a shoe thong was cut. . . In another comment, the verse is read ‘Thus the entire work. . . finished itself’. What is meant by the expression ‘the entire work,’ etc.? That (each stone) came flying and mounted (to its proper place) so that the building got built of itself.”⁷⁵

The *Pesikta* stressed the unique nature of the miracles which took place at this time:

“Another comment: ‘Thus. . . all the work was finished (*wtšlm*) – when the workmen finished their work, their life was finished. Truly? But a moment ago you taught that not one of them took sick, not one of them had a pain in his eyes, and now you say that when they finished their work, they died. It was the decree of the Holy One, blessed be He, however, that the nations of the earth should not draft the workmen and build buildings with their help and say, ‘These are the same men who together with Solomon built God’s own structure’.”⁷⁶

Thus, the Temple was unique and attempts to build a new one or a similar one by other peoples would be doomed to failure. Might this not be part of the Jewish response to the “New Temple” in “New Jerusalem”.

The actual completion of the construction was so important that it represented the culmination of the creation of the universe:

“In another comment, the words are read ‘Now all the work. . . is finished’. Not ‘the work’ but ‘all the Work’ – that is, on the day the Temple was finished, God declared as finished the

⁷⁵ *Pesikta Rabbati*, *Piska* 6, 25a, ed. Friedmann (translation 126–127, ed. Braude). Cf. *Ex Rabbah* 52:4; *Tanhuma Pekude* 8 (67, ed. Buber) and parallel sources cited by Buber. See also *Pesikta ad loc.*: “R. Huna said in the name of R. Joseph, (that the House of God, which Solomon built seemed to build itself, for) anything, even spirits, even demons are willing to assist the king” (translation, 128, ed. Braude, with emendations). Although the tradents mentioned here are Babylonian, parallel versions record this tradition with Palestinian tradents and the tradition may well be Palestinian. See, for example, *Midrash Ps* 24:10 (154b, ed. Buber): R. Aha in the name of R. Jose. Cf. *Ex Rabbah* 52:4; *Num Rabbah* 14:3. The aid of demons in the construction of Solomon’s Temple is a prominent motif in the pseudepigraphic Testament of Solomon. See Ginzburg, *Legends* (n. 45 above), V.VI, 292, n. 56. Cf., however, D. Rokeah (n. 72 above), 151. Christianity took a very dim view of demons and denied, in fact, that there were any good ones. Solomon’s use of demons in the building of the Temple may add, possibly, an additional ironic anti-Christian element.

⁷⁶ *Piska* 6, 25a (ed. Friedmann; translation 127, ed. Braude).

work of the six days of creation... Only when Solomon came and built the Temple would the Holy One, blessed be He, say that the work of creating heaven and earth was now finished... Indeed, he was called Solomon ('he who is destined to finish') because it was through the work of his hands that the Holy One, blessed be He, completed the work of the six days of creation."⁷⁷

The negative Solomon traditions are outside the scope of our study, since, as we stated above, they represented criticism of Jewish leadership and most likely the rather imperious Patriarch R. Judah II who ruled from approximately 230–270 C.E.⁷⁸ We briefly discuss them in order to point out the marked difference between these traditions and those which we have seen above. This difference surely strengthens our interpretations of the positive Solomon traditions.

There are two major negative motifs: 1. On the eve of the dedication Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh, celebrated throughout the night and overslept the next morning, causing a delay in the offering of the daily sacrifice and the dedication of the Temple itself. Solomon's behaviour infuriated God who actually contemplated the destruction of Jerusalem.⁷⁹ 2. Solomon is seen as haughty and arrogant and the Temple itself seeks to teach him a lesson. Thus, he was not able to bring the ark into the Temple or his prayers for the divine fire went unanswered. Only the merit of his father David saved him from failure and embarrassment.⁸⁰

If our interpretation of *Piska* 6 and the Solomon traditions is correct, it would seem, then, that the Rabbis were not unaware of the *Encaenia* of the Holy Sepulchre and the elements attendant upon it. Consequently, they sought to nullify any attempt to transfer and borrow Jewish Temple motifs and at the same time attempted to strengthen those very motifs and, thus, stress their permanent nature within the framework of the Jewish Temple.

Joshua Schwartz, Ramat-Gan

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* (translation 126, ed. Braude).

⁷⁸ On R. Judah see Z. Fraenkel, *Mevo Ha-Yerushalmi*, Breslau 1870, rpt. Jerusalem 1967, 92–94 (Hebrew). On Rabbinic criticism of Solomon see M. Aberbach, L. Smolar, *Jeroboam and Solomon: Rabbinic Interpretations*, JQR 59 (1968) 118–132. Cf. S. Shimoff, *Rabbinic Legends of Saul, Solomon and David: Political and Social Implications of Aggadah* (unpublished diss., St. Mary's Seminary and University Ecumenical Institute, 1981).

⁷⁹ *Lev Rabbah* 12:5 (262–264, ed. Margoliot). See Margoliot *ad loc.* for parallels.

⁸⁰ On this motif see G. Salzberger, *Salomos Tempelbau und Thron in der semitischen Sagenliteratur*, Berlin 1912, 21–36; Ginzburg, *Legends* (n. 45) V.VI, 296, n. 65.