

Men and Women in the Early Christian Centuries

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Men and Women in the Early Christian Centuries

Edited by

Wendy Mayer and Ian J. Elmer

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Abbreviations

<i>ABR</i>	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AKG	Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
<i>BSAC</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur <i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
<i>CH</i>	<i>Church History</i>
<i>CIG</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i>
<i>CIJ</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum</i>
CPG	Maurits Geerard, <i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i> , 5 vols (Turnhout 1974–1987)
CPL	Eligius Dekkers, <i>Clavis Patrum Latinorum</i> (3rd edn; Turnhout 1995)
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
<i>CTb</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
ECS	Early Christian Studies
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ESV	English Standard Version (2001)
ET	English translation

FOTC	Fathers of the Church
GCS	Die Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderts
GNO	<i>Gregorii Nysseni Opera</i> , various editors, 10 vols, multiple parts (Leiden 1958–2014)
GNT	Good News Translation (1976)
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Version (2004)
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>HibJ</i>	<i>Hibbert Journal</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
JAEMA	<i>Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
J ECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JFSR	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of the History of Sexuality</i>
JK	P. Jaffé, <i>Regesta Pontificum Romanorum ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII</i> , vol. 1: <i>A. S. Petro ad a. MCXLIII</i> , rev. F. Kaltenbrunner (rev. edn; Leipzig 1885) 1–140
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSJSup	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i> , Supplement Series
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i> , Supplement Series
JSP	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i> , Supplement Series

<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
MES	The Message (1991–2000s)
NAB	New American Bible (1970, 1986, 1991)
NASB	New American Standard Bible (1971, 1995)
n.d.	no date
NEB	New English Bible (1961)
NET	New English Translation (1996)
NIV	New International Version (1984)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible (1986)
NKJV	New King James Version (1982)
NovTSup	<i>Novum Testamentum</i> , Supplements
NPNF	P. Schaff (ed.), <i>A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church</i> (various editions)
n.s.	new series
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
<i>PLRE</i>	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , 3 vols., ed. John R. Martindale et al. (Cambridge 1971, 1980, 1992)
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
PVTG	Pseudepigrapha Veterus Testamenti Graece
RSV	Revised Standard Version (1952)
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SC	Sources Chrétiennes

SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>StPat</i>	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
<i>SVTQ</i>	<i>St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>
TCH	The Transformation of the Classical Heritage
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TNIV	Today's New International Version (2001, 2005)
TRE	Theologische Realenzyklopädie
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VCSup	Supplements to <i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Preface

A number of the articles in this volume started out as papers presented at the conference *Early Christian Centuries I*, held at the Melbourne campus of Australian Catholic University, 3–5 October 2013, on the theme *Men and Women in Early Christianity*. This inspired such a wealth of perspectives on the topic from the New Testament period into the eighth century and beyond, in addition to highlighting the continuing maturing and growth of scholarship in early Christian studies in the Asia-Pacific region, that it was decided to make this scholarship more widely available in a themed volume.

This is not the proceedings of the original conference. Far from it. Only those scholars who initially contributed papers directly on the theme were invited to contribute. Since that time many of the authors have substantially revised or augmented their arguments, producing more or less fresh studies. Other articles have been added to help redress the bias towards studies of women. All of the articles published were subjected to double blind peer review prior to acceptance. An introductory article tracing the history of scholarship on the topic and providing a select bibliography for further study has also been produced by us as editors of the volume in order to situate the articles it contains in context.

Wendy Mayer and Ian J. Elmer
August 2014

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The Liturgical Calendar in the *Joseph and Aseneth*

Basil Lourié

St Petersburg, Russia

Introduction

Both ancient Jewish tradition and its early Christian continuation considered Israel's Covenant with God as a wedding or marriage where the gender role of Israel is the female one. The ancient hagiographic romance of *Joseph and Aseneth* (hereafter *JA*) is an exemplary piece of such imagery or even some culmination of the whole Jewish tradition of the “marital theology” of the Covenant. This became especially clear after some recent studies of *JA* within the Jewish mystical tradition, which will be mentioned below. However, as is not uncommon to Jewish mystical texts, the theological language of *JA* is liturgical. For some scenes, it was always evident for the scholars, but I would like to show that the whole plot of the romance is governed by a liturgical calendar with its appropriate rites. Thus, the mystical contents of the story of the marriage between God and Israel is revealed through the *lex orandi*.

The origin of the *Joseph and Aseneth* is a hotly disputed matter.¹ Those who share the opinion that it is a Jewish text that originated from

¹ Cf., as a recent introduction to this problematic issue together with an approach that seems to me especially reasonable, Nina V. Braginskaya, “*Joseph and Aseneth* in Greek Literary History: The Case of the ‘First Novel’”, in M.P. Futre Pinheiro, J. Perkins, and R. Pervo (eds), *Fictional Intersections: The Ancient Novel and the Early Christian and Jewish Narrative*, Ancient Narrative Supplements 16 (Groningen 2012) 79–105. Cf. also an important but often overlooked review article by Michel van Esbroeck of R.S. Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph* (1998) in *Xristianskij Vostok* 2 (8) (2000) 452–454 (and his earlier

an Essene-like community were always interested in its liturgical calendar. Indeed, the text contains a number of dates, as normally do hagiographical texts related to some liturgical commemorations. It is difficult, if not impossible to explain these dates without attributing to them some liturgical meaning. The whole text of *JA* is saturated with liturgical content, in descriptions of both events and the place of the main events, Aseneth's house (whose space is organised as a temple space – a “tower with three plus seven chambers”, – and so, needs to be analysed from the liturgical point of view).² However, the liturgical meaning of these calendrical dates remains obscure.

As early as in the 1960s, Annie Jaubert proposed in a personal communication to Marc Philonenko that the *JA*'s calendar probably contains “...une trace du calendrier des *Jubilées*”.³ This supposition, if true, would substantially corroborate the views of the adherents to an Essene origin of the work.

However, the situation is not as simple as that. According to the calendar of the *Jubilées* (the 364-day per year [thereafter 364DY] calendar with 1.I falling on Wednesday), 18.IV is Saturday, whereas in *JA* it is Sunday. Jaubert's reinterpretation of *JA* 1:2; 3:1 as Saturday required

reviews of M. Philonenko, *Joseph et Aséneth* [1968], and Ch. Burchard, *Untersuchungen zu „Joseph und Aseneth“* [1965] in *Analecta Bollandiana* 86 (1968) 404–410). Among the most recent localisations of *JA* in its Jewish original context, cf. G.J. Brooke, “Men and Women as Angels in *Joseph and Aseneth*”, *JSP* 14 (2005) 159–177. Among the most recent defenders of the opposite view (Christian origin of *JA*) are R. Nir, *Joseph and Aseneth: A Christian Book*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 42 (Sheffield 2012), and, before her, R.S. Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph: A Late Antique Tale of the Biblical Patriarch and His Egyptian Wife, Reconsidered* (Oxford 1998).

