



NORWEGIAN  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

# The Book of Noah

Exploring Three Contemporary Scholarly Positions About the Book of Noah

**Gideon Tetteh**

**Supervisor**

Professor Liv Ingeborg Lied

*This Master's Thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the MA degree at*

MF Norwegian School of Theology, [2019, Spring]

AVH5080: Master's Thesis (60 ECTS)

Master's in History of Religions

Word count [37,009 words]

## **Acknowledgement**

I express my profoundest gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Lied Ingeborg Liv. I could not have come this far with the great interest she should in my work and giving me all the support and help I needed. She showed so much patience, understanding, guidance and support in my writing of this work, and even beyond. I owe her a lot of gratitude. This is my first time of undertaking a project of such nature, but she encouraged me whenever I was discouraged and displayed a profound insight and interest about the study. I am equally grateful to all my lecturers during my studies at the Norwegian School of Theology and Religion and Society. Professor John Kaufman, you were right when you recommended Liv to me. I have found her supervision unbeatable and much blessing. I am now confident to take up any academic challenge that I am offered because of her supervision.

I am highly indebted to my wife, Abigail, who made huge sacrifices and encouraged me to finish this project amidst all our challenges. There were a lot of things that happened in the last couple of years when I took up this master's program. But you stood by me even this year when we had our first child, Billy, after a lot of struggles. Sweetheart God bless you so great for your love and kind considerations that permitted me to have this project completed. I am proud of having such a wonderful person like you as my wife.

My final and warm gratitude is to the Almighty God, our Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing like having faith in Him. He gave me a good supervisor who would help me thus far. He offered me strength, good health and soundness of mind in all my challenging situation. My challenges were so apparent till the final words of my supervisor after she was satisfied that I could submit this project were, "Congratulations! You have worked very hard, also in difficult times, and I am very proud of you". I give all the glory to the Lord Jesus, for He has been my hope and stay through it all.

## **Dedication**

To my lovely wife and honourable supervisor and all students in History of Religions

## **Abstract**

The focal point of this thesis is recent discussions and views on the supposedly lost Book of Noah by three scholars namely Michael Edward Stone, Divorah Dimant and Richard Steiner. Thus, the project examines the scholarly debates or discourse, tensions and discussions that are ongoing among scholars in the field of Pseudepigrapha studies particularly regarding the Book of Noah. It explores the different key moments/turns in the history of the Book of Noah about how scholars at different time periods and contexts have imagined and argued for or against the existence of such entity, and what this discussion may tell us about the development of studies of Jewish Antiquity as a modern discipline. It employs meta-critical literary analysis and Book History as method and theory respectively. The thesis belongs to the discipline History of Religions.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgement .....	2
Dedication .....	2
Abstract .....	2
Chapter 1.....	5
General Introduction .....	5
Pseudepigrapha .....	5
Background of the Study .....	6
Lost Books.....	7
Why “Books” or “Lost Books” .....	9
Terminologies .....	10
How do Scholars search for Lost Books?.....	11
Why is the Book of Noah under discussion?.....	12
Research question and a brief discussion of why this should be studied .....	15
Primary material, delimitation and motivation .....	16
Method: meta-critical literary analysis .....	17
Theoretical frame work .....	18
Preliminary structure of the thesis .....	21
The goal and significance.....	22
Ethical considerations .....	22
Chapter 2.....	24
The Book of Noah: Finding what it is and what its contents are .....	24
Introduction .....	24
Noah and the Book of Noah in context.....	25
What is the Book of Noah? .....	27
The journey to the conception of a Noah book.....	27
The content of the Book of Noah.....	30
How can we describe the Book of Noah? .....	37
The Book of Noah: “lost” or “real”, or a mere “title” or a shorter section of a larger work.....	40
The Book of Noah as a potential source document .....	43
Chapter 3.....	48
What is a book? .....	48
Introduction .....	48
What is a book? .....	48
The linguistic turn .....	52
What then is the traditional conception of a book in Jewish antiquity?.....	55

<b>Chapter 4</b> .....	57
<b>Three scholarly positions on the Book of Noah</b> .....	57
<b>Introduction</b> .....	57
<b>Description of the argument of three scholars</b> .....	57
<b>Michael Edward Stone’s Position</b> .....	58
<b>Stone’s Approach</b> .....	60
<b>Devorah Dimant’s Position</b> .....	64
<b>Her Approach</b> .....	65
<b>Richard C. Steiner’s Position</b> .....	67
<b>Comparison of the three positions of the scholars</b> .....	69
<b>Literary phenomenon versus material phenomenon</b> .....	70
<b>Scientific approach and paratextual approaches versus literary and material approaches</b> .....	73
<b>Potential role of a Noah book as a source document versus non-existence of such argument</b> .....	76
<b>Chapter 5</b> .....	78
<b>Analysis of their Arguments and Approach</b> .....	78
<b>Introduction</b> .....	78
<b>Why is the argument for a postulated Book of Noah centred on whether it is a book or not?</b> .....	78
<b>Analysis of their use of the term: “lost”, “imagined” or “real” or a source entity collection</b> .....	83
<b>Analysis of language and scientific equipment</b> .....	87
<b>Chapter 6</b> .....	89
<b>Summary and Recommendations</b> .....	89
<b>Summary</b> .....	89
<b>Recommendations</b> .....	90
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	91
<b>Internet sources:</b> .....	93

# THE BOOK OF NOAH: EXPLORING THREE CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARLY POSITIONS ABOUT THE BOOK OF NOAH

## Chapter 1

### General Introduction

During the last decade, the Book of Noah (BN) has gained much scholarly attention as part of the study of lost books. In recent publications, the Book of Noah is described as a supposedly lost entity attributed to the legendary biblical figure, Noah. It is listed in the genre of modern collections of so-called Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. The evidence that the Book of Noah or to use a more technical term, Traditions about Noah or Noahic Traditions<sup>1</sup>, is increasingly gaining currency in scholarly debates, is evident in several scholarly publications and paper presentations at conferences by students and professionals. The contribution of this researcher examines this scholarly debate or discourse—tensions and discussions that are ongoing among scholars in the field of Pseudepigrapha studies particularly regarding the Book of Noah. It explores the different key moments/turns in the history of the Book of Noah with regards to how scholars at different time periods and contexts have imagined and argued for or against the existence of such entity, and what this discussion may tell us about the development of studies of Jewish Antiquity as a modern discipline. The researcher also presents some speculations about the reason why the Book of Noah is gaining much academic attention today. The focal point of this thesis is recent discussions and views on the supposedly lost Book of Noah by three scholars namely Michael Edward Stone, Devorah Dimant and Richard Steiner. The selection of these three scholars is interesting because their positions show the complexities in the current conceptions of “real” and “imagined” entities. The construal of “lost books” will be explored as a prism to understand key concepts and models of thought in the academic fields that explore Pseudepigrapha.

### Pseudepigrapha

It is important to say what Pseudepigrapha is at this point in order to have a clear view of what the term is when referred to in this project. The term Pseudepigrapha is a modern concept or category originating with Johann A. Fabricius<sup>2</sup> in 1713 which has been appropriated, mainly

---

<sup>1</sup> I borrowed this term from Dorothy M. Peters. According to her “Noah Tradition” is a term which describes a speech, action, event, or character trait associated with Noah in more than one text. Also, it might be a “theme” which recurs within a given text and which may extend beyond Noah to formulate within the text. See footnote on page 2 in Peters 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Fabricius called the first volume of his massive work ‘Codex pseudepigrapha’. See Charlesworth 1983, p. xxiv

since the late nineteenth century. As such it is not something that can be seen “on the ground”. It is used in various ways, but the term “Pseudepigrapha” is commonly used to designate the Jewish writings from the first centuries BC to the first centuries AD that claim to have been divinely revealed but which have been excluded both from what became the Hebrew Bible and from the Greek Old Testament. Said differently, Pseudepigrapha denotes a group of early writings not included in the biblical canon or the Apocrypha. In this vein, Old Testament Pseudepigrapha is used to designate such documents. Annette Yoshiko Reed,<sup>3</sup> Associate professor of Religious Studies at New York University posits that these documents survived mostly in Ethiopian, Slavonic, Coptic, Armenian, Latin or Syriac translations preserved in late antique or medieval manuscripts. Though they are sometimes supplemented by older Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek manuscripts or fragments discovered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The term Old Testament Pseudepigrapha when studied and discussed into details is very problematic. The term “Pseudepigrapha” is sometimes used as a category of text whereas at other times the term “pseudepigraphy” is used as a literary technique. Part of the problematic nature of this classification is because the literary category Pseudepigrapha is not native to the sources. It is a modern-day concept or category, or term coined for classification purposes.

Nonetheless, Pseudepigrapha are commonly approached for the information they are assumed to give about Second Temple Judaism and Christian origins. Old Testament Pseudepigrapha is often seen as the fringe of Biblical Studies or as part of Early Judaic Studies or Second Temple Judaism. It is expanded to now include “more” books in published editions<sup>4</sup>. In this project, the term is used as a category of texts since one major concern of this project is to find out what kind of entity the Book of Noah is and the methodological issues that arise from such category.

### **Background of the Study**

The motivation for this master’s thesis stems from the fact that Pseudepigrapha Studies is an interesting area in Biblical Studies and the study of the History of Religions but has been relatively little researched. Most especially, the investigation into the postulated “lost books,” like the Book of Noah, lack much investigations as to whether they existed or not. It appears

---

<sup>3</sup> Reed 2016, p. 121, & Reed 2009a.

<sup>4</sup> See Bauckham and Davila 2013

that a little investigation exists in this area to find out whether the Book of Noah which is being referred to is a real or imaginary book. This project will reveal the complexities and our conceptions of real and imagined book. The editors of the 2013 volume: *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*<sup>5</sup> have opened the door for more critical readers and scholars to delve into the problem and criteria for describing the mentioned works as real, imaginary or as to whether they are complete works or part of another work. As to whether the authenticity of these supposedly “lost books” is pretence or that they have authority but without presence is another issue.

### **Lost Books**

Textual scholars and book historians have long observed that there are certain books/works which did not survive into this modern era. It is, however, somewhat difficult to account for the reasons why such books did not survive to this day. The discoveries that were recently made of the Dead Sea Scrolls suggest that efforts were made to keep and protect such works in ancient times for posterity<sup>6</sup>. One idea that can be inferred for the non-survival of these works perhaps is either because these works that are said to be lost never did exist as physical entities, but they were just imaginary entities or that they only existed by title. Or maybe, they existed as real works but the effort that was made to protect them for posterity has rather kept them from being discovered. Chemical decay and the stop of copying texts for some or other reason are two common reasons why manuscripts have not survived. This is one issue that this project proposes to investigate.

Perhaps, they are waiting for us in the storeroom of a library or hidden somewhere that it may take an adventure like that which led to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls to find them. This is just an assumption that this could be so and not saying it is so. Should these entities be discovered I imagine they will be of great importance in history just as those found in the cave at Qumran are helping book historians, textual scholars and the world at large today to modify or verify our scholarly interpretations. In other words, they can help verify some of our scholarly interpretations about what type of entities they were and perhaps put them into their rightful place or categories.

---

<sup>5</sup> Bauckham, (R.), Davila, (J.), & Panayotov, (A.), 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Though there may be several reasons why the custodians hid the scrolls in the cave. I imagine that among such reasons the purpose of keeping them for posterity is one of such. Perhaps, they were keeping it from being destroyed by their enemies in the times of war as some historians speculate. See the documentary Archaeology and the Dead Sea scrolls: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMwpy6aLF8I>  
Dead Sea Scrolls: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsXjm-m1UQE>

The importance of the discovery of lost books can be inferred from the findings made in the caves at Qumran, now referred to as the Dead Sea Scrolls and other ancient documents such as those found in the Cairo Genizah and at Nag Hammadi. These materials have changed and broadened our horizon of some ideas that were held about some entities that are supposed to be lost books or entities that once existed. Scholars are concerned about lost books and therefore attempt to search for them or find out why they did not survive. Hence, one can say without any shadow of a doubt, that the discovery of Dead Sea Scrolls and the abovementioned ancient documents is of immense significance currently in history. This is because they help to investigate and confirm the concept of lost books or entities that are claimed to have once existed, whether they really existed or were imagined entities.

One may ask why scholars are concerned about lost books? One possible reason of scholarly investigation into lost books can be inferred from James H. Charlesworth's introduction in the collection *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, that western culture has been largely shaped by a unique collection of ancient books: most especially the Bible<sup>7</sup>. He, therefore, asserts that ideas, symbols, morality, commitments, perceptions, and dreams in biblical books influenced Western cultural language, theology, philosophy, art and law. He further stated that since the European Enlightenment-era attempts have been made by scholars to understand these books. They thus began to make a search for other ancient writings related to the biblical book<sup>8</sup>. The importance of these biblical books is that they serve as models as to how we imagine other literary entities from antiquity<sup>9</sup>.

It can be observed that for the very fact that books have a profound influence on civilizations then it makes sense to search for lost books. Charlesworth<sup>10</sup> and others<sup>11</sup> have observed that the (presumed) authors of the Biblical books depended on sources that are no longer in existence.

---

<sup>7</sup> Charlesworth 1983, p. xxi.

