GAMLA

Jannaeus in about 83–80 B.C.E. after which the town came under Jewish sovereignty.

GAMLA

Agrippa II reign of Herod the Great. When the First Jewish Revolt Rome (Life Gamla underwent a period of expansion during the fighting and a seven-month siege by the forces of King Vespasian and his son Titus besieged the town for an additional thirty days (J.W. 4.11-83). According to Josephus' account, the Romans killed 4,000 of Gamla's inhabitants, many of whom were refugees from other towns. An additional 5,000 people plunged to their deaths from Gamla's crest (J.W. 4.79-80).

The site of Gamla covers an area of approximately 100 dunams (25 acres). Archaeological excavations have uncovered evidence of a prosperous neighborhood comprised of elaborate homes with frescoes and stuccoed walls, two olive presses (with attached miqva'ot), flower mills, and a synagogue. Some of the structures were roofed with basalt slabs. A spacious three-level mansion that cuts into the town's hillside built of smooth ashlar masonry has been partially uncovered.

Excavations have also revealed a portion of a large first-century C.E. building made of extremely large ashlers with wide aisles that has tentatively been identified as a basilica. Gamla's synagogue is a large, rectangular structure (25.5 × 17 m.) that contains three rows of benches around its four walls, with a large miquel at its entrance. The small room attached to the synagogue may have been a study room. Numismatic and ceramic evidence suggests that the synagogue was built in the first century B.C.E., making it possibly the oldest known synagogue discovered in Israel. Weaponry from the Roman siege has been found in the majority of Gamla's buildings. A pile of ballista stones discovered 300 m. outside Gamla's wall was likely the location of a Roman ballista emplacement. Seven unique coins from the First Jewish Revolt have been found bearing the legend "For the redemption of Jerusalem the Holy." These coins were minted at Gamla as propaganda during the revolt and are similar to those produced in Jerusalem at the same time. A few scholars have challenged the accuracy of Josephus' account of Gamla's siege, suggesting that perhaps the mass death he records never occurred. An international team of experts is preparing the final reports of the Gutmann excavations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


GARDEN OF EDEN — PARADISE

Garden of Eden — Paradise

In early Judaism, the term "Paradise" or "Garden of Eden" occurs in various senses. It is present in shorter or longer retellings of the story of Genesis 2-3, where Eden is an earthly region, whether it was created before the creation of the world or on the third or sixth day of creation. In some texts, the garden remains on earth as an abode of God and the righteous after Adam and Eve have left. In other texts, it also occurs as a place in (the third) heaven, sometimes as an eschatological reward for the righteous in the beyond.

1 Enoch

The Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1–36) already existed at the beginning of the second century B.C.E. It seems to be an independent witness to the tradition used by the author of Genesis 2–3. At the end of his second journey, Enoch arrives at the Paradise of righteousness located in the very east of the world (1 Enoch 32:3), corresponding more or less to the Garden of Eden. He sees there many kinds of large, beautiful, sweet-smelling trees. Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge and learned knowledge (32:6). The Tree of Life is described in 1 Enoch 24–25 as located in the middle of seven mountains somewhere in the northwest, sometimes identified with a second Paradise. Its fruit will be for life, its fragrance will be in the bones of the elect, and the righteous will live a long life.

The Paradise of righteousness is also mentioned in the Astronomical Book of Enoch (1 Enoch 72–82), which was written in the second century B.C.E. It is part of a description of the three concentric parts of the world; Paradise seems to be located at the outer part (1 Enoch 77:3). The Book of Parables (1 Enoch 37–71), from the first century C.E. or slightly earlier, refers to the "garden of the righteous ones" (60:23), and the "garden of life" where the first fathers, the chosen, and the righteous dwell (61:12). This garden is located in the northwest (70:3-4) and is identified with the place where Enoch was taken up (60:6; cf. Jub. 4:23).