² For the temple called “tower” in the Second Temple period Judaism and early Christianity see В. Лурье, “Три Иерусалима Лалибелы. Интерпретация комплекса церковей Лалибелы в свете данных его Жития” [B. Lourić, “Three Jerusalems of Lalibala: An Interpretation of the Church Complex of Lalibala in the Light of the *Life of Lalibala*”], *Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne* 13 (2000) (= *Miscellanea Aethiopica Reverendissimo Domino Stanislao Kur septuagenario professori illustrissimo, viro amplissimo ac doctissimo oblata*) 117–140, here 134–135, n. 66. As to the ten (3+7)-compartment liturgical space, as it is the case of the house of Aseneth (cf. 2:1–6, p. 76–80, and the mention of “seven heavens” in 22:13, p. 276–277), one has to take into account ten-heaven cosmologies; cf. some references in A. Kulik, *3 Baruch. Greek-Slavonic Apocalypse of Baruch*, CEJL (Berlin–New York 2009) 316, 325. Ross S. Kraemer's analysis of the lodgement of Aseneth as a temple (Kraemer, *When Aseneth Met Joseph*, 118–120) is hardly more than a very preliminary approach to the topic.

³ M. Philonenko, *Joseph et Aséneth. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, *Studia post-biblica* 13 (Leiden 1968) 128, footnote.

violence to the text. The calendar of the *Jubilees* is certainly not the calendar of *JA*.

Roger T. Beckwith proposed another “suggestion”.⁴ *JA* implies an otherwise unknown calendar similar to that of the *Jubilees* but distinct in one detail: its first day (1.I) falls on Thursday instead of Wednesday, and so its 18.IV falls on Sunday. However, this hypothesis is highly problematic. Even though it is likely that we do not so far know all the historical modifications of the 364DY calendrical scheme, the beginning of the calendar on Thursday seems to me impossible. Historically we know of only two approaches to the beginning of the calendar in Jewish and Christian traditions: it is either Wednesday as the day when the luminaries were created or Sunday as the first day of creation. There is absolutely no reason to begin the calendar on Thursday. Thus, the whole reconstruction by Beckwith seems to me untenable.

Nevertheless, Beckwith seems to me quite justified in looking for a fitting modification of the 364DY calendar. Now, thirty years after Beckwith’s “suggestion”, we know of a wide range of different Jewish calendars of the Second Temple period. One of them aligns with the calendrical plot of *JA*: the calendar of 2 (*Slavonic*) *Enoch*.⁵

18.IV on Sunday: The calendar of 2 Enoch

There is, at least, one 364DY calendar where 18.IV falls on Saturday. It has 35 days in the second month, whereas 30 days in the first and the third (and the fourth) months. This is the calendar of 2 *Enoch*.

The calendar of 2 *Enoch* belongs to the Sunday family of the 364DY calendars, that is, the calendars where 1.I falls on Sunday. This type of calendar is the only theoretically possible type where all of Leviticus’ requirements concerning the dates of the festivals of the Unleavened Bread and the Weeks are met in a strictly literal way. All other known calendars (those of Rabbinic Judaism, the Samaritans, the Karaites, the *Jubilees*, etc.) need to break (or “rethink”) one or another part of these requirements.

⁴ R.T. Beckwith, “The Solar Calendar of Joseph and Asenath: A Suggestion”, *JSJ* 15 (1984) 90–111.

⁵ B. Lourić, “Calendrical Elements in 2 Enoch”, in A. Orlov and G. Boccaccini (eds), J.M. Zurawski (assoc. ed.), *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch. No Longer Slavonic Only*, *Studia Judaeoslavica* 4 (Leiden 2012) 191–219.

The particular calendar implied in *2 Enoch* certainly predates this book. It could be as ancient as the calendar of *1 Enoch* or even more (4th–3rd c. BCE). Its most probable *Sitz im Leben* is the Jewish diaspora in Egypt.

This calendar seems to have some influence on later Christian traditions⁶ but, so far, there is no known source other than *2 Enoch* where this calendar as a whole would be recognisable. I think *JA* will be the first one.

JA's chronological timeline

The narrative is subdivided into two parts. The first part, which is dedicated to the story of the marriage of Joseph and Aseneth, is dated to the first year of the seven years of plenty (1:1, p. 70; 3:1, p. 84).⁷ The second part dedicated to the meeting of Aseneth and Jacob and the further conflict of the couple of Aseneth (and also of Joseph) with Gad and Dan, brothers of Joseph (and, of course, with the son of Pharaoh), is dated to the second year of hunger (22:2, p. 270); I will argue below that both the meeting with Jacob and the conflict with Gad and Dan took place on the same year and within the same liturgical cycle.

1. Chronological timeline of the first part

“Pharaoh sent out Joseph to drive around the whole land of Egypt” on 5.II (1:1, p. 70); no variant readings for the date. The day of 5.II must be a Sabbath, but this fact would hardly prevent Pharaoh from issuing an order. There is no necessity to presume that Joseph departed on the same day.

Sunday 18.IV is the day when Joseph met Aseneth for the first time. This date is repeated twice: at 1:2 and 3:1 (p. 70 and 84). It is clear that both 1:2 and 3:1 refer to the same day, but there are some

⁶ B. Lourić, “Afterlife of the 2 Enoch Calendar: Major Christian Feasts on the Sixth Day”, *Enoch* 33 (2011) 102–107.

⁷ Despite that several Greek manuscripts simply omit it. Here and below the text is quoted according to the critical edition that takes into account all versions: Ch. Burchard, *Joseph und Aseneth*, PVTG 5 (Leiden 2003). The English translation will be quoted (without indicating the pages) from Ch. Burchard, “Joseph and Aseneth: A New Translation and Introduction”, in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols (Garden City, NY 1983–1985) 2:177–247.

important variant readings at 3:1 (p. 85)⁸ where a large group of manuscripts (including some of the best ones and those having at 1:2 the date 18.IV) have 28.IV instead of 18.IV (and, of course, several manuscripts have no date at all). The date of 28.IV could not be rejected out of hand,⁹ even though it is rejected by Burchard, given that sometimes the genuine readings of numbers might be preserved in some otherwise poor manuscripts. However, I have rejected it *a posteriori*, after having proven that, unlike 18.IV, 28.IV as Sunday results in no reasonable calendrical scheme; thus, it will be not discussed below. Most probably, the reading “28” is a scribal error (εἰκάδι instead of δεκάτη).

This same day, Sunday, Joseph continued his journey across Egypt without accepting an invitation to stay overnight but promising to return on the eighth day. The exact wording is:

...I [Joseph] will go out today, because this is the day on which God began to make all his creatures and on the eighth day, when this day returns (τῆ ἡμέρᾳ τῆ ὀγδόῃ ὅταν ἐπαναστραφῆ ἡ ἡμέρα αὕτη), I too will return to you and lodge here (9:5, p. 122, 124).

Some manuscripts and the Armenian version have here “on the seventh day” instead of “the eighth” (p. 124), but this is probably a variant reading resulting from a different way of counting (exclusive instead of inclusive, that is, without counting the day 18.IV itself as the first of the eight days) and is, most probably, enforced with the seven-day duration of the following penitence of Aseneth. The text at 9:5 states unequivocally that Joseph is departing on Sunday and is planning to return on the next Sunday, that is, on 25.IV.¹⁰ The number of the seven virgin servants of Aseneth (10:1 etc.) is also in a symbolical correspondence with the seven days of penitence.