<sup>8</sup> Charlesworth 1983, p. xxi

<sup>9</sup> The above assertion by Charlesworth may not only apply to the Western world but other civilizations as well. Also, it can be said that not only the above-mentioned book and its related types have a profound influence on modern cultures but other books as well. We can refer to places where Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and other religions are practiced and find out that their cultures too are influenced by ancient books from their religious past. In this modern time, I can say of my country Ghana that it has been influenced more by the Bible as well, since the advent of Christianity to Ghana by the former colonial masters. The African traditional religion which once used to be the indigenous religious practice of the people seems to be relegated to the background. Perhaps one reason for this is the lack of books that recorded this religion such as we find in the Bible and other religious books.

<sup>10</sup> Charlesworth 1983, p. xxi.

<sup>11</sup> See Baxter 2006, p. 186.



Charlesworth also mentioned that little proofs exist (it cannot be actually determined whether) that the sources mentioned in the Bible were actual documents<sup>12</sup>. Among the entities designated as Pseudepigrapha are some that are believed to have been lost. That is, not all the materials called Pseudepigrapha are extant. Charlesworth disclosed that there are references to Pseudepigrapha documents that are now lost.

This brings the Book of Noah which is mentioned by ancient writers but is no longer extant into the picture. There is a good deal of scepticism surrounding the existence of this postulated book. Hence, the many debates surrounding this entity is whether it was an actual document or an imaginary one. It is such scholarly debates that this project attempts to investigate. Hence, this project examines the idea of lost books using the Book of Noah as a case study.

### **Why “Books” or “Lost Books”**

One issue that needs to be explained in this project is the use of the term “book” or “lost books”. Until this point, nothing has been said about this term(s) and how it will be used in this project. I observed from my readings and discussion with Liv Ingeborg Lied that scholars who came to address, translate, and edit the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha were most commonly biblical scholars. Some of these emerged from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds. The mid- to the late nineteenth century, when many of the Pseudepigrapha were published, was also the era of manuscript hunt and discoveries. The idea of the “book” as printed material was already dominant in Europe or the West. Because of this, they used concepts or ideas from their field of study and period to make references or describe the entities they referred to as Pseudepigrapha. One typical concept is the model of the biblical book. What I thought about when I talked about “biblical book” was each of the books in the Bible, such as “Genesis,” “Exodus” among others, and not the entire collection.

The term book can be very misleading if we are not aware of the kind of entity being described as a book. Since in other cases inventory of someone’s daily activities can be referred to as a book or the record of family generations or reign of kings are sometimes referred to as a book. So, we need to know what is really meant when we use the term “book” to refer to an entity<sup>13</sup>. In this project, I borrow the understanding of Professor Lied of what a book is. This is what

---

<sup>12</sup> Charlesworth 1983, p. xxi.

<sup>13</sup> The concept of book is discussed under the subheading “What is a Book?” in this project.

will be used as a working definition throughout this project. Per Lied, a book is a compositional unit. That is the textual entity that is perceived of as the consistent and coherent entity, having established identity, and that circulates as an identifiable composition.

### **Terminologies**

It is also important to explain certain terminologies at this point in order to understand their usage in this project: manuscript/document, writings, text, and narrative content and literary entity. I borrow the understanding of the above terms as explained by Lied<sup>14</sup>. Below are the explanations of how the above terms are used in this project.

**Manuscript:** this is used to refer to the material inscribed object/artefact (the material stuff). That is the text bearing object. It is the culturally produced material artefact that contains the text-on-page.

**Writing:** this will refer to the compositional unit (Book). It will represent what is typically known as the “work”. That is the textual entity that is perceived of as the consistent and coherent entity, having established identity, and that circulates as an identifiable composition. Per Lied, the idea of work/writing is both a representation and abstraction. She, therefore, posits that it should therefore not be confused with the text because it is the way the text is represented. She also noted that the conception of writing/work can both exist in history and thus be part of what we study, and it can be a contemporary scholarly projection. That is something we bring to bear on the empirical material.

**Text:** refer to any consistent bulk of writing inscribed on the pages of a manuscript. Said differently a text is a series of words in a certain order as the words on the page, says Liv.

**Text-unit:** this is also known as textual unit or unit of text on the other hand per Liv, is any textual entity in manuscripts that is distinguishable within the general flow of text by textual or visible features such as titles or subtitles, paragraphing graphemes, spacing, and marginal annotations, though not limited to any of these.

**Narrative contents:** this will also be used to refer to the content of a literary work.

---

<sup>14</sup> Lied 2015 pp. 152-153

**Literary entity:** this refers to the larger concept for various formats such as writing/book, smaller textual unit, independently circulating story unit and an excerpted part/passage.

In this project, to avoid a presupposition about the Book of Noah, as we investigate the idea of lost books in current scholarly debates, the term ‘lost’ will be replaced by claimed/postulated, to ensure a suitable discussion of the entity. It will also help to distinguish the positions of the various scholars clearly. This is because using the term ‘lost’ appears to suggest that the entity once existed but is now missing or non-extant. Meanwhile, it is only assumed that it did exist, but as to whether it was a real book or an imaginary, it has not been clearly determined.

### **How do Scholars search for Lost Books?**

From my readings, I have discovered that the search for and collection of lost works is not recent. Rabbi Azariah de Rossi, an Italian Rabbi, is believed to have been the initiator of the search for lost Jewish Scriptures. Though the recent search began in the early 1700s<sup>15</sup>. This time it was explored by Johann Albert Fabricius<sup>16</sup>. This enormous work which per Bauckham et al, include more than 300 documents or quotations reflects the search for knowledge inspired by two main events. Namely, the Renaissance and the exploration of a canon and scripture which was motivated by the Reformation<sup>17</sup>. This can be linked to the search of manuscripts and lost books in the Middle East and elsewhere in the 1800s. In this vein, one can observe that a reason for the search of lost books is to find out where certain ideas that continue to influence or affect our society or our way of thinking and behaviour originated.

To answer the above question, Charlesworth explained that one way of searching for lost writings is through the list of canonical and extracanonical books. An example of an extracanonical list that is supposed to have come from the sixth century is a catalogue which is alleged to have been compiled by Athanasius of Alexandria<sup>18</sup>. Should scholars go through the list and find writings that have been mentioned but cannot find it in the material form then such a work would be typically designated lost. This method is questionable because the mere mention of a book on a list of books does not definitely mean it existed but is now non-extant because its material component cannot be found now. One possibility is that it only existed by

---

<sup>15</sup> Bauckham et al 2013, p. xi.

<sup>16</sup> Bauckham et al 2013, p. xi

<sup>17</sup> Bauckham et al 2013, p. xi.

<sup>18</sup> See Charlesworth, pp. xxi-xxiii

title and it can only be found in that list or mentioned in another book and nothing more. But this discussion will be elaborated in the subsequent section and the chapters after this chapter. Since this section was intended to only find out how scholars search for lost books or determine whether a book is lost or not.

### **Why is the Book of Noah under discussion?**

After giving a background to this study and presenting the concept of “lost books” and how scholars search for lost materials, it appears appropriate to examine the importance or reason why the so-called Book of Noah is gaining much attention in the field in this chapter. Since, the so-called Book of Noah is assumed a “lost book”. Hence, in the few paragraphs below I present some reason that might contribute to the reason why the assumed “lost” Book of Noah is gaining much academic attention.

To begin with, Michael Edward Stone<sup>19</sup>, a professor emeritus of Armenian Studies and Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is one of the renowned scholars that we will examine his approach and stance on this subject, the Book of Noah. In his article, “The Books Attributed to Noah<sup>20</sup>”, Stone alluded that recent scholarly debate is geared toward the Book of Noah. The main aim of these debates is to find out whether this so-called Book of Noah existed or not. He pointed out that this question is of great importance because should it be discovered that such a book existed then it would be one of the ancient Jewish works beside the Bible<sup>21</sup>.

Again, Stone asserts that should it be discovered that the Book of Noah existed, it might fill in a momentous part of the enigma of the dark age of the history of Judaism in the fourth and third centuries before the common era<sup>22</sup>. This perhaps is one more reason why the Book of Noah is being studied. Furthermore, the character of Noah seems to resemble that of Enoch and Moses. This by extension suggests a trident view of the relative authority of the texts traditionally associated with Enoch and Moses. This implies that the postulated Book of Noah is deemed as an authority over a matter should it say something about the matter just as the texts ascribed to Enoch or Moses may do.

---

<sup>19</sup> In chapter three Stone’s work will be further examined as part of the three scholars whose work appears to show the three scholarly positions on the Book of Noah. In this section the researcher uses this works as a review.

<sup>20</sup> Stone 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Stone 2006, pp. 4

<sup>22</sup> Stone 2006, pp. 5.

It appears that one major reason why scholars are also interested in the postulated Book of Noah is the assumption of the potential role of a Book of Noah as a source to other texts such *Jubilees*, *Aramaic Levi Document* and the *Genesis Apocryphon*. Scholars who hold such view include Himmelfarb and Garcia Florentino Martinez. Should this be proved it would be a great achievement even as Stone has noted above. Scholars are therefore concerned and want to find out the possibility of such assumption. Hence, the drive to find out more about the Book of Noah.

A reading of Dorothy M. Peters'<sup>23</sup> book *Noah Traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Conversations and Controversies in Antiquity*, suggests that one reason why the book is becoming of much interest to scholars today is that it has something to do with all humankind<sup>24</sup>. This means that the postulated book does not only have something to say about the Jews of antiquity from whom the book seems to have originated but non-Jews as well<sup>25</sup>. The final verse of the introductory chapter of the *Book of Asaph* stated below also affirms this:

“Noah wrote all these things in a book and gave it to Shem, his oldest son. And the ancient wise men copied from this book and wrote many books, each in his own language.”

The second sentence from the above quotation seems to imply that the Book of Noah was significant to other people since they are said to have written the book in their own languages as well. Perhaps this is one reason why Noah is deemed the father of all humans and not particularly a Jewish ancestor.<sup>26</sup> This underscores the alleged importance of the book.

To mention again, the entity seems to reveal or give a hint about the religious culture and practices of the Jews before the present time. It appears that the postulated Book of Noah holds a great deal of the genealogy and identity of the Jewish people. Thus, cultural beliefs and practices are contained therein. This then serves as a sort of authority for the passage of tradition and divine revelation from the patriarchs to later generations<sup>27</sup>. Briefly, we can say that it serves as a means of passing on of knowledge from one generation to the other. Like other

---

<sup>23</sup>Dorothy M. Peters, is an Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies and Associate Director of the Humanitas Anabaptist-Mennonite Centre, at the Trinity Western University & ACTS Seminaries

<sup>24</sup> Peters 2008, p. 1

<sup>25</sup> A reference to the translated version of the Book of Noah may confirm this assertion. See Himmelfarb 1994, pp. 129-130

<sup>26</sup> See Peters 2008, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> See Schiffman 2004, pp. 429

pseudepigrapha, the postulated Book of Noah is gaining currency in the contemporary study of ancient books. Perhaps, this is because the references to a Book of Noah in the ancient literature seems to convey the same idea as the books mentioned some books of the bible or canonized books but are now missing or alleged to be fictitious books<sup>28</sup>.

It appears that the postulated Book of Noah as an authoritative book for the discussion of a matter can also help to explain the increasingly pronounced “parting of the ways” between Christianity and Judaism. According to Peters, one of the sharpest polemics and debate that seems to have set Judaism and Christianity apart was the debate over the role of a common ancestor. A good observation from the conversation between Justin Martyr and Trypho<sup>29</sup> which may serve as one of the examples of the polemics and debates involving Noah can easily show that a representation of Noah in both traditions may either overlap or remain distinct from one another. Per Peters, Justin uses the issue of Noah’s not being circumcised to argue that righteousness does not emanate from the Law. These depictions can be hints of the degree of separation between the movements where an archetype of Noah is built<sup>30</sup>.

From my readings, I have observed that an important reason why the postulated Book of Noah is gaining much currency is that scholars give much attention to the creation of idealised biblical figures. For instance, Peters postulates that Geza Vermes, in 1951 is likely to have been the first scholar to have recognised Noah as an ideal figure in the Dead Sea Scrolls<sup>31</sup>.

Another reason for the interest of scholars in a Book of Noah is the assertion that if such a book happened to exist it would be one of the most ancient Jewish works that existed apart from the Bible<sup>32</sup>. As such it might help us to throw more light on some of the accounts in the Bible.

---

<sup>28</sup> See Schiffman 2004, pp. 430

<sup>29</sup> The Dialogue between Justin Martyr and Trypho, is a second-century Christian apologetic text, documenting the attempts by theologian Justin Martyr to argue that Christianity is the new law for all men, and to prove from Scripture that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. The Dialogue uses an intellectual conversation as a literary device between Justin and Trypho, a Jew. The dialogues deal with so many issues that shows the polemics and set differences between Christians and Jews. The concluding section postulating that the Christians are the true people of God. See: Williams, A. L., & Martyr, J. (1930). *The Dialogue with Trypho. Translation, Introduction, and Notes*, London. Also, see: Dialogue with Trypho, Justin Martyr: [https://www.theologynetwork.org/Media/PDF/Justin\\_Martyr-Dialogue\\_with\\_Trypho.pdf](https://www.theologynetwork.org/Media/PDF/Justin_Martyr-Dialogue_with_Trypho.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> I deduced this reason from Peters 2008, pp. 3-6.

<sup>31</sup> Peters 2008, pp. 10

<sup>32</sup> This idea can be inferred from STONE 2006, pp. 4

It can also be inferred from the recount of the Noah story<sup>33</sup> that Noah performed sacrifices. This act today is believed connects Noah to the sacrifice cults and rituals and instructions concerning the blood. Noah is therefore considered the originator of animal sacrifices. Hence, religions that have animal sacrifice as part of their rituals would definitely find the postulated Book of Noah interesting.

