Mas1j Work Similar to Jubilees ("Prince of Hatred")

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Description and Background

According to Ehud Netzer, a member of Professor Yigael Yadin’s excavation team at Masada, a small fragment now labeled Mas1j was found on a Roman garbage pile near Masada’s Western Palace. Because this fragment contains very little continuous text, it has been and still is very difficult to identify as part of a larger text. Yadin’s initial identification of the fragment placed it as part of the book of *Jubilees*, an apocryphal account of revelations received by Moses while he was on Mount Sinai for forty days. It is most likely that Yadin connected this fragment with *Jubilees* because one of the legible phrases of the fragment, *Prince of Hatred*, is found in that book.

However, Professor Shemaryahu Talmon has recently indicated that no portion of *Jubilees* corresponds to the text preserved on this fragment. Rather, the fragment “possibly stems from a Pseudo-Jubilees composition.”¹ Talmon further points out that the title *Prince of Hatred* also occurs in another Pseudo-Jubilees document found at Qumran.²

Written on parchment in the square script similar to the script found in other biblical manuscripts, this text is much smaller and harder to identify. Nevertheless, for two reasons several scholars, including Talmon, have tentatively identified this fragment as part of a text from Qumran. First, the orthography (spelling patterns) found in the fragment is very similar to the orthography found in texts composed at Qumran. Second, the use of the word *hatred* is characteristic of the sectarian documents found at Qumran.

This identification, in light of the fact that other Masada scrolls likely originated in Qumran, particularly the fragment known as the *Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice*, gives credence to the idea that members of the Qumran community joined the Zealots in their revolt against the Romans.

Translation

The following translation of this fragment is very tentative. Because of the fragmentary nature of the text, there are many gaps in the translation. The translation is divided into columns 1 and 2 because the fragment shows the end of one line and the beginning of the next with a very definite column division between the two. The transcription that serves as the base for this translation has been published by Talmon in a recent article.³ He has also suggested the possible English renderings for some phrases. Where possible, we have followed his suggestions. The numbers on the left are line numbers. The dashes represent unreadable letters, the words within the brackets are restorations by Talmon, and the letters in italics are Hebrew letters for which no English translation can be made. A single open bracket indicates that missing or illegible text follows the bracket, and a single close bracket indicates the same for text preceding the bracket. Because of the lack of context, the meaning of many words can be debated. We offer this translation only to give the reader a general idea of what the fragment says. The words that are fairly certain appear in boldface.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ḫwd s</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ḫwh people</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. yrm and they took</td>
<td>3. ygs-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. and he took <strong>and no</strong></td>
<td>4. <strong>contention</strong> y-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commentary

This is a tantalizing find. The lack of surrounding text is frustrating, and we can only speculate about which larger work this fragment came from. As has been noted above, the spelling of certain words is very similar to Qumran spelling practices. That, in addition to the occurrence of the title *Prince of Hatred* in a so-called Pseudo-Jubilees fragment found at Qumran, makes the connection between this fragment and Qumran quite reasonable. Likewise, the placement of this fragment within some sort of *Jubilees*-type document is very reasonable.

Notes


2. See ibid.

3. See ibid., 171.