⁸ There are no especially important variant readings at 1:2 (p. 70), where the date is omitted by several Greek mss and the Syriac and Slavonic versions; moreover, one Greek manuscript has “ten” instead of “eighteen” which is obviously a *lapsus calami*.

⁹ As Andrey Vinogradov has rightly pointed out to me.

¹⁰ I am grateful to Andrey Vinogradov and other members of the Center of Classical and Ancient Studies of the Institute of the Oriental and Classical Studies of the Russian State University for the Humanities (Moscow), especially the head of the Center Nina V. Braginskaya, Anna I. Shmaina-Velikanova, and Maria Kassian for discussing with me this and other points of *JA*, although I am solely responsible for the present analysis and its possible errors. I am also grateful to Wendy Mayer for her valuable suggestions in discussion of the draft version of this paper.

Aseneth begins her penitence (with change of clothes and the ash rituals so important for penitence in a true ancient Jewish fashion) exactly after “the night fell”, after having “weighed down and wept until the sun set” without eating (10:1, p. 124, 126). And she finishes her penitence when the seven days passed, on the early morning (when the morning star appeared) of the day when Joseph promised to return (14:1, p. 175), that is, the eighth day after 18.IV. Thus, the evening and the night when Aseneth began her penitence still belonged to 18.IV. This is a mark that the *nychtemeron* is counted from the morning, as is normal for the 364DY calendars. There are, in *JA*, other marks of the beginning of the day at sunrise.¹¹

The eighth day, whose date must be counted like 25.IV, is the day when Joseph returns. His return is twofold: at first on the early morning, as his heavenly counterpart – “the man like Joseph in every respect (άνήρ κατὰ πάντα ὅμοιος τῷ Ἰωσήφ)” (14:9, p. 178) –, then, later on the same day, as the earthly Joseph.¹² The wedding of Joseph and Aseneth is postponed to the next day, when it will be celebrated by the Pharaoh (ch. 20 and esp. 21:1, p. 256). This is the culminating day of the whole narrative of part one, when the most important liturgical rites are performed (atonement of Aseneth’s sins and her acceptance into Israel).

The day of the wedding is the next day (cf. 21:2, p. 256: τὸ πρῶτῃ), which is to be counted as 26.IV.

Then, the seven-day¹³ wedding feast follows (21:8, p. 262). It is natural and clear from the context that the first day of this number of seven days is the day of 26.IV itself. Thus, the seven days of the wedding feast are those from 26.IV to 2.V (assuming that the number

¹¹ Aseneth “finished” the seven days of her humiliation (ἐποίησεν...τὰς ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας) (10:17, p. 138) and, then, the eighth day begins on the next morning (ὄρθρος) (11:1, p. 140); this statement is repeated, with a slightly different wording, in a prayer of Aseneth on the same morning (13:9, p. 168), but this part of the text could be a later addition.

¹² The angelomorphic transformations of Joseph, Aseneth, and Jacob throughout the book are to be explained within the Second Temple Jewish mystical traditions; cf., for the context of *JA* in this respect, C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam. Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 42 (Leiden 2002) 85 *et passim*. However, this angelomorphic imagery is something more, *pace* Fletcher-Louis, than simply a “god language for humanity”. It could be best understood in the light of the different Jewish approaches to the divine plurality within the unique God; cf. D. Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA 2004) 112–127.

¹³ The duration of the feast is almost without variant readings: a couple of mss omit the number and one Latin ms has “vi” instead of “vii”.

of days in the fourth month is 30, as it is in all known 364DY calendars).

2. Chronological timeline of the second part

The second part of the narrative has two precise dates: the day of the meeting of Aseneth and Jacob, which is 21.II (22:2, p. 270),¹⁴ and the day of the culmination of the conflict, which is the day of the harvest of grapes (τοῦ τρυγητοῦ) (24:15, p. 298; cf. also 25:2, p. 304, the son of Pharaoh's words: "...I am going out to harvest [the vintage of] my new-planted vineyard" [τρυγήσαι τὴν ἄμπελόν μου τὴν νεόφυτον]). These dates might be précised in the course of a liturgical analysis, which has never been undertaken so far, however.¹⁵

The second part of the story has been recently analysed from the point of view of political history, which is certainly especially relevant for the case.¹⁶ However, the story deals with the political problems after having put them into its own mystical framework and expresses itself in a liturgical language which has to be studied properly.

3. Harvest time

Christoph Burchard noticed that the two parts of *JA* culminate on the same day of harvest, although divided by (eight) years.¹⁷ However, only in part two (24:15 and 25:2, quoted above) is it said explicitly that it is the harvest of grapes that is meant. Part one uses a broad term *θερισμός*, which could correspond to any kind of harvest. However, different kinds of harvest give their names to different parts of the liturgical calendar, and so it is vital to understand what harvest is meant. These distinctions are noticeable already in the Hebrew Bible but

¹⁴ Some mss omit the date, one ms has 11.II instead of 21.II due to the apparent scribal error (δεκάδι *pro* εικάδι) (p. 270–271).

¹⁵ There is one calendrical mark that I will omit in the following analysis (after having failed to figure out its possible liturgical meaning): the death of the elder son of Pharaoh on the third day after his wounding (on 25.IV, see below) in 29:7 (p. 334).

¹⁶ See especially the recent study by N. Nacham, "Joseph and Aseneth: Loyalty, Traitors, Antiquity and Diasporan Identity", *JSP* 22 (2012) 53–67, but, before him, already, e.g., J.J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (Grand Rapids, MI 2000²) 109 (first publ. 1983).

¹⁷ Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth", 2:202, note *d*: the events of part one take place in the first year of plenty (1:1, p. 70; 3:1, p. 84–85), whereas those of part two in the second year of famine (22:2, p. 270).

became especially elaborated in the calendars of the Second Temple period such as that of the *Temple Scroll* (but also, e.g., *3 Baruch*). The major harvest periods are those of barley (just after the Passover), wheat (on the festival of Weeks, that is, the first pentecostad after the Passover), grapes (New Wine festival of the *Temple Scroll*, the second pentecostad after the Passover), and oil (New Oil festival of the *Temple Scroll*, the third pentecostad after the Passover).

In both parts of *JA* Joseph is distributing the grain all over Egypt. In the second part, this is the very reason for Joseph to separate himself from Aseneth in her dangerous travel: “For I, too, will go to my grain-giving and will give bread (πορεύσομαι ἐπὶ τὴν σιτοδοσίαν μου καὶ δώσω ἄρτον) to all men...” (26:3, p. 308). Such an activity fits perfectly the interval between the feasts of Weeks (harvest of grain) and New Wine. In the first part, too, Joseph “was gathering the grain (ἦν συνάγων τὸν σῖτον)” (1:3, p. 70), but the whole situation is a little more complicated.