### **Research question and a brief discussion of why this should be studied**

In the article “Text-Work-Manuscript: What Is an ‘Old Testament Pseudepigraphon’?” Lied has noted that the edition *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* have some editorial issues that must be reconsidered. This relates to how the editors refer to some of the works they describe as real ‘Books’ or ‘ancient Books’ or the **methodological criteria** they used to categorise the works they refer to as Pseudepigrapha. From her argument, it appears that some of the works did not really exist as independent, coherent or real books as some of the editors would assume, they were. This, therefore, calls for further investigations into the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha to further discuss the kind of entity in the literature and methodological issues it brings up.

To add to the above reasons why this area should be further studied, I refer to another work of David Frankfurter; ‘Apocalypses Real and Alleged in the Mani Codex’<sup>34</sup>. The American scholar of ancient Mediterranean religions has also noted that though the collection of literary extracts of revelations that Mani used as a proof of his own authority in the Cologne Mani Codex has stimulated investigation into the circulation and influence of Jewish apocalypses among different religious communities of late antiquity. It has also proved to be very frustrating since none of the apocalyptic texts that Mani referred to matches the surviving apocalypses in the name of Enoch, Adam, Seth and Enosh. Other examples also include references to a Book of Enoch in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs.

This discourse is very interesting and needs to be further studied. Since they raise the questions of; what kind of literature are these? And, what are the functions of this literature in the cultural context of late antique people of the Mediterranean region? This raises the question of forged documents as well. We can observe that Frankfurter, is not talking about “false-discourse” as it

---

<sup>33</sup> See chapter 2 the sections Noah and the Book of Noah in context and the journey to the conception of a Book of Noah for the story of Noah.

<sup>34</sup> Frankfurter 1997.

may appear, but he seems to find answers to the questions that are stated above. Is an ancient claimed book a “forged” book? Is the “truth” issue the most interesting? Or is it more interesting to explore the complexities of imagined ancient libraries in contemporary research?<sup>35</sup>

From the above discussions, the following are the three main questions that this project seeks to probe:

1. What is the Book of Noah? What is the known content of the Book of Noah?
2. What are the kinds of arguments that scholars make for the existence or non-existence of the Book of Noah?
3. What are modern textual scholars doing with their investigations and perceptions of ancient literary works?

In addition to the above questions, the following sub-questions serves as a guide that will keep this project in focus: a) Does this entity qualify to be described as a book? b) What are the methodological issues that come up? c) What kind of book is this? Is it a lost or imaginary book or a book that has only existed by or known by the title?

With regards to the ongoing debates and speculations, this project attempts to find answers to the above questions. Should there be no answers found to these questions, this project will still remain significant, since it will add to the ongoing debates and discussions of this emerging area of study in Religious studies. These questions will be examined through the lenses of three modern debates by three scholars about the Book of Noah. In fact, as far as the above questions are concerned, no definitive answers should be expected. However, the light that is thrown on the scholarly conceptions and the constitution of the main literary materials of the field will be the point.

### **Primary material, delimitation and motivation**

The field of Pseudepigrapha-studies in both the Jewish and Christian literary contexts is an intriguing area in the study of the history of late antique religions. However, there is not much work done in this area especially the investigation into whether some of the writings included in this category are imaginary or real. Thanks to the editors of the *Old Testament*

---

<sup>35</sup> This very vital since the basic entity of much historical studies is the book.



*Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*<sup>36</sup> who have taken the step to delve into this area of study, there will now be more materials to consult for more information.

This project is mainly about the study of contemporary scholars' imagination/representation of certain references from antiquity such as the Book of Noah as a "book". In this regard, modern academic publications constitute the main source material of this study. The project examines how modern scholars in their interpretations refer to certain entities from the materials they investigate as books. Or, what their perception about the entities in possession is. The project also comprises of investigations into the catalogues of libraries and collections of manuscripts, to find out the imaginations of books in modern editions. In this regard, the ancient texts and the manuscripts that contain them are not my main source material. They are auxiliary source materials and it should be acknowledged that my references to ancient texts in this project are dependent on translations.

The researcher has previously intended to deal with at most three books that have been listed among the numerous Old Testament Pseudepigrapha by the editors of the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. Since these books or materials appear to be entities that have some similarities and differences in their material make up that can be studied together. They also possess some methodological issues that can be compared and discussed together to make the study even more interesting and fascinating. These include the Apocryphon of Eber, the Book of Noah and the Book of Jashar. However, due to an unforeseen distraction on behalf of the researcher and being pressed with time the researcher imagined that an examination of one material: the Book of Noah, at this project, will produce a good academic material that can easily be followed by the reader. Perhaps the three materials can be considered in doctoral research later.

### **Method: meta-critical literary analysis**

In this project, the researcher uses a very simple method to do this study. First, the researcher reads the articles that concern the debates surrounding the existence and nonexistence of the so-called Book of Noah. He then selects three scholars using their arguments to categorise the positions that best defines the debate into three main scholarly positions. The researcher presents the arguments of each scholar spelling out their main arguments and the methods that each scholar employed in his/her argument. Then he compared and discussed the arguments and methods employed by the three scholars, drawing a conclusion from the argument. The

---

<sup>36</sup> Bauckham, (R.), Davila, (J.), & Panayotov, (A.) 2013.

motive behind the use of this is to examine the relationship between scholarly construal/conception of books based on the materials that survive. How does the concept of the “book” influence the ways scholars think about ancient literature? The breakdown of the subject into the above-mentioned components perhaps can be described as meta-critical literary analysis.

The project approaches the entity herein under examination as a postulated entity assumed to be embedded/mentioned in other manuscripts. It attempts to explore as to whether it qualifies to be described as a “book”. And if so, did it exist by title only or was it an imaginary or real book? It will consider the methodological issues or questions that the material raises to be described as a book or for it to be classified as a book. In this regard, the relationship scholarly construal/conceptions and the material that survives will be examined.

### **Theoretical frame work**

The project uses theoretical perspectives from Book History to discuss the concepts involved. For instance, this will help the researcher to find out what editions do to text and how we would view or think about them. Book History or History of the book is an interdisciplinary field which attempts to approach the problem of textual categories and definitions. It is also well known as Historical Bibliography<sup>37</sup>. Bibliography is described as the Sociology of Texts by the textual historian D. F. McKenzie. Per him, Sociology of Text is a discipline that studies text as recorded form, and the process of their transmission, including their production and reception<sup>38</sup>.

Professor Emerita Leslie Howsam has rightfully noted that the main theoretical contribution of Book History is to emphasize that books are not mere inert containers for the transmission of disembodied verbal content. They are physical objects, textual artefacts, and cultural transactions, and both their physical forms and social meanings shape the way their content is created, transmitted, and received<sup>39</sup>. In this sense, Howsam seems to posit that Book History combines three disciplines namely Bibliography, Literature and History. Bibliography studies the book as a material, whereas Literature studies the text and History involve the study of the social and cultural context in which text was created and used<sup>40</sup>.

---

<sup>37</sup> See Mroczek 2012, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> McKenzie 1986, p. 12. See also Mroczek 2012, p. 7.

<sup>39</sup> Howsam 2016.

<sup>40</sup> See Mroczek 2012, p. 7.

In this regard, one can rightly note that Book History involves more than we can imagine about a book, not only the book as a material is implied in Book History but the culture and social context in which the text of the book was created, transmitted and used is also involved in the study of the book. This theory will, therefore, help in the analytical aspect of the debates that will be examined in this project in relation to the Book of Noah.

Mroczek asserts that ancient texts are not “books” as we imagine them to be. Also, writings, authorship, and textual transmission functioned differently in scribal society. Book historians show how our bookish categories are historically contingent<sup>41</sup>. Roger Chartier, a French historian has rightly observed that the idea of book as we naturally imagine it, as an object that links a physical object, a text and an author is greatly dependent on the *libro unitario*. That is the practise of binding the work of a single author in a codex. This practice which according to Chartier has shaped our perception of what a book is or must look like originated in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries<sup>42</sup>. He also believes that the figure of the author as the fundamental principle for the designation of a text is also an invention of the modern period when the increase in the availability of the texts encouraged the creation of organizational categories<sup>43</sup>.

It can be observed from recent scholarly works that the advent of the modern digitalization of text has relieved the modern perception of book. It shows how our modern and basic textual categories are informed by assumptions specific to the print period<sup>44</sup>. Per Mroczek, some scholars<sup>45</sup> postulate that:

the set of characteristics namely fluidity, collective creation, proliferation, and changing concepts of authoritativeness, digital culture which are so much discussed in book history, has challenged scholars to revisit the categories in which we think about text, categories that had long been dominated by the printed book and the individual author<sup>46</sup>.

---

<sup>41</sup> Mroczek 2012, pp. 7-8.

<sup>42</sup> Chartier 2004, pp. 133-151, 141.

<sup>43</sup> Chartier 1994; See also Chartier and Stallybrass 2013, for more discussions on the idea of a “book”.

<sup>44</sup> See Hayles 2003, Chartier 2004, and Sutherland 1997.

<sup>45</sup> These scholars are Noegel Bryon Scott an American Professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of Wisconsin and Hayles N. Katherine also an American Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the program in Literature at the Duke University.

<sup>46</sup> Mroczek 2012, p. 8.

Mroczek posits that its penetration into all areas of scholarship and daily life invites us to see texts of various kinds with fresh eyes and to ask whether the concept of a “book,” when applied to both preprint and post-print textual worlds, is a metaphor that has outlived its descriptive power<sup>47</sup>.

Mroczek’s studies<sup>48</sup> seem to indicate that employing new metaphors and models from outside of print will unbind and open ancient Jewish texts from the constraints of the book<sup>49</sup>. I imagine this can be employed in this project to study the scholarly debates about the Book of Noah to find out why scholars make the claims they make about the entity. Mroczek has asserted that the concept “book” no longer has a monopoly on the contemporary structuring, transmitting, and categorizing of textual materials. The book can, therefore, be denaturalized, and we can take note of its contingency and cultural specificity. In her opinion, we can place “the book” within the history of concepts and trace its genealogy through cultural and historical transactions that unconsciously structure our thinking.

Therefore when we say “book,” we bring in the entire history of the book as we know it culturally, and its whole nature as we experience it: the history of the Alexandrian library, and birth of scholarly editing and cataloguing practices; the development of the codex; the invention of print; widespread literacy; the rise of authorial copyright; the nineteenth-century novel; twentieth-century publishing, scholarly bibliographies, modern cataloguing, authorial book signings, and the mass production of paperbacks<sup>50</sup>.

Inferring from Mroczek one can say that “book” is not a neutral signifier or a universalizable idea, and thus cannot be uncritically used as a term to translate early Jewish literature. She posits that when applied to cultures and time periods other than our own, the term “book” functions as a metaphor transferring aspects of one thing onto another, necessarily distorting or obscuring something even as it describes it. Mroczek will, therefore, suggest that even though we pay lip service to the idea that the concept of “book” is misleading, our bookish ideas still

---

<sup>47</sup> Hayles 2003, p. 263. Noegel 2004, pp. 133-143.

<sup>48</sup> See Mroczek 2012, Mroczek 2016, pp. 1-14.

<sup>49</sup> See Mroczek 2011, pp. 241-249.

<sup>50</sup> See Mroczek 2012, pp. 9-10

shape our thinking. Hence, to call early Jewish texts “books”<sup>51</sup> such as the Book of Noah in the ancient Jewish World is to use figurative language.

Per her, other metaphors are now possible, taken from the realm of digital text. These metaphors will, of course, break down as well like “book,” they will obscure some aspects of the textual imagination while highlighting others. However, looking at ancient writing through the lens of another textual culture, where the relationship between material objects, authors, and texts is quite different than in the “book,” can help us imagine just how differently textuality could have been conceptualized, Mroczek says<sup>52</sup>.

### **Preliminary structure of the thesis**

This project consists of **six chapters**. This chapter (**chapter one**), gives a general introduction to the project. It states the main research questions and discusses why the study is important and interesting. It states and discusses the primary materials and, also gives the delimitation and motivation of the project. The method and theory used in the project are discussed in this same chapter. It also states the ethical issues that might be a concern in this project. **Chapter two** contains the literature review of existing work on the subject which serve as the background to the study. It begins the discussion or answers the first research question which is: What is the Book of Noah and what is its content? **Chapter three** opens with and discusses the topic what is a book? It also discusses the linguistic turn as promised in chapter two. **Chapter four** begins the discussion on the second research question: that is, it examines the arguments around the existence of a Book of Noah, focusing on three major scholarly imaginations of the Book of Noah. It presents, compares and discusses the positions of the three scholars on the so-called Book of Noah. **Chapter five** which will form the analytical part of this project will analyse the methodological and theoretical approaches employed by the scholars and the problems or issues that arise from such. That is, this chapter discusses the influence of the model of the book or biblical book model of the early twentieth century on how these scholars seem to think about book and describe certain entities, such as the alleged Book of Noah, as such. I explore the suggestions that have been made by assessing the arguments and point out the logics of imaginations of which they are part. Then **chapter six** concludes the project. It gives a summary and some suggestions for further study.

---

<sup>51</sup> Mroczek 2012, p. 10.

<sup>52</sup> Mroczek 2012, p. 10.