The Book of Jubilees

The book of Jubilees, written in the middle of the second century B.C.E., contains a rewriting and interpretation of Genesis 2–3 (Jub. 3:1-31). The events that happen
in the Garden of Eden in the second week of creation are presented as a chronological continuation of the creation of the world which took place during the first week. The Garden of Eden itself is created on the third day of creation (2:7). Both Adam and Eve are created outside the Garden of Eden, and Jubilees delays the entrance of Adam and Eve into the garden by forty-eight days in relation to the halakah concerning women giving birth. Because Eden is interpreted as a sanctuary, Temple laws are applied to the garden. Therefore Adam and Eve could not have sexual relations in the Garden of Eden. Adam is acting as a priest when he burns incense at the gate of the garden (3:27). Like the priests, Adam, too, is explicitly bidden to cover his nakedness. There is no reference to the Tree of Life. Therefore it is not necessary to mention the cherubim and the flaming sword guarding the way to this Tree of Life (Gen. 3:24). Finally, the expulsion scene in Jubilees is quite considerably toned down, in line with the tendency to minimize the negative side of Eden as much as possible. Paradise remains even after Adam and Eve have left the garden. The location is on earth. It is said that the floodwaters did not come onto any of its land (Jub. 4:24). When Noah divides the earth among his sons (Jub. 8:10-9:15), it is made clear that the Garden of Eden is the most eastern part of the territory of Shem (8:16; cf. 8:21). It is the "holy of holies" and one of the residences of the Lord on earth, alongside Zion and Mt. Sinai (8:19). These three holy places face one another, and are located at the axes of the world. In 4:26, the mountain of the east is also mentioned as the abode of God on earth. After Enoch was taken from human society, he was led into the Garden of Eden, where he wrote down the judgment and condemnation of the world (4:23).

Texts from Qumran
The story of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2-3) is scarcely represented in the biblical manuscripts preserved, and seems not to have had a strong influence in the non-biblical compositions found in the different caves of Qumran. No rewritings of the Eden narrative have been preserved, and only a few texts refer in passing to the Garden of Eden or the Tree of Knowledge (cf. 4Q303; 4Q305 col. ii; 4Q422, col. i; 4Q423 frg. 2 1-4; 4Q504 frg. 8). It appears that Genesis 2-3 was used most to expound on the relationship between male and female, and to express humanity's God-given authority over the earth. Several texts state that God gave knowledge and insight to Adam. No concern with the location and present or future function of Eden can be found. In 4Q265 the Garden of Eden is used as the basis for a halakic rule. The author of this text is using the story of Eden in the rewritten form found in Jubilees, and the main points are the same.

Sibylline Oracles
The first two books of the Sibylline Oracles contain Jewish oracles with a Christian redaction. The original Jewish oracles can probably be dated to about the turn of the era. The text of Sib. Or. 1.5-64 retells the story of the creation freely, although the general structure of the passage follows Genesis 1-3 quite closely. The first part (1.5-21) is concerned with the creation of the world until the creation of man. The second part (1.22-37) forms a parallel to Genesis 2. It describes the creation of man and woman in three stages: the making of the male in the image of God (1.22-23), the placing of the man in the garden (1.24-25), and the creation of the woman to satisfy the loneliness of the man (1.26-37). The creation and description of the garden are reduced to the words "an ambrosial garden" (1.25) and "the luxuriant plantation of the garden" (1.26). The third part (1.38-64) is concerned with the story of temptation and transgression and runs parallel with Genesis 3. The prohibition to eat from the tree forms the direct introduction to this part of the story (1.38-39). Although Eve is the one who persuades Adam to eat from the fruit of the tree (1.42-45), it is the serpent who is seen as the primary responsible being (1.39-41). He is in fact the only one who is cursed (1.59-64), whereas the curse on Adam and Eve is lightened very greatly because it is connected with the blessing of God (1.50-58).