The first date of the narrative, 5.II, certainly precedes the festival of Weeks, regardless of its exact date. Nevertheless, this is not a serious problem, because 5.II is the date when Pharaoh sent out Joseph on his trip around Egypt, presumably to control the whole process of harvest, not only the distribution of the collected grain.

However, the symbolism of harvest in the first part of the narrative is so overwhelming – everything became ripe together with the ripeness of Aseneth¹⁸ – that it poses some agricultural problems. The most striking one is that of the coincidence of the harvest of grapes with the harvest of olives. When Joseph arrived at the house of Pentephres, “...in his right hand he held outstretched an olive branch, and there was plenty of fruit on it, and in the fruit was a great wealth of oil” (5:5, p.

¹⁸ Cf. 2:11, p. 82: “And handsome trees of all sorts and all bearing fruit were planted within the court along the wall. And their fruit was ripe, for it was the time of harvest”; 4:2, p. 90–91: “And they [Aseneth’s parents] brought out all the good (things) which they had brought from the field which was their inheritance, and gave (them) to their daughter. And Aseneth rejoiced over all the good (things), the fruits, and the grapes, and the dates, and the doves [*an erroneous reading, possibly pro* peaches], and the pomegranates, and the figs, because they were all handsome and good to taste.” Nina Braginskaya has pointed out during the discussion of my paper in her seminar that the symbolism of harvest in the first part of *JA* is going beyond the agricultural plausibility to underline that ripe is the most important fruit, Aseneth. However, verse 4:2 is obviously corrupt, at least, partially, and so, does not present reliable agricultural evidence.

100–102; the variant readings do not affect the main sense of the phrase).

Such a coincidence is physically possible in early August, when the harvest of the grapes in Egypt is finishing (its culmination is in June) but the harvest of the olives begins (its culmination is in November).¹⁹ Such a contamination of the two pentecost festivals (New Wine and New Oil) is a known phenomenon, e.g., in the calendar implied in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.²⁰ The convergence of the two feasts was developed on the ground of the mutual connection between the expiation (symbolism of wine) and mercy (symbolism of oil, cf. *3 Baruch*), both of them being major topics of the first part of *JA*.

However, it is hardly possible that the second half of the fourth month could fall in early August. Thus, the “agricultural situation” in the story seems to me artificial. It serves a liturgical purpose: to create, on the basis of the festival of New Wine (quite appropriate for the second half of the fourth month) a wholesale festival of the harvest. The prominence of this festival among other pentecost festivals (Weeks and New Oil) is clear in *3 Baruch* – and even, probably, in the Acts of the Apostles, as recently Étienne Nodet pointed out (Acts 2:13: “They are filled with new wine”) supposing that this Pentecost was the second one after Easter.²¹

Thus, Burchard is right when assigning both parts of *JA* to the same time of year, that of the harvest, and we have to add that it is the harvest of grapes that is basically meant – even though, in the first part, it is represented as *the* harvest par excellence and of everything.

This is not to say that the simultaneous harvest of all possible fruits is an invention of the author of *JA*. He alludes to the tradition attested to in *2 Enoch* (5:2–7), where Enoch sees in Paradise every tree in full flower and every fruit ripe and with a pleasant fragrance; moreover (in the short recension only), “...another tree was near it, an olive, flowing

¹⁹ A.E.M. Abdalla, E.A. El-Difrawy, and Y.F. Abdelneem, “A Study on the Effect of Harvest Time on Quality of Egyptian Olive Oil”, *Alexandria Journal of Food Science and Technology*, Special Conference Volume, March (2008) 61–74.

²⁰ According to my reconstruction in B. Lourié, “Cosmology and Liturgical Calendar in *3 Baruch* and Their Mesopotamian Background. In Appendix: Calendrical Structure of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*”, in A. Kulika and A. Orlov (eds), *Gaylord Memorial Volume*, *Studia Judaeoslavica* (Leiden, forthcoming).

²¹ É. Nodet, “On Jesus’ Last Supper”, *Biblica* 91 (2010) 348–369, here 367.

with oil continually”.²² This parallel demonstrates that *JA* shares with *2 Enoch* something more than a mere calendrical scheme.

The olive branch in the hands of Joseph is therefore a supernatural sign from Paradise.

Liturgical interpretation (Part one)

2 Enoch does not describe its liturgical calendar outside some short periods. It is almost of no help in understanding the feast of New Wine. However, there are two important facts from *2 Enoch* that need to be taken into account: the date of the first Pentecost (the festival of the Weeks), 6.III, and the date of the Summer solstice, 17.III. The latter date resulted from cosmological features of *2 Enoch* as a distorting of the date 17.IV that was presumed by some earlier astronomical tradition.²³

Moreover, the calendar of *3 Baruch*, also a Sunday 364DY calendar having much in common with that of *2 Enoch*, preserves the theoretical date of the Summer solstice 15.IV, which is the common theoretical date of the Mesopotamian astronomical treatises. This calendar is very helpful for reconstruction of the New Wine cycle. According to my evaluation,²⁴ this calendar presents another than *1 Enoch* and a quite independent Hebrew recension of the Mesopotamian astronomy.

This cycle contains the following three major blocks:

- a) 40 days after the first Pentecost: the direct continuation of the Pentecost itself, according to Exodus 24:18 (“Moses was on the mount forty days and forty nights”);
- b) a specific commemoration of the Summer solstice;
- c) some preparatory cycle before the festival of the second Pentecost (New Wine).

Let us turn to *JA*, taking into account that the date of the festival of the Week is assumed to be the same as in *2 Enoch*, 6.III, and that the

²² F. Andersen, “2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch”, in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:91–221, here 114–117.

²³ Lourié, “Calendrical Elements in 2 Enoch”, 199, 215–216. The dates of the two solstices are 17.X and 17.III due to the phenomenon that I called “asymmetry of solstices”. The normal (“symmetric”) dates would be 17.X and 17.IV.

²⁴ Lourié, “Cosmology and Liturgical Calendar in 3 Baruch”.

third month contains 30 days (unlike the calendar of the *Jubilees*, where it has 31 days).

Then, 40 days after 6.III would cover the period from 7.III to 16.IV inclusively.

The Sabbath falling on 17.IV seems to be the day of the Summer solstice (the date traceable through the calendar of 2 *Enoch*).

The Sunday 18.IV together with the following seven days lead to the date of the festival on New Wine, 25.IV – the major liturgical day of the whole story.

The following seven days of the marriage feast (26.IV – 2.V) are a continuation of the feast of New Wine.

Indeed, the ritual performed by Aseneth under guidance of the heavenly counterpart of Joseph is that of the New Wine, together with the expiation and penitence motives and symbolical understanding of wine as blood (cf. below, the scene of “signing” the honeycomb). However, the festival absorbs the motives of divine mercy to the penitents, too, which are traditionally those of the festival of New Oil (cf. 3 *Baruch*). We will return to this ritual in the next section.