### **The goal and significance**

The aim of this project is primarily to explore the scholarly debates surrounding the designation of the Book of Noah as a book. It probes the argument to find out if the Book of Noah can rightly be designated as a book. It attempts to probe the rationale behind the designation of the Book of Noah as a book or why textual scholars or the editors of the 2013 edition of *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* listed this entity as an ancient book. Why did some assume that this entity existed and was a real material entity? What conceptions of “books” and literature lies under the notion of realness? What documents/manuscripts does it take to have a book? The project makes an investigation into the reasons behind the creation and the role that the legend of this book has played in the literary context in which we find it. It appears that there is a misconception among modern editors about the kind of materials that they refer to. The project is, however, not going to actually give solutions to these misconceptions. But its aim is to find out how modern editors have represented this work and what the functions of this are.

### **Ethical considerations**

This project cannot be accepted by the research community and the society if the ethical issues that the project might seem to raise are not addressed. These may include objectivity, openness, honesty and social responsibility. To show that I have been honest in this project I have cited and referenced all the works that have been used in this project where necessary, to best of my knowledge. If any reference is lacking, it is not done intentionally. This is to avoid the fatal crime in academics known as plagiarism. That is the use of someone else’s ideas or one’s own ideas in a previous academic paper without proper referencing. I have demonstrated that the ideas are not my own but acquired from others. Though my own observations are clear in the project where necessary.

With regards to the scholars who I referred to, I have been objective with the use of their works that are herein discussed. Considering the ethical value of *doing no harm*, I can say that my analysis and discussion of their works is without any disregard for their expertise and professionalism in the field that they have pioneered. I have been open and honest with my comparison of their arguments without any bias as far as I know. I believe I have not caused any harm to the personality of the scholars I have mentioned in this work. Though without their

consent I have used their works, the reference to the works, which is not a private matter is my kind gesture to their intellectual knowledge.

I have not used the ethical value of anonymity in this project because, I have no responsibility for confidentiality, that is, to keep private matters private. The publications I explore are all publicly available and my research is not interview-based research but literary analysis. In my method and theoretical sections, I have stated how I have conducted this research and my way of analysing my observations. My duty of social responsibility here is to make knowledge available to the public. Hence, I submit this work to the Norwegian School of Theology and Religion and Society, and any interested persons can request and read and use it for any academic endeavour or acquisition of knowledge.

## Chapter 2

### The Book of Noah: Finding what it is and what its contents are

#### Introduction

Chapter one has introduced the project outlining the background of the project, stating the research questions, the primary materials and delimitation, the methods and the theoretical framework that is employed in the project. It also states the goal and significance and the ethical issues that are considered necessary in this project. This chapter is intended to be an opening chapter to the discussion of the research questions. As stated in chapter one, the method that is used is best described as meta-critical literary analysis<sup>53</sup> and the theory is book history. Hence, since the introductory chapter has shown that the project focuses on the “Book of Noah” this chapter opens with the discussion of the research question: what is the Book of Noah? Chapter three will attempt to answer and discuss the question: what is a book? The purpose of examining this question - the concept of book, - is to help in the analysis, whether the alleged Book of Noah can be described as a book or not. With regards to the focus of this project, this chapter attempts to open the stage for investigating the scholarly representation/imagination of certain references in antiquity.

Hence, this chapter focuses on the Book of Noah. It seeks to find out what this entity is; what is its content. Thus, the history behind the conception of such an entity. Whether we can designate it as a book. Chapter four will examine three scholarly debates that give a description of the discussions that are ongoing about this material entity. Then in chapter five, it is discussed if such scholarly arguments have shown that it can be considered a book or not. Nonetheless, it must be made clear that since this is a historical study one must not assume a definite yes or no answers for the above questions. This is because all that we know as far as history is concerned is the surviving texts and artefacts that we investigate. We are trying to trace the past, but the sources themselves do not speak unless they are being spoken to or questioned<sup>54</sup>. Often, just as Mroczek<sup>55</sup> has observed that our sources are not interested in our questions or even the descriptions we give them. They may not even follow our rules since they have different concerns and other anxieties or serve different purposes than we imagine them to be.

---

<sup>53</sup> See chapter one for more information on why the term is used in this study, what it implies and does not imply here.

<sup>54</sup> See Clark 2004, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn*. pp. 1-28.

<sup>55</sup> See Mroczek 2016, pp. 13-14.



This is somewhat a challenge for the historian whose task is to get and understand what happened in the past or alternatively: to make sense out of traces of the past. Since the historian has an element of interpretation when he tries to understand and interpret his text or artefact, his element of interpretation may be close to the truth but not the exact truth. This is what the term *linguistic turn* seems to explain/argue in the study of history. This is an idea the researcher would like to make clear as we study the Pseudepigrapha mentioned above to be considered in this project. The text is polyvalent and therefore always subject to different interpretation. It is partial or fragmentary and represents choices<sup>56</sup>.

In the paragraphs below, we will notice how challenging it is to undertake such a task as studying some writings of the past and attempting to hypothesize whether they were real or imaginary, as we study the Book of Noah.

### **Noah and the Book of Noah in context**

This section as stated above will begin the investigation into the Book of Noah. But some questions that seem important to ask in this section is who is Noah? Did Noah write a Book? Where is that book and what is its content? These questions perhaps can help put this whole chapter in perspective.

Stories about Noah and the flood were well known among Jews and Christians and later on, among Muslims. Noah is believed to have been the great survivor of the antediluvian world that was destroyed by the flood. The story about the biblical Noah can be found in the Bible from Genesis chapters 6 through 10. However, apart from this biblical story about Noah there also exist additional stories about Noah in early Jewish literature<sup>57</sup>. The Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies, Dorothy M. Peters has confirmed this assertion that Noah is a powerful magnetic subject of lively and persistent interest in the texts represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Though he is considered the father of all humanity, Peters also admits that he is a very problematic figure for the Jews in the Second Temple era<sup>58</sup>.

---

<sup>56</sup> See Clark 2004, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn*. pp. 1-28.  
Tosh 2015, *The Pursuit of History*. Pp. 1-21.

<sup>57</sup> See Kugel 1998/2009, pp. 171-190. In this work James L. Kugel who is Professor Emeritus in the Bible Department at Bar Ilan University in Israel and the Harry M. Starr Professor Emeritus of Classical and Modern Hebrew Literature at Harvard University outlines some of the traditions in early Jewish literature about Noah and the flood.

<sup>58</sup> Peters 2008, p. 1.

Per Peters, the Jews in the Second Temple era knew about the Genesis story of Noah. They believed Noah to be the righteous, covenant-making survivor of the prehistoric flood. He was separated from the wicked in those days by God, who blotted out the violence and wickedness by the flood. Noah could have been actively claimed as their own flood surviving hero. Except for the incident of his drunkenness and self-exposure<sup>59</sup>. Pieces of evidence exist in the texts that have come to us from the Dead Sea Scrolls that reveals some uneasiness and tensions about the figure of Noah<sup>60</sup>.

Despite the tensions and uneasiness about the figure of Noah he also seems to be attributed some important characteristics. For instance, the ritual of sacrifice. After the landing from the Ark, we are told in Genesis 8, that he performed a sacrifice. It was an animal sacrifice. Noah's animal sacrifice may be the first account of animal sacrifice on the altar found in the Bible. Even though Abel's animal offerings are mentioned in Gen 4:4, his sacrifices did not establish any momentous sacrificial pattern for future generations<sup>61</sup> like that of Noah.

Although the Book of *Jubilees* appears to mention the offerings of Adam and Enoch, it, however, refers to them as incense sacrifices<sup>62</sup>. In this vein, Noah can, therefore, be regarded as the instigator of the official ongoing tradition of animal sacrifices. He is also the first person to have received from God the commandment about the blood. Professor Michael Stone has rightly observed that the connection of the sacrificial cult and to instructions concerning the blood to Noah was not accidental<sup>63</sup>.

In Christian and Jewish polemics Noah is a problematic figure. For instance, interpreters of Noah in the New Testament and other Christian writings reinterpreted the righteousness of Noah in ways different from the Qumran sectarians. The author of Hebrews attributes the

---

<sup>59</sup> Peters 2008, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> Peters 2008, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> See Stone 1997, p. 138.

<sup>62</sup> "On that day, as he was leaving the Garden of Eden, he burned incense as a pleasing fragrance-frankincense, galbanum, stacte, and aromatic spices..." *Jub.* 3:27; "He burned the evening incense of the sanctuary which is acceptable before the Lord on the mountain of incense." *Jub.* 4:25. J.C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 2.20 and 2.28.

<sup>63</sup> Stone 1997, p. 138.

righteousness of Noah to faith whereas Rabbinic interpretation frequently proclaims him righteous only in comparison to the wicked of his generation<sup>64</sup>.

In the brief recounting of Noah above, one can rightly conclude that Noah is perceived as the survivor of the great flood. But he was, however, not accepted wholly by the Jews in the Second Temple era as a hero because of his drunkenness and self-exposure. He has been attributed the quality of an initiator of animal sacrifice. It can be understood from this brief story that Noah as an ancestor is indeed a multi-variant figure<sup>65</sup>.

### **What is the Book of Noah?**

Apart from the stories about Noah above, it is commonly believed that many works of the Second Temple era refer to writings or a Book of Noah. Said differently, the stories surrounding Noah, recount that Noah wrote a book. This book as can be inferred from the passage below seems to suggest that the so-called Book of Noah contains instructions about animal sacrifice<sup>66</sup>, the cause of illness, pain and disease-by evil spirits as a result of human transgression and sinful ways<sup>67</sup>, and healing or remedies to illness and pain<sup>68</sup>. This book is said to have been given to Noah's sons<sup>69</sup>. The excerpt below is what seems to presuppose that Noah had written a book.

### **The journey to the conception of a Noah book**

One question that arises in this study is did Noah write a book? Or how did the idea of a Noah book emerge? These questions will lead us into the probing of the so-called Noah book. They will also illustrate the key moments in the conception of a Noah book. It has been established from the above that the idea of a Book of Noah was formulated from the assertion that Noah wrote the instructions of the sacrifice in a book and gave it to his son Shem. This conception or idea of Noah writing a book hereby called the "Book of Noah" –is believed to have been first propagated by a European Jewish Rabbi and scholar, Adolph Jellinek<sup>70</sup> from the introductory chapter of the Jewish medieval, medical and magic book called the *Book of Asaph*.

---

<sup>64</sup> Peters 2008, pp. 3-6

<sup>65</sup> For more explanation on the problematic nature of Noah as an ancestor see Peters 2016, 3-6

<sup>66</sup> See verse 5 of the translated passage below.

<sup>67</sup> See verse 6 of the translated passage below.

<sup>68</sup> See verses 1, and 9 of the translated passage below.

<sup>69</sup> See verses 1 and 11 of the translated passage below.

<sup>70</sup> Adolf Jellinek was born June 26, 1821, in Drslavice, Moravia, Austrian Empire (now in Czech Republic). He died Dec. 29, 1893, Vienna, Austria. As a rabbi and scholar, he was considered the most forceful Jewish preacher of his time in central Europe. See Encyclopaedia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Adolf-Jellinek>

Consequently, among academics, this conception or assumption about Noah writing a book is believed to have been deduced from mentions or references of it in some ancient texts.

The translation of the relevant portion of the introductory chapter of the Jewish medieval, medical and magic book, *Book of Asaph* from which Jellinek is said to have first inferred the existence of a Book of Noah is outlined below:

1. This is the book of remedies that the ancient sages copied from the book of Shem, the son of Noah. It was handed down to Noah on Mt. Lubar, one of the mountains of Ararat, after the flood.
2. For in those days the spirits of the bastards began to attack Noah's children, to lead them astray and to cause them to err, to injure them and to strike them with illness and pains and with all kinds of disease that kill and destroy human beings.
3. Then all Noah's children went, together with their children, and related their afflictions to Noah and told him about their children's pains.
4. Noah was troubled, for he realized that it was because of human transgression and their sinful ways that they were afflicted with all kinds of sickness and disease.
5. So Noah sanctified his children together with the members of his household and his house. He approached the altar and offered sacrifices, praying to God and beseeching him.
6. He (God) sent one of the angels of the presence, whose name was Raphael, from among the holy ones, to imprison the spirits of the bastards from under the heavens so they would do no harm to mankind.
7. The angel did so, imprisoning them in the place of judgment.
8. But he left one in ten to go about on earth before the prince of enmity to oppress evil-doers, to afflict and torture them with all kinds of disease and illness and to afflict them with pain.
9. Then the angel told him the remedies for the afflictions of mankind and all kinds of remedies for healing with trees of the earth and plants of the soil and their roots.
10. And he sent the princes of the remaining spirits to show Noah the medicinal trees with all their shoots, greenery, grasses, roots and seed, to explain to him why they were created, and to teach him all their medicinal properties for healing and for life.
11. Noah wrote all these things and gave it to Shem, his oldest son, and the ancient wise men copied from this book and wrote many books, each in his own language.<sup>71</sup>

It appears that Jellinek deduced the idea of a Book of Noah from the phrase "This is the book of remedies that the ancient sages copied from the book of Shem, the son of Noah" in the first verse of this introductory chapter of the *Book of Asaph*. The last verse of this excerpt, "Noah wrote all these things and gave it to Shem, his oldest son, and the ancient wise men copied from this book and wrote many books" might also be a contributing factor to Jellinek's conception. I suppose that his presupposition of a Book of Noah was influenced by the idea that language makes a one-to-one fashion to things in the real world<sup>72</sup>. Apart from this inference, Jellinek did not offer proof that the phrase or language corresponds to a material entity that was in existence.

---

<sup>71</sup> Translation by Himmelfarb 1994, pp. 129-130.

<sup>72</sup> See the discussion of the linguistic turn in Clark 2004, pp. 5-6.