2 Enoch
2 Enoch was written probably in the first century C.E., originally possibly in Greek, but has been passed down only in the Slavonic language. On the one hand, Paradise is the garden that according to Gen. 2:8 God planted on earth as a residence for Adam and Eve (30:1; 31:2, 6; 70:25; 71:28), enclosed with armed guards, angels aflame with fire on the third day of creation (30:1). The rewriting of Genesis 2-3 is integrated into the description of the sixth day of creation, when Adam and Eve were created and placed in the garden. On this very day they were also driven away (30:8-32:1). On the other hand, Paradise is a place in the beyond, sometimes specified as the third heaven (8:1-9:1; 42:3; 65:10; 66:8; 71:28; 72:1, 5, 9). It is then the abode of the just (9:42:3; 65:10), and the place to which Melchizedek is transported (71:28; 72:1, 5, 9). The text speaks about the creation of the garden in the east (31:1), whereas Enoch ascended to the east into the Paradise of Eden, which is open as far as the third heaven (42:3). This is based on the depiction that the earthly garden of Eden is in direct connection with the heavenly Paradise. In 2 Enoch 8:1-9:1, Enoch is sitting in the third heaven, and he is looking down at Paradise (8:1). A tree is rooted in the earthly garden and reaches up to the third heaven, where it covers the heavenly Paradise. The exit that leads to earth is probably the root of the tree in the Garden of Eden (8:4). The earthly Paradise is described as inconceivably pleasant. Trees are in full bloom, and their fruits are ripe and sweet-smelling (8:1-2). The geography of the rivers is somewhat different from that of the biblical text of Genesis. The four rivers come from two sources, two streams. In 2 Enoch, the rivers seem to have already divided before they enter Paradise, and from there, when they leave Paradise and descend to the earth, they are divided again into 40 rivers. In the end they evaporate, and apparently return to Paradise in the form of rain, or perhaps mist (8:5-6).
The Greek Life of Adam and Eve
The Life of Adam and Eve is a Jewish or a Christian work, possibly from the second century C.E. It is preserved in several languages, including probably the original Greek. The reworking of Genesis 3 in the Greek version is a retelling of the story told in the form of two flashbacks, one by Adam (chaps. 7–8) and one, in a much more detailed way, by Eve (chaps. 15–30), both delivered at Adam's deathbed. Eve describes the situation in Paradise (chap. 15) and how Satan seduced the serpent (chap. 16), the serpent Eve (chaps. 17–19), and Eve her husband Adam (chap. 21). God returns to Paradise to judge Adam sitting in a chariot drawn by cherubim, while the archangel sounds the trumpet (chaps. 22–23).

Josephus has omitted the biblical statement that God would grant to the saints to eat of the tree of life (18:10–11). In the Testament of Dan the saints refresh themselves in Eden (5:12).

4 Ezra
The term “Paradise” (Garden of Eden) seems to occur in various senses in 4 Ezra, a work from the late first century C.E. In 3:4-7, the garden occurs in a short retelling of the story of Genesis 2-3. Adam was put into this garden, which God had planted with his right hand. When Adam transgressed the commandment, God appointed death for him and for his descendants (3:7). We have here the oldest attestation of the idea that Paradise was created before the creation of the world (3:6; cf. 6:2). The other use of the term is in the context of eschatological reward for the righteous (7:123; 8:52). In 7:36, Paradise is the place of delight and located opposite Gehenna. Perhaps 4:7–8 also reflects a view of an existing Paradise in heaven. Little information is offered about the nature of this Paradise. Certain elements of Genesis 2 are connected with the heavenly Paradise, for example, the incorruptible fruit (7:123) and the Tree of Life (8:52).

Pseudo-Philo
Pseudo-Philo's Biblical Antiquities, a Jewish work probably written in the first half of the second century C.E., contains a short reference to the events in Paradise shown in a revelation to Moses (Bib. Ant. 13:8). God says that Adam could have remained there had he not sinned. God recalls that Adam transgressed since he was persuaded by his wife, who was deceived by the serpent, with the result that death was decreed for all. A passing reference to Adam in Paradise may be found in 26:6: "He created Adam as the first created one and showed him everything so that when Adam sinned thereby, then he might refuse all these things." During the establishment of the covenant on Mt. Sinai, Paradise gave off "the scent of its fruit, and the cedars of Lebanon were shaken from their roots" (32:8).

Other Texts
A few other texts refer to the Garden of Eden or to Paradise. As an earthly place, it occurs in the Apocalypse of Abraham, where the Garden of Eden is shown to Abraham in a vision: "the Garden of Eden and its fruits, and the source and the river flowing from it, and its trees and their flowering, making fruits, and I saw men doing justice in it, their food and their rest" (Apoc. Abr. 21:6), and in 3 Baruch, where an angel tells Baruch that the floodwaters entered Paradise and killed every flower, but removed the sprig of the vine completely and brought it outside (3 Bar. 4:10). Both as an earthly and heavenly location, it appears in 2 Bar. 4:3-6, where it is said that the New Jerusalem and Paradise were shown to Adam but removed from him when he sinned. The similarity between the tabernacle and Paradise is preserved by God. Other texts locate Paradise in heaven as an eschatological dwelling place for the righteous. In the Testament of Abraham (recension A), Michael brings Abraham toward the east, to the first gate of heaven, where he sees "the gate of the righteous, which leads to life, and those who enter through it come into paradise" (T. Abr. 11:10). In the Testament of Levi (18:10) it is said that God "shall open the gates of paradise; he shall remove the sword that has threatened since Adam, and he will grant to the saints to eat of the tree of life" (18:10-11). In the Testament of Dan the saints refresh themselves in Eden (5:12).
Gematria

Gematria is a numerological technique that consists of calculating the numerical value of a word or a phrase by adding up the values of all its letters, often in order to find or demonstrate the supposed relations between different words and concepts by proving the equivalence of their gematria values.