The date of the beginning of the cycle, 5.II, remains difficult. So far, I have found it in the unique calendar of the *Liturgy of the Seventh Sabbath* of the Beta Israel (the Falasha) of Ethiopia, where an early Second Temple period’s Jewish core is recognisable; whatever its origin might be, it seems very probably that the Beta Israel received it through Egypt.²⁵ In this calendar (where the dates of the 364-day year are provided in my reconstruction only), the Sabbath 5.II opens a pre-Pentecost microcycle of three or four Sabbaths, where the liturgy is focused on the texts of 4 *Ezra*. Given that the motif of “Ladies and Cities” is shared by both 4 *Ezra* and *JA*,²⁶ this fact may be of importance, but, anyway, further studies are needed.

The date of the end of the cycle, 2.V, is also important for the calendar recovered from the *Liturgy of the Seventh Sabbath*. This is the first Sabbath of the whole liturgical year, the first in the annual cycle. In this calendar, this Sabbath precedes the second pentecontad festival (“New

²⁵ B. Lourié, “A 364-Day Calendar Encapsulated in the *Liturgy of the Seventh Sabbath* of the Beta Israel of Ethiopia”, in A. McCollum (ed.), *FS Getatchew Haile* (forthcoming).

²⁶ Cf. E.M. Humphrey, *The Ladies and the Cities: Transformation and Apocalyptic Identity in Joseph and Aseneth, 4 Ezra, the Apocalypse and the Shepherd of Hermas*, JSPSup 17 (Sheffield 1995).

Wine”) falling on Sunday 3.V. This is one more calendar where the importance of this festival is especially high: it opens the liturgical year. In *JA*, this festival is also exalted enough: probably (although not for sure), its last (eighth) day closes the liturgical year.

1. *The New Wine ritual*

The rite described in ch. 16 is apparently performed without wine, which would seem, of course, in disagreement with the idea of the New Wine festival. However, the wine is implied, although in a quite specific way.

The heavenly counterpart of Joseph apparently accepts Aseneth’s proposition to bring her *old* and especially or even miraculously good wine:

And I will set a table before you, and bring you bread and you will eat, and bring you from my storeroom old and good wine, the exhalation of which will go up till heaven (οἶνον παλαιὸν καὶ καλὸν οὗ ἡ πνοὴ αὐτοῦ ἐλεύσεται ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ), and you will drink from it (15:14, cf. 15:15, p. 200–201);

but, in fact, he does not: the bread that Aseneth brought (16:1, p. 200) remained intact, whereas the wine is forgotten by the narrator altogether.

The bread is replaced with the honeycomb. The miraculous honeycomb appearing in ch. 16 has been interpreted as the heavenly bread by Marc Philonenko, who noticed its similarity with the manna, whose taste was that of honey (Ex 16:31), and so identified it with “le pain des anges” (cf. Ps (77)78:25).²⁷ The wine, which itself is a symbolic representation of blood in different Jewish rites (cf. already the song of Moses in Deut 32:14, which is a liturgical composition), is also replaced, in this ritual, with its heavenly counterpart:

And the man stretched his hand out and put his finger on the edge of the comb that faced eastwards; and the path of his finger became like blood. And he stretched out his hand a second time and put his

²⁷ Philonenko, *Joseph et Aséneth*, 96. Now this is the prevalent understanding, although there are some “dissident” voices (e.g., M.V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul’s Letters and Thought*, Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Ser. 119 [Cambridge 2002] 65–71).

finger on the edge of the comb that faced northwards, and the path of his finger became like blood (16:17, p. 216–217).

This passage is preserved in a poor condition, and so its exact reconstruction is more or less conjectural. However, the only part important to us now is preserved quite well: the phrase “the path of his finger became like blood (ἡ ὁδὸς τοῦ δακτύλου αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο ὡς αἷμα)” repeated twice.

We have to recognise here an earlier modification of the rite of consecration of the Eucharistic bread with the already consecrated Eucharistic wine (which thus already became blood) in some Egyptian Christian liturgical practices (see Appendix). This rite, although so far unknown from the Jewish sources, need not be of Christian origin; it refers, through the *taw* in Ez 9:6 (written in the paleo-Hebrew script as the cross), to Ex 12:13.²⁸ In the ritual performed by the heavenly Joseph with the honeycomb, the chalice of wine is replaced with a direct producing of the holy blood for consecration. Without taking from Aseneth her old wine, the heavenly Joseph gives her a new and mysterious wine which is the holy blood. This is a kind of the New Wine festival mystery.

The effect of the ritual is that Aseneth becomes equal to Joseph in all respects, including “eating blessed bread of life, drinking a blessed cup of immortality, and anointing herself with blessed ointment of incorruptibility (φαγεῖς ἄρτον εὐλογημένον ζωῆς καὶ πιεῖς ποτήριον εὐλογημένον ἀθανασίας καὶ χρισθήσῃ χρίσματι εὐλογημένῳ τῆς ἀφθαρσίας)” (cf. 15:5, p. 188–190, and 8:5, p. 116, where Joseph says almost the same words about himself). The latter member of this threefold sequence still needs a clarification.

2. Imposing of hand and an anointment with light

There is no explicit anointment among the rituals performed by the heavenly counterpart of Joseph, although it is enumerated among the three sacramental tools of Aseneth’s transformation: bread, cup, and ointment. We have seen, however, that both bread and cup are not similar to the ordinary bread and cup, and so it is to be expected that the anointment will not be similar to the ordinary one either. Marc

²⁸ J. Daniélou, *Les symboles chrétiens primitifs* (Paris 1961) 143–152.

Philonenko was quite right when he discerned the heavenly bread behind the honeycomb, but he and the scholarly consensus after him failed to recognise the New Wine as a separate liturgical entity, assuming that all three mysteries (bread, cup, and anointment) were united in the mystical honeycomb.²⁹ However, even the anointment is represented in the account of ch. 16 as a separate liturgical entity.

The ritual in question passed so far unrecognised as a specific liturgical rite, although it contains nothing unfamiliar to the liturgical scholars. This is a very common rite of imposing the right hand as a sign of initiation or ordination or healing (corporeal or spiritual or both) – or even all this together, as is the case with Aseneth. It is by imposition of the right hand of the heavenly Joseph that Aseneth acquires the new name “City of Refuge” (πόλις καταφυγῆς) and unites with her own heavenly counterpart, which is the Lady (Virgin) Metanoia (Repentance), the daughter of the Most High (θυγάτηρ ὑψίστου) and also the sister (ἀδελφή μου ἐστι καὶ αὐτή) of the heavenly Joseph (as it was promised to her when the heavenly guest appeared: 15:7–8, p. 190–194).³⁰

The rite is obviously an initiation preparing her for the ensuing rite with the honeycomb, a kind of reception of Aseneth’s penitence, but also the ordination to the exalted status which was promised to her in 15:7–8:

And the man smiled at Aseneth’s understanding, and called her to himself, and stretched out his right hand, and grasped her head and shook her head with his right hand (καὶ ἐξέτεινε τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ τὴν δεξιᾶν καὶ ἐκράτησε τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς καὶ ἐπέσεισε τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ τῇ δεξιᾷ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς). And Aseneth was afraid of the man’s hand, because sparks shot forth from his hand as from bubbling (melted) iron (διότι σπινθήρες ἀπεπήδων ἀπὸ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ ὡς <ἀπὸ> σιδήρου κοχλάζοντος). And Aseneth looked, gazing with her eyes at the man’s hand. And the man saw (it) and smiled and said, ‘Happy are you, Aseneth, because the ineffable mysteries

²⁹ Philonenko, *Joseph et Aséneth*, 94–98.