This is the issue that is being argued with the linguistic turn as a problem about historians who posit that language refers exactly to what had happened or what the situation was in the past.

Arguments from scholars about this one to one mapping or reference has shown that this can be sometimes misleading<sup>73</sup>, especially in the case of the Book of Noah deduced from a phrase in another document, where we do not have any material remains of it except for the fragments we see in the introductory chapter of the *Book of Asaph*. But Jellinek seems to claim that the real book (?) is known only by or in and through its discursive construction as suggested by the linguistic system of differences. This suggests that Jellinek and others like him assume the adequacy of words to refer to things in the real world, which is a nomenclaturist idea.

Later, other scholars such as Stone and Steiner, just to mention but a few, have noticed and traced references to writings attributed to Noah in other literary texts. They rightfully observed that, although it cannot be found in the list of apocryphal books in the ancient catalogues<sup>74</sup>. It is however mentioned or embedded into several Second Temple narratives. A Book of Noah is mentioned in the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Genesis Apocryphon* from Qumran, and the fragment of the *Aramaic Levi Documents*<sup>75</sup> and the Greek fragment of the Levi document from Mount Athos<sup>76</sup>. Others include Pseudo-Philo and Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae I*<sup>77</sup>.

Some of these references are stated below:

*“And Noah wrote down all things in a book as we instructed him concerning every kind of medicine. Thus, the evil spirits were precluded from (hurting) the sons of Noah. And he gave all that he had written to Shem, his eldest son; for he loved him exceedingly above all his sons.” (Jub. 10:13-14)*<sup>78</sup>.

---

<sup>73</sup> See Clark 2004.

<sup>74</sup> Orlov 2000.

<sup>75</sup> Baxter 2006, p. 180. Per Stone, there is a huge question on the relationship between the Aramaic Levi Document and the Greek fragment of the Levi document. The *Aramaic Levi Document (ALD)* per Stone is mainly known as coming from the Cairo Geniza, the Greek Athos fragments and seven fragmentary Qumran manuscripts on the one hand whereas the Greek *Testament of Levi (TPL)* is from the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. He however posits that the question has been particularly important for two reasons: the antiquity of *ALD* and the disputed nature of *TPL*. But he opines that *ALD* is of the third century BCE and, in any case, one of the oldest of the extra-biblical Pseudepigrapha from Qumran or elsewhere. He claims that none would deny that it is one of the sources used by the author/redactor of *TPL* (and, by the way, of *Jubilees*), and presumably, therefore, of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. See Stone 2003.

<sup>76</sup> See Orlov 2000.

<sup>77</sup> See Baxter 2006, p. 180.

<sup>78</sup> See VanderKam 1989, vol. 2, p.60. see also the Book of Jubilees 8:11, 10:13-14, edited by Charles 1913.

“...this is the way I found it written in the book of my ancestors, in the words of Enoch and the words of Noah” (*Jub. 21:10*)<sup>79</sup>.

“the book of the words of Noah.” (*Genesis Apocryphon*)<sup>80</sup>.

“For thus my father Abraham commanded me for thus he found in the writing of the Book of Noah concerning the blood”. (*Aramaic Levi Document Col. 5, line 29*)<sup>81</sup>.

The above passages seem to suggest that a Book of Noah existed, or at least that a conception of a Book of Noah existed in antiquity. These passages and their contexts are examined in chapter four of this project. In addition to the above, some scholars such as Florentino Garcia Martinez<sup>82</sup> postulate that some parts of the so-called Book of Noah were assimilated into some collections such as *I Enoch* and *Jubilees*. Also, that some Qumran documents preserve hints of it. In this vein, it can be hypothesised that in addition to the mention/titles of the non-extant Book of Noah many pieces of materials associated with the early traditions of Noah have survived.

### **The content of the Book of Noah**

A great deal of uncertainty that surrounds the existence of a document called the Book of Noah<sup>83</sup> is present. One issue that escalates the uncertainty about the Book of Noah perhaps might be the fact that the exact content of the Book of Noah has not been comprehensively determined by scholars. Most refer to the story which is incorporated into the introductory chapter of the Jewish medieval medical and magic book called the *Book of Asaph*. Others include descriptions found in the *Genesis Apocryphon* and *I Enoch 106 - 107*. Though, the excerpts that are presented as the Book of Noah such as the *Genesis Apocryphon* tells about the birth of Noah and his instructions on animal sacrifice and healing to his children as found in *Jubilees*. Nothing more is known about any presumed details of the content of the Book of Noah. Moreover, there is no survival of such work among any of the manuscripts discovered at Qumran or elsewhere, from which the content can be determined.

From the above, it appears that as far as we know only the quotation/translation in the introductory part of the Hebrew medical and magical book, the *Book of Asaph* contains a known

---

<sup>79</sup> See VanderKam 1989, vol. 2, p. 123. see also the Book of Jubilees 21:10, edited by Charles 1913

<sup>80</sup> See Steiner 1995, pp. 66-71.

<sup>81</sup> See Greenfield and Stone 1985, p. 465, and Stone 2006, p.6.

<sup>82</sup> See Orlov 2000, Martinez 1992, p. 26

<sup>83</sup> Werman 1999, pp. 171-181 and Baxter 2006, pp. 179.

lengthy paraphrase of what the so-called Book of Noah is. The *Book of Asaph* according to Martha Himmelfarb, the American Professor of Religion, dates to the ninth or tenth century Byzantine Italy<sup>84</sup>. Apart from this, scholars have not found any manuscripts that contained an extant Book of Noah. Even the translation appears to be a paraphrase of a larger passage from some unknown source. Jellinek claimed from this paraphrase that a Book of Noah existed because of the phrase in the passage that says, “this is the book of remedies that the ancient sages copied from *the book of Shem*.” Per Jellinek, the phrase “the book of Shem” presupposed that there is an actual literary entity called the Book of Noah.

Wayne Baxter, an Associate Professor of New Testament and Greek at Heritage College and Seminary in Cambridge, Ontario has suggested three methods in which the content of the Book of Noah can be determined<sup>85</sup>. He spells out these methods as follows: application of the principles of what he refers to as “Gospel criticism” to the literary entity, analysing of the literary context of each explicit reference to the writings of Noah, and detection of redaction and extraction to get at the original Noah source.

Baxter posits that there is a parallel nature of the primary material as well as common methodological goal between the Gospels and the Pseudepigrapha, such as the Book of Noah. He, therefore, envisages that applying the Gospel criticism to this entity can help determine the content of it<sup>86</sup>. Per him just as the Gospels contained varied oral traditions about Jesus so does the Book of Noah consist of varied oral traditions about Noah which can be derived from the Noahic narratives of Genesis chapters 5 through 10. Hence, Baxter concluded that both fields involve *source-tradition-text* development.<sup>87</sup> Though he emphatically admits that these sources differ one from the other; the Gospels had oral sayings as sources and the Book of Noah has a written source, Genesis. He posits that the fundamental analogy of the *source-tradition-text* is the same.

Per Baxter, one objective of redaction criticism is to determine how an author shapes his sources to produce the final form of a text. He emphasises that a review of Second Temple Noahic narratives will reveal that the Book of Noah was used as a source for the writing of *Jubilees*

---

<sup>84</sup> Himmelfarb 2015, pp.40

<sup>85</sup> Baxter 2006, pp. 189-194

<sup>86</sup> Baxter 2006, p. 189-190.

<sup>87</sup> Baxter 2006, 189.

and the *Genesis Apocryphon*. He, therefore, suggests that it will be noteworthy to discern editorial redaction if we want to determine the content of the Book of Noah. It is, therefore, necessary to distinguish between the Noah traditions and a Book of Noah in the speculation of a Book of Noah. This is, however, what most scholars fail to do, he affirms.<sup>88</sup>

However, Florentino Garcia Martinez<sup>89</sup> maintains that the Book of Noah was the source of inspiration for all traditions that have no other parallel than *Jubilees*. His proposed framework for the content of the Book of Noah consists of all the various Noahic traditions which are discernible throughout *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, and the *Genesis Apocryphon*. By this assertion, Florentino Garcia Martinez implies that if a narrative either mentions Noah by name or is tied to him thematically, then it relates in some way to Genesis chapters 5 through 10.

On his final take on the Gospel criticism principle, Baxter explained that due to the selectiveness of every author from the sources available to him, not every Noahic narrative could comfortably find a way into a Book of Noah<sup>90</sup>. This is because the author makes a choice from the various sources and could not have possibly incorporated every tradition available to him into the Book of Noah. To confirm his point, he uses the birth of Jesus and stories concerning his ministry were incorporated into the different Gospels in diverse ways based on the author's purpose and audience as an example. He mentioned the quotation in John 20:30 and 21:35<sup>91</sup> to confirm that the authors were selective in the stories they wrote in their books.

In a nutshell, it can be inferred from the above that Baxter proposes that the full content of the Noah book which cannot be known exhaustively, can be determined by inferring from the various literary texts which mention and paraphrases the story of Noah that can be found in the Noahic narratives. Accordingly, in his opinion, every Noahic tradition did not have a literary antecedent, because the authors were selective in the use of the Noahic narratives or sources at their disposal.

---

<sup>88</sup> Baxter 2006, pp. 189-190.

<sup>89</sup> He is a former catholic priest who is now a professor emeritus of Religion and theology at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Martinez 1992, p. 41 see Baxter 2006, p. 190.

<sup>90</sup> Baxter 2006, p. 190.

<sup>91</sup> 'Jesus did many miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book.'



The second method that can be used to determine the content of the Book of Noah per Baxter is the analysis of the literary context of each explicit reference to the writing of Noah<sup>92</sup>. By this method, he implies that we must focus on the explicit references to a Book of Noah in the literary texts. Per him, the possibility of including inessential Noahic traditions decreases, since, these kinds of references explicitly refer to the content of the Book of Noah. He further expatiated his point by using an example from the Hebrew Bible, 1 Kings 14:29. He posits that the author of the Kings in this chapter cites a book called the “Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah”. Meanwhile, this book is lost, and its exact content unknown. He, however, argues that based on the literary context of the explicit mention of the “Annals of the kings of Judah” in this chapter of the book of Kings in the Hebrew Bible, the content of the so-called book would have included the acts of King Rehoboam who is mentioned in here.

This method seems to be a little shaky, because, though we are aware that a mere examination of the Biblical books discloses that their authors depended on sources that are no longer extant,<sup>93</sup> we have little knowledge about the sources if they were actual documents or they were just literary devices used by the authors to achieve their aim<sup>94</sup>. It is possible that these mentions are hints to us that some books or sources have been lost. But we cannot base our assumptions on these hints to determine their content because they might have been imaginary documents or literary devices, as some scholars may argue.

The third method as per Baxter in examining the content of the Book of Noah is the detection and extraction of redaction<sup>95</sup>. He opines that to retrieve the original source of the Book of Noah, we must resort to redaction criticism. According to him, since the Book of Noah has been used by the authors of *Jubilees* and *Genesis Apocryphon* as source document, it will be appropriate to employ redaction criticism to determine the content of the Book of Noah, since each author based on his own theological plans, would have shaped the Book of Noah consonant with his respective plans.

He refers to four explicit references to Noahic writings to justify his claim. To begin with, he cites *Jubilees* 10:13 which states that “And Noah wrote everything in a book just as we taught

---

<sup>92</sup> Baxter 2006, p. 190.

<sup>93</sup> Charlesworth 1983, p. xxi.

<sup>94</sup> Schiffman 2004, p. 429.

<sup>95</sup> Baxter 2006, p. 190-191

him according to every kind of healing.” He mentioned that one must study *Jubilees* 10:1-14, to determine what the book entails. The author of *Jubilees* in this section alludes how the descendants of Noah were afflicted by demons; seducing them into sin, blinding and killing others. Noah prayed to God to bind the demons to the place of judgment and protect his descendants after they have entreated him. God then sent his angels to bind nine-tenth of the demons and to teach Noah how to heal the sicknesses inflicted on his descendants, through herbs. He also taught them about demonic seductions. Noah is said to have recorded all these in a book.

Baxter explained that some of the details of the elements described in this section of *Jubilees* can be attributed to redaction such as chronology, the name of the chief demon and figure of nine-tenth. However, per the literary context, the subject matter of Noah’s book would include an account of demonic seductions, demonically induced sicknesses, and herbal remedies to affect the healing of these afflictions.

Another explicit reference to a Book of Noah according to Baxter can be found in *Jubilees* 21:10-11. Here it is stated that “Because thus I have found written in the books of my fathers and in the words of Enoch and in the words of Noah.” According to Baxter, ‘Thus’ in verse 10 refers to the ordinances in chapter 21:5-10. In here is Abraham’s testament to Isaac, where he exhorts him to keep the commandments of God, that is, not to follow graven images, not to consume the blood of animals and how to offer burnt offerings that are pleasing to God. Baxter posits that the meticulous guidelines for the burnt offerings and the Levitical prohibition against graven images could be attributed to redaction, given the priestly, halakhic emphasis of *Jubilees*, and therefore should be extracted. Against this backdrop, he opines that the subject matter of the Book of Noah per this literary context will include a prohibition against blood and description of Noah’s sacrificial burnt offerings.

Again, Baxter gives the citation in the *Aramaic Levi Document* as another explicit reference to the Book of Noah. In here it is stated, “that is what my father Abraham ordered me because that is what he found.” Baxter holds that Isaac is here instructing Levi in the laws pertaining to the priesthood. This text he says is like its parallel in *Jubilees* 21:10-11 and it offers detailed guidelines for different types of offerings. This passage seems to focus more on priestly, ritual purity which, given *Aramaic Levi* strong halakhic theme, should be attributed to redaction.