The use of letters to designate numerals (e.g., in Hebrew 'aleph = 1, bet = 2...), was used, for example, by the opponents of a certain Damagoras to prove that "Damagoras" = "a pest" (loimos) and by professional dream interpreters to prove that when a sick person dreams of an old lady the dream foretells his death, since "old lady" (graus) = 704 = "burial" (heekphora) (Artemidorus, Oneirocriticon 4.24).

Another Greek term, geometrikos arithmos (literally, "geometric number"), was used in a numerological sense in some neo-Pythagorean and neo-Platonic circles in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and this may have been the source of the Jewish name for this technique, gematria. Moreover, the exegetical uses of such techniques were well known to Greek and Oriental grammarians, as may be seen, for example, from Apion’s claim that the Iliad began with the word "wrath" (menin) because the first two letters of that word equal 48, the number of books in the Iliad and the Odyssey combined (Seneca, Epistles 88.40).

That the Jews borrowed this technique from the Greek world may also explain why its first attested appearances in Jewish sources are in the NT book of Revelation and in 3 Baruch, two works written by Greek-speaking Jews, and why in both texts gematrias are used to calculate the numerical values, according to the Hebrew alphabet, of Greek (and Latin) names and words. Thus the most famous example — the "number of the beast" in Rev. 13:18, calculated as 666 — seems to be based on the gematria sum of the letters making up the Hebrew spelling of the name of Nero(n) Caesar, the Roman emperor: nun (50) + reish (200) + waw (6) + nun (50) + gap (100) + samek (60) + reish (200) = 666. In another Judeo-Greek text, the Fifth Sibylline Oracle (lines 12-51), we find a list of Roman emperors identified by the gematria value of the first letters of their names; this too is a well-known technique in the writing of Greek oracles (see Lucian, Alexander 11 and Sib. Or. 1.137-46).

While the earliest Jewish uses of this technique may have been limited to Greek-speaking Jews, it soon was adopted by their Hebrew- and Aramaic-speaking brethren, and is explicitly mentioned, and used, by rabbis of the second century C.E. (but note the claim in b. Sukkah 28a concerning Yohanan ben Zakkai’s knowledge of gematria, which would push it back to the first century C.E.). The rabbis even recognized gematria as one of the thirty-two "measures" (exegetical techniques) by which the Torah may be expounded, thus granting this technique a canonical status within the Jewish exegetical tradition. And yet, the use of this technique in rabbinic literature is rather limited; in the realm of halakah, it was sometimes used to prop up well-known rulings that had no explicit biblical support (see, e.g., b. Nazir 5a); in the realm of haggadah, it was used mainly as a colorful embellishment to rabbinic sermons (e.g., b. Niddah 38b), or to counter the christological demonstrations of early Christian exegesis. In the best-known example, the Christian Epistle of Barnabas 9:8 insists that the reference in Gen. 14:14 to Abraham’s 318 armed men, a number written in Greek as TTH, in fact points to the cross and to the first two letters of the name of Jesus, whereas the rabbis claim that 318 is the gematria value of "Eliezer," thus proving that the verse in fact referred only to Abraham’s faithful servant (b. Nedairim 32a; Gen. Rab. 42.2 [Theodor-Albeck, p. 416]).

In later rabbinic literature, and especially in the writings of medieval and later Kabbalah, gematria became much more prominent, and many new types of gematrias were developed (e.g., using the numerical value of each letter by adding up the value of the letters used to spell it out, so that yod, for example, equals yod [10] + waw [6] + dalet [4] = 20. The proliferation of many different types of gematria calculations enabled the adept to discover many new relations and equivalences between otherwise unrelated words and phrases, thus increasing its utility for its users, but also exposing it to severe attacks from its many critics (such as Rabbi Leo Modena, Ari Nohem, chap. 10). In the modern Jewish world, such gematrias remain widely popular in some Jewish circles, as a playful pastime, as a major exegetical tool, or as a means with which to dazzle the ignorant.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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