³⁰ These aspects of Aseneth’s heavenly transformation and deification were recently analysed in detail by Celia Deutsch, “Aseneth: Ascetical Practice, Vision, and Transformation”, in D. Arbel and A. Orlov (eds), *With Letters of Light. Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Early Jewish Apocalypticism, Magic, and Mysticism in Honor of Rachel Elior*, Ekstasis. Religious Experience from Antiquity to the Middle Ages 2 (Berlin–New York 2011) 325–348.

of the Most High have been revealed to you, and happy (are) all who attach themselves to the Lord God in repentance (ἐν μετανοίᾳ), because they will eat from this comb' (16:12–14, p. 208–210).³¹

Both imposing of hand(s) and anointment have similar meaning and are often interchangeable or go together in the Jewish and Christian rites of priestly ordinations, initiation (pre- and post-baptismal ceremonies, in the case of Christianity), and all kinds of healing, including penitence.³² Moreover, the oil in the rite above does appear – but, this time, under the species of the light similar to the melted iron. The oil was normally a source of light, but this mysterious oil as a source of light was comparable to the shining liquid metal.

The ordination of Aseneth makes her the daughter of the Most High by adoption and the sister of her heavenly bridegroom who is the natural Son of God (cf. 6:5, p. 106, and below, section 8). At the same time, she becomes the City of Refuge for all those, from all nations, who have recourse to repentance (15:7, p. 190–192). It will be necessary to compare this status of Aseneth with the meaning of the specific blessing that she will receive from Jacob in the second part of *JA*.

3. *Summer solstice*

Jan van Goudoever has already made the basic observations concerning the liturgical value of the Summer solstice in *JA*, already referring to 2 *Enoch* (even if he thought that the solstice's date is 18.IV itself).³³ The name of the city is Heliopolis, the central place of the solar cult. Joseph arrived on the chariot “manufactured from pure gold”, his garments were “made of linen interwoven with gold, and a golden crown (was) on

³¹ This description is severely damaged (abbreviated) in the shorter recension whose editor obviously failed to understand what ritual is meant, but Ross S. Kraemer enumerates this difference among the evidence for the priority of the short one (Kraemer, *When Aseneth*, 185–186, note 114). In fact, it is evidence of the contrary.

³² Nevertheless, there is no comprehensive study of the relevant late Second Temple period Jewish rites. As a general introduction (focused on the priestly ordination only) one can use P.F. Bradshaw, *Rites of Ordination. Their History and Theology* (Collegeville, MN 2013) 1–16. Among the earlier studies see, e.g., E. Lohse, *Die Ordination im Spätjudentum und im Neuen Testament* (Göttingen 1951) 19–27 (esp. 22); E. Ferguson, “Laying On of Hands: Its Significance in Ordination”, *JTS* n.s. 26 (1975) 1–12.

³³ J. van Goudoever, *Fêtes et calendriers bibliques*, trans. M.-L. Kerremans, *Théologie historique* 7 (Paris 1967) 173–174.

his head, and around the crown were twelve chosen stones, and on top of the twelve stones were twelve golden rays” (5:5, p. 100–101); “...the sun [*variant reading* as if the sun] from heaven has come to us on its chariot”, said Aseneth (6:2, p. 104–105). Joseph clearly represents the sun in its golden chariot (which became identified with the divine *merkabah* in the Jewish cosmological apocalyptic tradition³⁴) on the heaven represented by the twelve (Zodiacal) stones with golden rays.

In the same manner, Joseph’s heavenly counterpart departs on “(something) like a chariot (ὡς ἄρμα) of four horses travelling into heaven toward (the) east. And the chariot was like a flame of fire, and the horses like lightning” (17:8, p. 226–227). We know a similar chariot from *3 Baruch*, where the four horses are clearly the four winds moving the (chariot of the) sun, according to the Mesopotamian and Jewish cosmological views. The direction from the west to the east is that of the annual sun’s path on the ecliptic.

The day of the Summer Solstice, 17.IV, is the Sabbath, and so unsuitable for travelling. Thus, the events begin on the next day.

Such a predominant role of the Summer solstice is known from *3 Baruch* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, although, on this day, *3 Baruch* is preoccupied with the cosmological questions, whereas Abraham contemplates the destiny of the generations and the whole world. Unlike both of them, *JA* does not imply any activity on the day of the Summer solstice because here this day falls on the Sabbath.

Liturgical interpretation (Part two)

The second part of *JA* contains two liturgically marked events. The second of them, the victory over the firstborn son of the Pharaoh and Dan and Gad is explicitly connected to the harvest of grapes, that is, the New Wine festival. The Pentecostal features of the victory are underlined with the repeated motive of fifty: Pharaoh’s elder son had with him fifty warriors (24:19, p. 300; 26:7, p. 312–313) to catch Aseneth; these warriors were killed by Benjamin with fifty stones (27:5, p. 315–316). The number of the other warriors of the son of Pharaoh was 2,000 but, despite some confusions in later recensions, it is clear

³⁴ Cf. *3 Baruch* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. Lourić, “Cosmology and Liturgical Calendar in *3 Baruch*”.

that they were divided into four squads per 500 (= 50 × 10) men each (24:19–20, p. 302–303; 27:6, p. 318, cf. Burchard's note to 24:20 on p. 303). The numbers related to the warriors with Aseneth refer to both fifty and six: Aseneth's escort contained a squad of the "forerunners" of fifty men, with the main squad of six hundred men (24:15, p. 298–299; 26:5, p. 310); then, the number of the sons of Jacob who fought on the side of Aseneth is six: "Ruben and Simeon, Levi and Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, <...> and the six men killed two thousand" (27:6, p. 316–318). The symbolism of fifty is the same (Pentecostal), whereas the symbolism of six is certainly related to the new name of Aseneth "City of Refuge": according to Numbers 35:13–15, the number of these cities was six. Thus, the scene refers to the inauguration ritual performed by the heavenly counterpart of Joseph.

But what is the meaning of the conflict? Why is it appointed on the days of the New Wine festival? These questions are unanswerable without a proper interpretation of the previous event, the meeting of Aseneth and Jacob. There is a scene here which has so far passed unrecognised as having a liturgical value.

And Jacob said to Joseph, is this my daughter-in-law, your wife? Blessed she will be by the Most High God. And Jacob called her to himself and blessed her and kissed her. And Aseneth stretched out her hands and grasped Jacob's neck and hung herself on her father's neck just like someone hangs on to his father's neck when he returns from fighting into his house, and she kissed him. And after this they ate and drank (22:9–10, p. 274–275).

The liturgical meaning of such scenes was first recognised by Annie Jaubert who provided several parallels to the Johannine Last Supper's scene where the Beloved Disciple was blessed at the farewell banquet through a corporal contact (when he was lying on the bosom of Jesus). The closest parallel was then the blessing by Abraham of his grandson Jacob in *Jubilees* (22:1–23:2). The blessing transmitted in such a way is of a quite specific nature, being the blessing of the Covenant with God, and especially of representation, in this Covenant, of the whole people of God (Israel).³⁵ Abraham blessed Jacob who was, in this scene, the personified Israel.