Therefore, per Baxter, the content of the Book of Noah according to this fragment will include a description of Noah's sacrifices to God.

Finally, Baxter mentions the citation in the *Genesis Apocryphon* column 5, line 29, (1QapGen V.29) as the fourth explicit reference to Noahic writing. The quotation is 'The writing of the words of Noah...'. He postulates that Richard Steiner has argued convincingly that the word in this quotation is the heading for what follows in the text. According to Baxter, although the content of these columns has been a mystery for decades owing to their fragmented condition. The use of infrared technology has been used to decipher its content.

He then goes on to explain what follows in the subsequent columns and lines after the heading "the writing of the words of Noah" in columns 6 through 17. He states that column 6 line 1 through 10 is a description of the virtues of Noah and his family. Then columns 6, line 11 through column 7, line 23 state sin of the Watchers which led to the Flood and the promise of Noah's deliverance. Column 10, line 13 through 18 accordingly gives a detailed account of the Flood highlighting Noah's atonement. The survey of the land's lushness is stated in column 9, lines 1 through 15.

In columns 11, line 16 through column 12, line 7, God's covenant with Noah and the prohibition against blood is stated. Further, columns 12, lines 10 through 13 is outlined the genealogy of Noah's sons. Noah's planting and drinking from his vineyard are also described in column 10, lines 14 through 35. In column 13, lines 1 through column 15, line 22 is an elaborate vision of an olive tree and cedar and its interpretation. Finally, columns 16, line 1 through column 17, line 19 is the division of the land among his children.

Baxter acknowledges that editorial redaction of the *Genesis Apocryphon* is difficult due to its fragmentary condition. He, however, posits that the parallelism between Noah in columns 6 through 17 and Abram in columns 19 through 22 seems to suggest excluding the elements in the text that represent a double redaction of the biblical narrative. By this he implies, that those elements in the account of the *Genesis Apocryphon* of Noah and Abram that have no counterpart in the biblical text. He, therefore, explains that an exclusion be made for the olive tree-cedar vision and its interpretation between columns 6 and 17. Since these are parallel to Abram's dream and interpretation of a cedar and palm tree in columns 19, lines 14 through 20.

With regards to the above four explicit references to the writings of Noah, Baxter posits that the baseline content of the Book of Noah would be: an account of Noah's virtue and his family, a statement of the Watchers' sins which led to the Flood, an account of the Flood and Noah's deliverance, his sacrificial offerings of atonement and God's subsequent covenant with him, the prohibition against blood, an account of his planting and drinking from his vineyard, a genealogy of his descendants and their allotment of the land, and an account of demonic seductions, illnesses and their concomitant herbal remedies.

He rejects the conclusion of Professor emeritus Michael Stone who suggested that 'a Book or Books of Noah may have existed, and it might as well have dealt with a minimum of three topics, namely, the birth of Noah ("Book of the Words of Noah"). Then the sacrificial instructions ("Book of Noah Concerning the Blood"). Finally, medicine and demonology ("Book of Noah")'. Baxter asserts that the use of the term 'book' by Stone is misleading. Since it may assume too much. Was the Book Noah so systematically arranged? Was it long enough to have consisted of these 'books'? Baxter asks.

He again pointed out that Florentino García Martínez also understood the story of Noah's unusual birth features which is explicitly described in *I Enoch*. 106, to belong to the Book of Noah. Baxter, however, distinguished his study from these two scholars by stating that his study suggests that the stories were generally part of the diverse Noahic traditions but not the Book of Noah specifically. He gives two reasons to affirm his claim. Firstly, he postulates that the story lies outside of the literary context of the heading, 'the writing of the words of Noah' in column 5, line 29 of the *Genesis Apocryphon*. Secondly, the dissimilar account of Noah's bizarre birth features in 4Q534-36 more precisely attests to the diversity of Noahic traditions surrounding his birth, not to the inclusion of such an account in the Book of Noah.

Baxter finally stated that in the speculation of the baseline content of the Book of Noah, the claim is only for the basic content, not the complete subject matter or even the specific details of the basic content. He posits that his claim for the baseline content does not rule out the possibility of other traditions being included in the Book of Noah. He, however, mentioned the problem consists in knowing which traditions to include. However, instead of rejecting the existence of the Book of Noah due to a mere contradiction in the Noahic traditions, or for an assumption that every tradition should be included in the Book of Noah, or arbitrarily choosing

one tradition over another. His study draws upon aspects of Gospel Criticism, puts forward the criteria for determining which traditions comprised (at least in part) the Book of Noah.

The argument Baxter is making here and the methods he proposes for determining the content of the so-called Book of Noah is very interesting. It would even have been more interesting provided we have the remains of the material entity of the postulated Book of Noah just as the books and traditions he argues about which he claims used the methods he proposes to derive their content. The fact remains that neither the sources of the Gospels or the Book of Noah survived. So, far we have no entity which can be materially presented as the Book of Noah or the source for such.

Another issue that Baxter's argument raises is that it presents the whole issue around the so-called Book of Noah as if the content is the only goal. Meanwhile, there are other issues that raise questions about the postulated book. He does not state the function or reasons for referring to book. Hence, as good as his arguments maybe they do not convincingly prove the existence or exact content of a postulated Book of Noah.

### **How can we describe the Book of Noah?**

From the above, it can be easily realized that earlier researches have not come up with a method of fruitfully exploring the materials that we actually have. Description of the literary text or manuscripts as presented above, demonstrate that there are several ways in which the literary entity is described. These descriptions, however, have several ambiguities, which I imagine further complicates the issue. Among these problems are the different titles found in the manuscripts that are used to refer to the literary entity called the Book of Noah. Translations and quotations about the so-called mention of the writing of Noah are described in the manuscripts severally as: "the Words of the Book of Noah", or just "the words of Noah" or "copy of the book of the words of Noah."<sup>96</sup> These translations of the title and quotations about the so-called reference to a Book of Noah give several meanings. It is not clear whether they point to the same entity.

It is unclear what they refer to. Whether they mean "Words from the Book of Noah" or "a book that contains the words of Noah in it" or "a copy that has been made from the book that contains

---

<sup>96</sup> Steiner 1995, pp. 65-68.

the words of Noah” is unclear. Such ambiguities in the translation of the texts that seem to suggest that Noah wrote a book or there was a Book of Noah in circulation or in the ancient works are not so clear and it, therefore, makes it very challenging to refer to this entity as a book.

Again, other ambiguities include the narratives about the birth of Noah. Some accounts place the narrative in the mouth of Noah’s grandfather, Enoch, whereas others put it in the third person pronoun or in the mouth of Lamech, Noah’s father. It is therefore unclear who is telling the story. Hence, the quotations that are thought to suggest that the words might come from a Noah book is uncertain. The authorship of the so-called book is not clearly defined by the quotations that are used to argue for the Noah book.

Although Baxter gives a suggestion on how to determine the content of the Book of Noah. We do not know the content of the book. Many details are not available to content. Hence, the mentions of a so-called Book of Noah have a lot of ambiguity which makes it even harder to pin it down and call the translated quotation in the *Book of Asaph* as a book. It is, therefore, necessary to probe into these issues to find the best description for this translation. When these questions are answered then we can, therefore, know where to place the so-called Book of Noah. Until then any designation can best be accepted as an assumption.

This issue raises the question of what is a book? Or what is the understanding of a book in ancient Jewish literature culture? How do these relate to our understanding of a book today? Chapter three probes into these questions.

At this point, we deliberate a little on the Book of Noah. Having tried to determine the content of the Book of Noah, it seems appropriate to give a description of what it might be. It is not, however, an easy task to explain or describe as we have already pointed out above that the exact content of the book is unknown. It must be noted that what I am describing here is not posit that such entity existed. Rather the contents of the circulating traditions of Noah and not a book. I mean to say the content is an assumption of what ancient Jews would have associated with an imagined book entity, even though it may not have existed as an extant book.

Nonetheless, from the proposed description of the assumed content of the Book of Noah as suggested by Baxter and the narrative in the *Book of Asaph*, a working description or definition

is employed below to give a general idea to the reader of this paper. Since it has been discovered that the so-called Book of Noah is found in the introduction chapter of the Jewish medical book called the *Book of Asaph*. It somewhat presupposes that it could have been a medical or magical document in Jewish literature. This is clearly shown in how and where the document into which this so-called Book of Noah was incorporated into laid emphasis. For instance, the *Book of Asaph* placed more emphasis and details on the remedies given from the postulated Book of Noah. This is because it serves as a medical book. Whereas the book of *Jubilees* did not since *Jubilees* appears to be a spiritual book<sup>97</sup>.

Thus, “the Book of Noah” so-called can be said to be a Jewish medical and magical book that is attributed to the Biblical hero Noah, the survivor of the flood<sup>98</sup>. According to Himmelfarb, although, several of such medical and magical works existed, the narrative genre and association to the Biblical hero, Noah, seems to distinguish it from the others<sup>99</sup>. She also stated that its similarity to a passage in the *Book of Jubilees* is very remarkable. This according to her provides the ground to believe that it is of greater antiquity than the remaining works in the *Book of Asaph*<sup>100</sup>.

It appears that the importance of this work is proven by its inclusion in the genre of medical and magical collections. Since as a medical book, it attempts to explain when or how diseases originated and as a magical book it tries to give remedies to the diseases. It is alleged that the children of Noah came and complained of their sufferings to Noah. It was then discovered that because of their sins, some evil spirits were sent to afflict them. However, upon Noah’s prayers, the angel Raphael was sent to give Noah the remedies for their ailments<sup>101</sup>. From this one can easily deduce that the idea that diseases and afflictions are caused by evil spirits as a result of sins is ancient.

---

<sup>97</sup> See Himmelfarb 1994, pp. 130-136.

<sup>98</sup> This idea is deduced from Himmelfarb 2015, pp.40

<sup>99</sup> Himmelfarb 2015, pp.40

<sup>100</sup> Himmelfarb 2015, pp.40

<sup>101</sup> To read the story see Himmelfarb 1994, pp. 129-130 for more details from her translation and Himmelfarb 2015 pp. 40-46 in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures. Volume One*, written by Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov.

### **The Book of Noah: “lost” or “real”, or a mere “title” or a shorter section of a larger work**

In recent years there has been a substantial scholarly discussion about whether the Book of Noah existed or not. A section in chapter one states some reasons why the Book of Noah is under much discussion in recent scholarly debates. This section examines the issue of whether the Book of Noah is a “lost” or “real” book or whether it was only known by title as it seems to suggest from the translation from the *Genesis Apocryphon*, mentioned above. This section is meant to give some little background to the discussions in chapter four.

Titles, however, have manifold functions: they can mean potential shorter entities, or multiple entities or potential multiple contents. Perhaps it is just a shorter section of a larger work, that is, it is the circulation of a smaller entity. If we can consider the account in the *Book of Asaph* as a paraphrase of a larger passage. This shows the complexity in describing this entity. Furthermore, it has been established above that it is not clear if all the references from antiquity point to the same entity.

One most important question that remains a puzzle to scholars is whether this book really existed or not? This will be considered soon in some paragraphs below. However, another thing is if this book really existed and had such importance or function as stipulated in chapter four, why is it no longer extant? Did the book vanish out of history just as any other book that has become extinct or that someone for some unknown reason intentionally saw to it that it should no longer be transmitted? This suggestion seems plausible. Perhaps one can be allowed to say that the loss of the postulated Book of Noah was deliberate since the Book of Noah seems to portray that all nations including Israel have the same ancestor. A view which is not highly accepted or welcomed by some Jews,<sup>102</sup> especially of the Second Temple period. Maybe the disappearance of the book if it existed echoes the changes in the torrents of Judaism in the fourth and third centuries.

Had it not been for the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls which have now made it clear that there were references made to the Book of Noah or well-known traditions about Noah. I imagine that the assertion of the renowned medievalist scholar Montague Rhodes James, that the Book of Noah never existed, would have been an excellent argument for the non-existence of the

---

<sup>102</sup> See Peters 2008, pp. 1-6.



Book of Noah. Since, according to him, the Book of Noah seems to have been mentioned nowhere by any ancient writer,<sup>103</sup> neither did any literature made references to it<sup>104</sup>. He, however, acknowledges that pieces of it have been fused into ancient literary texts such as the *Book of Enoch* and the *Book of Jubilees*.

Conversely, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has rendered this assertion less certain. This, therefore, implies that our understanding now is shaped by what we know now. Perhaps, based on this it may be right to postulate that we constantly do not know what we do not know; and our perspectives are shaped by what we think we know and are not neutral. But does this suggest we are not supposed to make investigations to find out things we do not know? Or make assumptions about our findings? No, that is not so. But rather it suggests that we must be careful not to put a period on what we know based on our current perspectives. Since later research may prove otherwise as we can see in the case of James' assertion above.

Hence, we must take into consideration our theories and perspective we propose in a given situation or concerning a given matter. We can, therefore, observe that different scholars have understood or have had different perspectives on the same matter or subject from time to time. The example of Professor Montague Rhodes James about the Book of Noah can testify of one of the key moments in the search for an assumed lost material. We would look at different opinions that also forms part of the key moments in the research for the Book of Noah. How had different scholars understood it from time to time chronologically? That is to say, an investigation will be made at this juncture to find out what has shaped the results of scholars in other periods. This would be viewed with respect to the periods before and after the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

If one should assume that the assertion of Professor James that the Book of Noah never existed is true, then some critical questions that may be asked is, is one supposed to believe that it existed as an oral tradition which never found itself written down for future generations? Perhaps, this assertion also could have been true if the entity referred to as the Book of Noah was held to be so sacred<sup>105</sup> that no-one could access it easily when it was in circulation. Or it

---

<sup>103</sup> James 1920, 11.