³⁵ A. Jaubert, *Approches de l'Évangile de Jean*, Parole de Dieu (Paris 1976) 43–44. Cf., for further details, B. Lourié, "The Processions of My God?: The Liturgical Structure

The corporal contact between Aseneth and Jacob is as narrow as one could imagine, taking into account the difference of the sexes. It is not without precedents in the *Book of Jubilees*, either. When Jacob brought for blessing to his father Isaac his two sons Levi and Judah, they were at first blessed by Rebecca who also hugged and kissed them (31:7) and, then, Isaac himself hung on Jacob's neck "and cried on his neck"; then, before blessing Levi and Judah, Isaac's sight was recovered and he asked: "Are these your sons, my son?...When they came up to him, he turned and kissed them and hugged (both) of them together" (31:8–11).³⁶ These kinds of corporal contact are those taking place in the scene of the meeting of Jacob and Aseneth. The banquet is also presented. However, Jacob in *JA* represents his own heavenly counterpart who is certainly God himself,³⁷ as it is especially stressed with the *Shiur Qomah* imagery (that is, an anthropomorphic but gigantic representation of God) in 22:6–7 (p. 270–273) – and this is why Joseph is called in *JA* "son of God" (6:5, p. 106; 21:4, p. 258–259).

The scene with Jacob serves to inaugurate Aseneth as the matriarch of Israel. There is already a detailed study of Celia Deutsch who demonstrated this from other data in *JA*,³⁸ and so I have only provided an independent liturgical demonstration of her conclusion.

behind the Signs of the Gospel of John", in M. Petit *et al.* (eds), *A View from a Bridge: In Honour of Annie Jaubert (1912–1980)*. II (forthcoming).

³⁶ Trans. by J.C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, CSCO, 511; Eth., 88 (Louvain 1989) 202–203.

³⁷ On the Jewish mystical traditions representing Jacob with his heavenly counterpart as God see esp. Ch. Rowland, "John 1.51, Jewish Apocalyptic and Targumic Tradition", *NTS* 30 (1984) 498–507; J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford 2007²) 244–259; J.E. Fossum, "The Son of Man's Alter Ego: John 1.51, Targumic Tradition and Jewish Mysticism", in *id.*, *The Image of Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology*, *Novum Testamentum et orbis antiquus* 30 (Freiburg–Göttingen 1995) 135–151; A. Orlov, "The Face as the Heavenly Counterpart of the Visionary in the Slavonic *Ladder of Jacob*", in C.A. Evans (ed.), *On Scribes and Sages: Early Jewish Interpretation and Transmission of Scripture*, vol. 2, *Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity* 9 (London 2004) 59–76 (repr. in *id.*, *From Apocalypticism to Merkabah Mysticism. Studies in Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, JSJSup 114 [Leiden 2007] 399–419); S. Bunta, "The Likeness of the Image: Adamic Motifs and צלם Anthropology in Rabbinic Traditions about Jacob's Image Enthroned in Heaven", *JSJ* 37 (2006) 55–84.

³⁸ Deutsch, "Aseneth". See *ibid.*, among others, about the meaning of comparison between Aseneth and Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel (1:5, p. 72) and of the close friendship between Aseneth and Levi.

Joseph as the son of God is not suitable to represent Israel, because he represents God who is the husband of his chosen people. Thus, this people is now represented by Aseneth. And this is also the real motive of the competition between Aseneth and Gad and Dan, who behave similarly to Esau toward Jacob: they represent the part of the descendants of Israel (Jacob) who did not inherit his blessing.

A striking similarity between the meaning of this blessing of Aseneth by Jacob and her previous “ordination” by the heavenly counterpart of Joseph needs to be explained. The former took place at the eighth year after the latter.³⁹ This fact reminds us that the “ordination” of Aseneth took place on the eighth day after the first visit of Joseph – and so, implies that the “ordination” had a preparatory meaning for the blessing by Jacob and acceptance of its result by the people of God (victory over Gad and Dan). The whole plot of *JA* follows the scheme where the culminating scenes are separated by seven units of time: first visit of Joseph (preparation for Aseneth’s “ordination”) – Aseneth’s “ordination” at the eighth day – Aseneth’s blessing by Jacob at the eighth year after her “ordination”. Eventually, after the blessing by Jacob, Aseneth becomes a subject of God’s covenant together with God himself, in the same fashion as Jacob and Abraham. Thus, she is not *a* matriarch in the same sense as Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel (1:5)⁴⁰ but rather *the* matriarch in Jacob’s (and so, Abraham’s) fashion, that is, *the* mother of the whole people of God, the whole true Israel. Of course, this true Israel is open to the proselytes and closed to some part of Israel by blood, and the latter becomes clear from the conflict with Gad and Dan.

Finally, the date of the meeting of Jacob and Aseneth, 21.II, needs to be explained. Unfortunately, I have no parallel in the calendars known to me. However, if we count based on the calendar of 2 *Enoch*, 21.II is the first day of the 70-day period before the festival of New Wine on 25.IV (the second month having 35 days). The number 70 is remarkable not only because it is a multiple of seven but, first of all, because this is the number of the people who entered Egypt with Jacob – at least, according to the Hebrew Bible and *Jubilees* (44:33).⁴¹ It is

³⁹ See n. 17 above.

⁴⁰ See n. 38 above.

⁴¹ But 75 in some other traditions including LXX. Cf. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 294, with a note to 44:33.

certainly a liturgical cycle that is meant here, and this cycle unites the two stories related in the second part of *JA*.

Conclusion

The calendar of *JA* is partially recoverable on the basis of the 2 *Enoch* and 3 *Baruch* calendars. The claim that the calendar implied in *JA* is the same as that of 2 *Enoch* would be an exaggeration, but *basically* the calendar is the same. The main results of our liturgical analysis are represented in the following table.

Date	Event in <i>JA</i>	Liturgical Meaning
5.II Sa	Joseph is sent by Pharaoh	Beginning of a pre-Pentecostal microcycle
21.II Mo	Aseneth meets Jacob	Beginning of the 70-day cycle before the New Wine festival
[6.III Sa]	–	[Pentecost]
[17.IV Sa]	–	[Sabbath of the Summer Solstice]
18.IV Su	Joseph meets Aseneth	Celebration of the Summer Solstice: feast and beginning of the fast
18.IV (evening) – 24.IV	Fast and penitence by Aseneth	Seven-day fast before the festival of New Wine
25.IV Su	Joseph returns to Aseneth / Aseneth is rescued from Gad and Dan and the son of Pharaoh	Festival of New Wine, first day
26.IV – 2.V Sa	Wedding banquet of Joseph and Aseneth	Second to eighth days of the festival of New Wine and the end of a (yearly?) liturgical cycle on 2.V

Recovering the liturgical calendar of *JA* leads to the mystical traditions already traced by previous scholars of *JA*, especially by Celia Deutsch. These traditions represent Jacob and Joseph, through their heavenly counterparts, as, respectively, God and the Son of God, whereas Aseneth is represented as not only a (or rather *the*) matriarch of Israel but also the “daughter of the Most High.” Unlike Joseph, who is the Son of God according to his nature (as a natural son of Jacob that corresponds, *in divinis*, to the sonship of God) Aseneth is the daughter of Jacob (God) through marriage with Joseph (the Son of God). This situation corresponds to the situation of Israel (represented by his

matriarch Aseneth) in the heavens: Israel is the daughter of God by adoption, through his “marriage” (Covenant) with the Son of God. The spouse of the Son of God is God’s daughter, even though her origin is far from being divine. To the same extent as Aseneth does not belong to Israel according to her birth but does belong according to her divine marriage, the whole people of God became a divine entity not by birth but as a result of their mystical marriage which is the Covenant with the Son of God.

The marriage is a liturgical rite, and it is in this way that the feast of New Wine was reconsidered in *JA*: this feast is not only the feast of the Covenant but especially the wedding feast between the people of God and the God who represents himself as the Son of God.

The gendered aspects of the mutual relations between God and Israel thus became expressed in the most prominent fashion: the people of God are the collective “daughter of the Most High”, despite the Septuagint’s saying θεοί ἐστε καὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου πάντες (Ps 82(81):6) but still within the range of possibilities of understanding the corresponding Hebrew בְּנֵי (not necessarily “sons” but also “children”, male and female).

Appendix: Consecration of the bread with the priest's finger immersed into the consecrated wine

1. *Constantine of Assiut (late 6th cent.), Encomia in Athanasium, II, 4, 38–39⁴²*

Pervenit ad horam illam, plenam formidinis, in qua solet sacerdos flectere caput super altare, orans et obsecrans Spiritum Sanctum ut veniat super panem et calicem, et fiat sanguis, secundum decretum divinitatis. Et cum perfecisset orationem illam plenam formidinis et plenam mysterii, incohavit denique secundum consuetudinem sacrificium sanctum et extendit manus suas sacerdos Dei Athanasius, et signavit panem, qui corpus factus est. Et cum remisisset digitum intra poculum [EΠΕCΗΤ ΕΠΠΙΟΤΗΡΙΟΝ; Orlandi translates “*super poculum*”!], et signavisset eius sanguinem sanctum, eius digitus tinctus est sanguine sancto ille vivificanti.

Deus fecerat illud mysterium cum eo, in testimonium pro omnibus quemadmodum Deo placerete ius sacrificia.

2. *John of Paralos (fl. 6th cent.), an entry in the Coptic and Ethiopic Synaxaria on Kibak 19 = Tahsas 19 = Dec 15*

Arabic ⁴³	Ethiopic ⁴⁴
<p>Quand il offrait le saint sacrifice, ses larmes tombaient comme la pluie parce qu’il voyait les escadrons célestes sur l’autel. Trois fois il consacra (قدس) et chaque fois il mis son doigt dans la calice (في الكاس) pour faire le signe de la croix sur l’offrande ; au moment de la partager, il trouva que le calice était un feu allumé.</p>	<p>Lorsqu’il célébrait la messe, ses larmes coulaient comme la pluie, car il apercevait, lui, les armées des (êtres) célestes au-dessus de l’autel, surtout (quand) il chantait le Trisagion. Lorsqu’il mettait son doigt dans le calice (ወሰተ፡ ጳዋዕ፡), afin de consigner l’Eucharistie au moment de la fraction, il trouvait le calice comme un feu qui brûlait.</p>

⁴² T. Orlandi, *Constantini episcopi urbis Siout Encomia in Athanasium duo*, CSCO 349–350; Copt., 37–38 (Leuven 1974) 15–16/11 txt/tr.

⁴³ R. Basset, “Le Synaxaire arabe jacobite”, PO 3 (1909) 488; trans. by Basset with my corrections.

⁴⁴ S. Grébaut, “Le Synaxaire éthiopien”, PO 26 (1945) 22–23.

3. *Savirius ibn al-Muqaffa*, *History of the Church, Part 7, Christodoulos (1047 – 1077)*⁴⁵

There was in the days of the father, Abba Christodoulos, an anchorite in the hermitage of Singar, whose name was Peter, to whom many miracles (were accounted), among which, that his finger was dyed from the holy chalice, and it (the finger) remained fifteen years bound up with a rag. Justus as-Singari, the priest at the Church of Abba Mercurius, the illustrious martyr, at Cairo (Misr), who went up after him (Peter) to the aforesaid hermitage, narrated to me that he saw him, and his finger was bound up, and he had not unbound it, nor did he show it to anyone, and that he (Justus) was with him when he became ill three days before his death; and that he had asked him to show it (the finger), and had not ceased to humour him and to make obeisance to him, until he uncovered it for him. Then he saw it, (and it was) red, as if he had dipped it at that hour in blood. The priest Kiyil as-Singari related to me in the Church of the Pure Mistress which is in the village called al-Gudidiyah that he used to celebrate the Liturgy in the aforesaid hermitage at Singar for this saintly Peter, the anchorite in it, on feast days and other (days), and that he said to him (Peter): “O my holy father, I am as the least of your disciples. Why do you not call me that I should celebrate the Liturgy for you, and (why) do you not celebrate the Liturgy for yourself?” He (Peter) said to him: “Do not interest yourself in my affairs.” The aforesaid Kiyil said to me: “I said to him (Peter): ‘If you do not make known to me the reason, I shall go away from you and I shall cease from celebrating the Liturgy for you.’ And I made an obeisance to him, and he said to me: ‘Is it really necessary for you (to know this)?’ I said to him: ‘Certainly.’ Then he said to me: ‘I celebrated the Liturgy once in the Church of Damrua al-Khammarah, before I went up to this hermitage.’ When I placed my finger on the rim of the chalice and said: ‘May this become the Blood of Christ’, the chalice flooded so that it filled to its edge, and my finger was dyed,⁴⁶ and I fainted, and great fear came upon me; and since that day I have bound up my finger so that no one may see it, and I have not celebrated the Liturgy up to this day, and I shall never again celebrate the Liturgy.”

⁴⁵ A.S. Atiya, Y. 'Abd al-Masih, and O.H.E. Burmester, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church Known as the History of the Holy Church by Savirius ibn al-Muqaffa*, *Bishop of al-Asmunin*, II, 3 (Cairo 1959) 296–297.

⁴⁶ Thus, the specific rite of consecration is already forgotten (the priest touches only the rim of the chalice), but the story still preserves its traces.

4. Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Apostle Bartholomew, *CANT*
80⁴⁷

Then Thomas put forth his finger and took out [some] of His blood which flowed down from the side of the Son of God, and he signed himself therewith. And the Saviour answered and said to all the Apostles, "Behold, My blood of God hath joined to your bodies, and ye yourselves have become divine, even as I.⁴⁸ Behold, I am with you until the end of the world."

⁴⁷ E.A. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt* (London 1913) 214.

⁴⁸ A kind of consecration by contact, in the same manner as the bread becomes consecrated after having been signed with the consecrated wine (blood).