<sup>104</sup> James 1920, p. 12

<sup>105</sup> Although, some works that were not canonized in the Hebrew Scriptures were still held to be sacred or possess divine revelation and were therefore accorded some honour just as those that were canonized. See Charlesworth 1983, pp. xxiii-xxiv

circulated only as an oral tradition. This idea somewhat is debatable since the period in which the entity was said to have existed fall into the same time period as other materials we have today. Perhaps the narrations were known to the later writers as fabrication which were only attributed to the legendary Noah of the Bible.

It is commonly believed that the survival of a work from antiquity is dependent on whether it was circulated or transmitted by Christians. Those works which have not survived or are not well known to us is because they were not transmitted by Christians<sup>106</sup>. The Book of Noah apparently was not transmitted by Christians. This might be a reason why it did not survive to this day.

Perhaps, this postulated Book of Noah, if it existed at all, did not contain anything that was new to the Christians at the time, from what they have known before. As noted with many literary entities of such nature like the Book of Noah, it is believed that they retell stories that have already been told somewhere else, like the Bible or the Apocrypha. Schiffman postulates that books of such nature might have been lost because they might have been overpowered by the books that eventually came to find themselves in the canon of the Hebrew Bible and because of the change of the writing<sup>107</sup>. Hence, per Schiffman canonization contributed to the loss of the so-called Book of Noah, because it did not find its way into the Bible.

Schiffman and other scholars have posited that an examination of the Biblical books reveals that their authors depended on sources that are no longer extant<sup>108</sup>. These sources according to Schiffman and other scholars, might have never existed but the authors of the biblical books used them as literary devices. The authors might have cited them to serve their need. According to Schiffman<sup>109</sup>, the rabbis, for example, perceived the “Book of Jashar” as referring to an existing book of the Bible, but they imagine that no book of such title ever existed. In this vein, it can be imagined that the Book of Noah just like the books mentioned in the Bible as sources, never existed but was just a literary device book.

---

<sup>106</sup> Kraft 1994, pp. 55-86.

<sup>107</sup> Schiffman 2004, pp. 430.

<sup>108</sup> Schiffman 2004, p. 430 and Charlesworth 1983, p. xxi

<sup>109</sup> Schiffman 2004, p. 430.

This can perhaps suggest that the authors and compiler of the literary texts in which the title Book of Noah or the paraphrased text of the Noah story appears might have used it to serve their need as Schiffman suggests <sup>110</sup>, such as a source of authority and carriers of divine revelation and also vehicles that enhanced the transmission of traditions from the patriarchs to later generations. These assumptions are plausible however, we cannot of a fact say that it was so in the case of the postulated Book of Noah. Also, since, this shows that our knowledge now is based on the things we do know now. Should we claim that the book never existed, like Professor James, perhaps further research might reveal otherwise.

### **The Book of Noah as a potential source document**

We will examine some of the key moments in the study of the alleged Book of Noah. This section examines the claim that the postulated Book of Noah has been used as a source document for two different Jewish literature in ways that seems to have served the need of the authors or the purposes of the literary text. Martha Himmelfarb, in one of her earliest articles on this subject, “Some Echoes of Jubilees in Medieval Hebrew Literature”, posits that this Book of Noah was a source used by the *Book of Jubilees*<sup>111</sup>. In this regard, Himmelfarb seems to be of the same opinion as to the claims of Professor R.H. Charles concerning the Book of Noah.

Professor Charles earlier postulated that the passage (this is the passage claimed to have been from the Book of Noah, or so far known as or to be contained in the Book of Noah) in the opening chapter of the *Book of Asaph*, stood very close to *Jubilees*' account of the revelation of Noah of the remedies to heal his offspring from the ills caused by demons. Charles formerly suggested that the passage in the *Book of Asaph* was based partly on the *Book of Jubilees*. He, however, suggested that the *Book of Asaph* preserved the Hebrew form of the Book of Noah which was taken over by *Jubilees*.

According to Himmelfarb, Charles inferred his suggestion about the existence of the Book of Noah from the passages in *Jubilees* and the *Enochic* corpus. She pointed out that the Book of Noah did not survive in any language neither was it stated in the canon lists. According to Himmelfarb, this evidence that the book was not stated in the canon lists, suggests that the Book of Noah did not widely circulate among Christians. This assertion seems to relate to some

---

<sup>110</sup> Schiffman 2004, pp. 430

<sup>111</sup> Himmelfarb 1994, pp. 127

suggestions made above that the book might have existed. But perhaps because it was held to be sacred or that it was known among the later writers as fabrications. Hence, they did not encourage its circulation. Another plausible suggestion could be that the writers at the time were focused on some other matters they imagined was more important to them and did not focus on this book.

Nonetheless, it can be observed that Charles' suggestions seem to have been made before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Himmelfarb has pointed out that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has provided evidence for the circulation of the traditions of Noah. She, however, mentioned that there are different existing materials about Noah, and this reflects more than one Noahic work<sup>112</sup>. Again, to point out that the Book of Noah was known in ancient times she mentioned that the passage from the *Jubilees* about Noah's medical revelation was known to the Byzantine chronicler and ecclesiastic Syncellus<sup>113</sup>. However, she noted that Syncellus made references to the story about Noah as an example of the unreliability of Apocrypha. This seems to coincide with a suggestion made above that perhaps the story was known to ancient writers as fabrications or fictitious.

It can be observed from a reading of Himmelfarb's article that her hypothesis is like the opinion of Professor Charles. In her own words, Himmelfarb said,

“But even if the passage from *Jubilees* was available in the Byzantine world, I believe that Charles was correct in his later view that the *Book of Asaph* drew not on the *Jubilees* but on the Noah book *Jubilees* used”<sup>114</sup>.

The above statement seems to imply that both Charles and Himmelfarb assume that there was a material entity called the Book of Noah or a Noah book, which the *Book of Asaph* and the *Jubilees* used as their source. Hence, the Book of Noah existed and was used as a source for *Jubilees*. In their thinking, passages in each book were copied from the same source and that source is the Book of Noah. To justify her stance, Himmelfarb mentioned that the idea of a

---

<sup>112</sup> Himmelfarb 1994, pp. 127-128

<sup>113</sup> Syncellus is the Latinised name of the Greek name Synkellos. He was known as George Synkellos who died in A.D 810. He was a Byzantine chronicler and ecclesiastic. He lived many years in Palestine as a monk, before coming to Constantinople. He was appointed synkellos to Tarasius that is patriarch of Constantinople. For more information see Treadgold (W.) 2013 George Syncellus and Theophanes Confessor. In: *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, (pp. 38-77).

<sup>114</sup> Himmelfarb 1994, pp. 128

medieval Jewish work that portrays knowledge of a lost ancient text is not exceptional. She mentions some examples of such works to confirm her assertion<sup>115</sup>. She then goes ahead to prove how the *Book of Asaph* and *Jubilees* used the lost work of Noah as their source. Himmelfarb postulates that the stories in both works are similar and share several details. Nevertheless, there are some important differences between the two works. These differences according to Himmelfarb can be explained by the different goals of the two works<sup>116</sup>.

Thus, from this understanding, Himmelfarb seems to allude that like the Q-source<sup>117</sup> proposed by many scholars for the Gospels (Synoptic) the authors of the two collections seem to have taken what they needed and left-out what they did not need. Also, their point of emphasis or elaboration was different due to the kind of audience or type of work they intended to produce. Hence, copying from the common source was not wholesale copying. So, an explanation of the differences and similarities between the two extant collections about the medical revelation given to Noah recorded in the book attributed to him. For instance, Himmelfarb observed that the *Book of Asaph* placed more emphasises and details on the remedies given to Noah because it serves as a medical book, whereas *Jubilees* which is more concerned about spiritual matters does not. Hence, it appears that the compiler of the *Book of Asaph* emphasises the medical aspects of the story in the source to make it a seemly introduction to his work. But the *Jubilees* takes the medical aspects lightly with its picture of spiritual afflictions caused by the evil spirits<sup>118</sup>.

From the above discussion, it can be observed that Himmelfarb and Florentino Garcia Martinez holds the same opinion about the Book of Noah. He opines that 1QapGen column 1-17 contains a summary of the lost Book of Noah which is independent of *Jubilees*<sup>119</sup>. In this regard, Garcia Florentino Martinez seems to imply that the *Genesis Apocryphon* is independent of *Jubilees* and, for that matter, the Noah material contained in the *Genesis Apocryphon* does not draw from the Book of *Jubilees*. From this perspective, Florentino Garcia Martinez and Himmelfarb appears to say that there was a literary entity separate from *Jubilees* and the *Genesis Apocryphon* and perhaps this entity was their source.

---

<sup>115</sup> To see more of such works read from Himmelfarb 1994, pp. 128.

<sup>116</sup> Himmelfarb 1994, pp. 130

<sup>117</sup> Baxter 2006 seems to use this same method in his article to analyse the debates about the Book of Noah. His article applied insights from Gospel Criticism to determine the baseline content of the Book of Noah.

<sup>118</sup> For more of these comparisons see Himmelfarb 1994, pp. 130-136

<sup>119</sup> Garcia 1992, pp.40.

Nonetheless, it must be mentioned here that some scholars such as Steiner and Schiffman do not agree to the above assertion of Garcia Florentino Martinez and Himmelfarb. They have therefore suggested another way of understanding this. For instance, Steiner postulates that the phrase “the words of Noah”, on the Genesis Apocryphon does not imply that is a reference to a book, let alone for that entity to be a source to another ancient text. For him, the phrase indicates a title or heading or better still an introductory lemma of a subsection of a book. In this case, Steiner would not agree to the assumption that a Book of Noah was a source to another ancient text.

Lawrence H. Schiffman also argues in a similar manner in his article: “Pseudepigrapha in the Pseudepigrapha: Mythical Books in Second Temple Literature”. Per Schiffman, the phrase “Book of Noah” in the *Genesis Apocryphon* is not an indication of a real book that the author is referring to or citing from. But rather it is just a heading or title the author gave to that portion or section of his work. According to him, the phrase is just a literary device or in his own language, it is an earlier imaginary work or pseudepigraphal book that appeared or was mentioned in another pseudepigraphal book<sup>120</sup>. Hence, the phrase “Book of Noah” does not suggest a real book that the author is mentioning as a source as Himmelfarb and Charles seem to claim.

At this point one can observe that unlike Himmelfarb and Charles who believe that there was a material entity called the Book of Noah which was used by the compiler of the Book of *Asaph* and *Jubilees*, Schiffman and Steiner assert that there was nothing of that sort but rather an introductory title of the section of the entity in which it appears. All these scholars in their own perspective have some wonderful observations that cannot be easily overlooked. This makes it even more interesting for one to make a straight forward stance on the issue. Since the arguments of the above scholars though debatable in every way yet are plausible. In the next few paragraphs, we would see what some others have to say about this book.

In a nutshell, it can be observed from the above presuppositions, that now we are no longer in suspense over whether a Book of Noah was mentioned by ancient writers or not like Professor Montague Rhodes James in 1920. However, the findings that a Book of Noah has been

---

<sup>120</sup> Schiffman 2004, pp. 433

mentioned in ancient manuscripts did not solve the dilemma of whether there was a material entity called the Book of Noah or not. This is where scholars diverge in their views. As discussed above some only consider it to be a literary device whereas some assume it was a real book that was used as a source material. The issue that makes the debate very interesting is that apart from the references to the Book of Noah or mention of it by ancient literature, none knows the exact content of the book as discussed above. All we know as at now is the quotations in the materials in which they appear and the above translation by Himmelfarb.

As we move to chapter three, we discuss some questions that this study raises such as: what is a book? Or what is the understanding of a book in ancient Jewish literature culture? And, how does this relate to our understanding today? How can the methodological issues be approached from the perspective of language analysis? In chapter four we would examine the three scholarly debates and further discuss the methodological and theoretical issues that arise from the way scholars designate the entity Book of Noah in their scholarly debate.

## Chapter 3

### What is a book?

#### Introduction

In chapter two we discussed what is the alleged Book of Noah and what its known content is or can be derived with, focusing on Baxter's proposition. We discovered that previous researches have not been able to fruitfully determine the content of the Book of Noah. Neither has it been proven whether it was real or lost or just an entity known by title and some scant paraphrases of its contents. Since this entity has been designated as a "book", we examine in this chapter the methodological criteria used by some scholars to designate it as a "book". Is it worth and relevant describing this entity as a "book"? It, therefore, attempts to answer the questions, what is a book? Or what is the understanding of a "book" in ancient Jewish literature culture? How do these understandings relate to our understanding of a "book" today? Observations made from these discussions will help us to either refute the designation of the entity as a "book" or give a better description that it befits or maintain the designation. This chapter also elaborates on the perspective of the Linguistic turn in the study of language. This will help us to consider the use of language as a descriptive tool and not as a true representation of what is described. Perhaps the designation of understanding the reference to a Book of Noah in the ancient text is a problem of language. In the paragraphs below, we examine what the term "book" denotes and how it was understood in Jewish literature.

#### What is a book?

The contemporary term "book" has a compound meaning. This implies it has more than one meaning. For example, a bound set of blank sheets for writing in is a book. Below are two different notions/models of "books" that have decided contemporary imaginations of "books". First, the imagined ideal of a "book" as a written or printed work consisting of pages fastened or stitched together along one side and bound in covers will be used as a working definition. That is, a "book", is text written with ink on paper sheets that are bound into a codex format. Then, "book" as in the sense that the biblical book is modelled as discrete literary work and a lay out unit. These two models are used as working definitions of "books" in this project. In the following paragraphs I show how these models have decided contemporary imaginations of "books".



It has been proposed that all forms of written materials are “books” of one sort or another. Hence, it is held that the concept “book” incorporates the following early forms: clay tablets, Egyptian writing on walls, Babylonian stelae, handwritten scrolls of ink on parchment, like the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) used in Jewish religious services, and handwritten codex books of ink on papyrus, vellum and later paper<sup>121</sup>. It must be acknowledged that even this definition is a modern construct or description of what a “book” is. It is a modern protestant or western preference for the “book”. But Reed describes the pre-print culture as a culture that employs a variety of technologies of memorization<sup>122</sup>.

I discovered from my readings that several ways exist of understanding a “book”. The “book” throughout its history has never remained the same. It has several connotations. To say it better, the “book” is understood differently and appears in different forms at a different point in time and diverse cultures. Whichever way it may be understood or how the “book” may become “books” has to do with the process or medium of communication<sup>123</sup>.

I imagine Professor Annette Yoshiko Reed<sup>124</sup> agrees to this assertion when she noted that our modern-day understanding of what a “book” is, differs from how Jewish literary culture was like in antiquity. Her article entitled “Fallen Angels and the Afterlives of Enochic Traditions in Early Islam”, seems to show that there are various ways of transforming and preserving information in the past which our modern way of thinking might not consider. She warns about how Western scholars envisage or read about the past. She pointed out that there is the tendency of Protestant or European scholars to limit their method of evidence for history to the transmission of religious traditions as a textual domain. This is the way they think about the text.

But Reed posits that it is important that we realise how complex the nature of ancient texts are rather than just looking for their survival in written forms in early and known forms. Reed asserts that the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has made scholars aware that the premodern Jewish and Christian encounter with the biblical past involves more than only the text of what

---

<sup>121</sup> What is a book? <https://www.physics.utoronto.ca/people/homepages/logan/ch9-what-is-a-book.pdf>

<sup>122</sup> See Reed 2005.

<sup>123</sup> This is deduced from Darnton 1982, p. 65

<sup>124</sup> Reed 2015. She is an Associate Professor in the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies and the Program in Religious Studies at New York University. Her research spans Second Temple Judaism, early Christianity, and Jewish/Christian relations in Late Antiquity.

comes down to us as the Tanakh<sup>125</sup>. It encompasses a fluidly dynamic and surprisingly stable complex of motifs and traditions, circulating in oral and written forms.

I, therefore, understood from Reed that there will be a misconception if not an error, about what the textual domain of antiquity was if we only base our arguments or explanations on what has come to us in the form of written accounts. Because it is clearly evident that there has been and still cultures exist in the world which preserve materials or traditions such as religion, science, philosophy, politics and so on in oral traditions such as proverbs, arts, memory-making, symbols, folklores dance and songs or music. An example is the African traditional culture and even some Eastern cultures as Reeds has alluded. In most African countries, ancestors have passed down information that has no written text to the next generation that has been accurate and still stands. This unwritten texted information is held as textual domain and is still transferred to others.

An understanding of Mroczek seems to portray that “books” are not only the material, static, and bounded entities that the modern or Protestant understanding may seem to speculate or portray. In fact, per Mroczek “books” in antiquity may also be imaginal. She began the introductory chapter of her PhD thesis with a quote that states that “Far more books are imagined than ever written”<sup>126</sup>. She attempted to prove this by her case study of what is known as the “Great Psalm Scrolls” which is one of the material entities that were discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls. She borrowed the term “imaginal” from the French Philosopher and Islamic scholar H. Corbin. For Corbin, “imaginal” is a concept which principally encompasses the idea of the contemplative/mystical experience and depictions of other worlds in Arabic and Persian traditions. Mroczek, however, used the term to refer to the world of the early Jewish religious imagination, with its culturally specific metaphors, symbols, foundational narratives, and modes of organizing knowledge.

I imagine that Mroczek attempted to explain that the term “books” in Jewish antiquity could just be metaphors. This understanding can also be deduced from her monograph entitled *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*. In this monograph, she seems to assert that certain mentions of “books” in the texts that have come to us from Jewish antiquity in the lists of

---

<sup>125</sup> Reeds 2015, pp. 3-5, 7, 16-17.

<sup>126</sup> Howsam 2006, cited in Mroczek 2012, p. 1.

patriarch records and so forth but without their presence or which material entity could not be found might best be described as “imagined books” which never did exist.

Mroczek examines book culture in ancient Judaism but posits that book culture is a misnomer. This is because in her point of view, the book as we know it did not exist in the scribal scroll culture of antiquity. Hence, our modern book culture, shaped by the history of the biblical canon, the print codex, and scholarly practices of cataloguing and editing, has distorted our understanding of the texts and prompted us to ask anachronistic questions about their nature and status in ancient times,<sup>127</sup> says Mroczek.

It appears that when we mention the “book” in recent times our minds seem to be directed only to a certain entity which has a unified text, authorial and physical presence. According to Mroczek, this ideology seems to have been formed by the history of the codex and print as well as the bookish habit of inventorying titles, categorizing works and attributing texts to give order to our written works<sup>128</sup>. This is how we, therefore, imagine “books” to be in antiquity and our approach to them is somewhat shaped by such perceptions.

Mroczek has also observed that the domination of the text at the expense of other ways of configuring the textual landscape is related to, and reinforced by, the dominance of the bibliographic. She explained that the concepts and principles by which texts are identified, delimited and classified in modern scholarly practice do not fit ancient ways of conceptualizing literary production. She observed that the concerns of scholarly bibliography establishing date, provenance, author, and authoritative text drive the organization and study of Jewish materials. She acknowledged that “book” as a concept emerged from a specific history of the transmission of text in the modern West and the very specific way in which we have become accustomed to accessing, reading, and organizing writing<sup>129</sup>.

The observations of Reed and Mroczek above are critical in the current project because they will help me in several ways. First, to understand how scholars such as Jellinek read about the past and why they describe works in antiquity as “books”. This will help me understand what was going on in the mind of the scholars when they described the mention of the writing of

---

<sup>127</sup> Mroczek 2012, p. 2.

<sup>128</sup> Mroczek 2012, p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> Mroczek 2016, p. 10.

Noah in the *Book of Asaph* as a “book”. Second, their observations will help me understand what the Jewish literary culture in antiquity looks like. Thereby, examining whether the description of the reference to a Noah writing in the ancient writings as a “book”, is so in the sense that modern and Protestant scholars seem to describe “books”. Or it should be designated as an “imagined book”. Third, this will help me discuss the methodological issues that the descriptions of entities such as the book Noah raises. Hence enabling me to do a critical analysis of the scholarly arguments that are made for and against the existence of a Noah book.

### **The linguistic turn**

I imagine that part of the problem with the designation of Noah’s writing as a “book” can be discussed as a problem of language. Since this project proposes to approach the entity herein under examination as an object of historical ideas preserved in text form, it is justified to apply language analysis to this study. I suppose that the Linguistic turn would be useful in my subsequent take on this subject and in discussions. Since language is used to convey our concepts and knowledge of the world. I briefly describe how its importance in my work is warranted.

Linguistic turn is an expression for the impact of the focus on the relationship between philosophy and language. It became prominent in the early twentieth century. This term is first believed to have been coined by Gustav Bergmann<sup>130</sup> who posits that “*All linguistic philosophers talk about the world by means of talking about a suitable language. This is the linguistic turn...*” In the Anglo-Saxon systematic philosophy milieu, it was later discovered that the matters once deemed to have been theoretical were rather linguistic problems. This implies that theorists unknowingly used language to create problems that could not have been there<sup>131</sup>.

One notable scholar who was enthused by the linguistic turn theory was Richard McKay Rorty. He therefore studied and took the theory further in order to demonstrate the “*various ways in which linguist philosophers have viewed philosophy and philosophical method over the last thirty-five years.*”<sup>132</sup>. One notable thing he achieved was that his study came to encompass history. He therefore called on scholars to acknowledge lack of language to perfectly determining whether one is responding to a “compulsion of language” or a “compulsion of

---

<sup>130</sup> Bergman 1964, p. 177 and Rorty 1967, p. 7-9.

<sup>131</sup> Quine 1948, pp. 21-38.

<sup>132</sup> Rorty 1967, p. 1.

experience”. Said differently, he postulated that in the interchange of speech a possibility exists that can blur what is said about is real (“compulsion of experience”) with the way in which something is said about what said is about what is real (“compulsion of language”).

In short, the issue arises here is whether the object talked about in the interchange of speech is a language issue or a matter of fact. This aroused the curiosity of many historians in the philosophy of language. This resulted in what has been termed “philosophy of linguistic history.”<sup>133</sup> Nonetheless, the non-referential use of language is prevailing due to the growth and discussion around structuralism and linguistics. Scholars who are well-known for this rise of this include Jacques Derrida<sup>134</sup> and Roland Barthes.<sup>135</sup>

However, Hayden White<sup>136</sup> is associated with the linguistic turn in history. Erstwhile, the term implied the philosophy of linguistics, of Anglo-Saxon tradition championed by Rorty, and innovative developments in linguistics by Derrida and Barthes. However, the impetus of the above-mentioned scholars, and through the literary theory and criticism such as the works of Northrop Frye (1973), White introduced the linguistic turn into the field of history. This is evident in his work, *Metahistory: The historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe*<sup>137</sup>. He posits that the historical text is a “literary artefact”<sup>138</sup>. By this, he implies history is text! Events outside of the text are in principle not attainable. However, this assertion was not welcomed by many historians and it was therefore resulted in much criticism and heated debates<sup>139</sup>.

Some scholars however, take the debate with a little compromise. For instance, Martin Jay<sup>140</sup> posits that the probability of realising the absolute transparency or opaqueness of language is very low. Hence, this is mode of exploring the subject far-fetched. However, some scholars advocate that the study of history has changed since historians are expected to factor the

---

<sup>133</sup> Rorty 1979, p. 169 and Ankersmit 1994, pp. 124-129).

<sup>134</sup> See Derrida 1967

<sup>135</sup> Barthes 1967, pp. 65-75. Barthes 1970, pp. 145-155

<sup>136</sup> See Paul 2011, p. 2; Ankersmit 1994, p. 119; Clark 2004.

<sup>137</sup> White 1973/2014.

<sup>138</sup> White 2002, pp. 191-210.

<sup>139</sup> The issue of the linguistic turn resulted in a lot of intense debate in historiography. All these debates cannot be discussed here since this project is not set to do that but to use the term in discussing problem that this project seeks to find solutions to. Hence, it would be pointless here to recount each one of them in detail. For more information especially on those who remained critical of the use of the linguistic turn in historiography, see Momigliano 1981; Handlin 1979; Novick 1988/1996; Evans Richard 1997; Evans 1999; Spiegel 2009.

<sup>140</sup> Jay 1982, p. 86-110

linguistic turn into their profession<sup>141</sup>. But Clark and others are more determined and strive to discuss to the linguistic turn past the boundaries of modern history<sup>142</sup>. She posits that language and, by extension literature does not provide access to any real past. According to her, the concept of the uncertainty of the sign proposes a great challenge to the correspondence theory of truth. So, she seems to assert that if words relate only to each other, then language cannot be deemed to refer to the world<sup>143</sup>.

However, we can see that the conceptions that seem to put a one-to-one reference of words to things in the real world still prevails and influences some scholars today. This is proof that disciplinary conceptions and traditions die hard<sup>144</sup>. I take sides with Herman Paul, the Leiden University Professor of History, it is an overstatement for one to say that Hayden White had no influence on the practice and writing of history<sup>145</sup>. If nothing at all, one legacy of White for historians is: “tell less” or “write less” and you will be writing “good” history; or “if you are really in the mood to write, move on to literature”.

Professors Lied and Kartzow have rightly observed, that the imaginations of “books” that were shaped in the formative years of the disciplines are still with us. They have been represented as inexhaustible ideas categorized under analytical discussions. They, however, these ideas are weakening, if not disappearing, due to the emergence some new and potent theories. Among these theories are the Linguistic turns herein discussed, and concepts of Book History and New Philology. According to them, the Linguistic turn has firmly established that neither does language nor literary works directly correspond to the real past referring to the assertion of Clark above<sup>146</sup>.

This is what I intend to use this theory to portray in this paper. I will use this idea to analyse the inference of a Book of Noah whether it is an issue that can be discussed as the problem of language—that a little risk exists in assuming a one-to-one mapping between books mentioned in various literary accounts and real inscribed artefacts of the past. As we can see, language does not directly represent the thing we are talking about. It rather represents what we think the

---

<sup>141</sup> See Munslow 2006, Clark 2004

<sup>142</sup> See Clark 2004.

<sup>143</sup> Clark 2004, pp. 42-47

<sup>144</sup> Lied and Kartzow 2018, p. 2.

<sup>145</sup> Paul 2011, p. 1-14

<sup>146</sup> Lied and Kartzow 2018, p. 2.

thing is. Hence, language is ambiguous. This is because several signs/words are synonymous with each other. The word is something, but the context makes it understandable.

### **What then is the traditional conception of a book in Jewish antiquity?**

Professors Lied and Kartzow have observed that perspectives of Book History and New Philology have challenged the traditional conception of books. Hence, the perception of the “book” as the various relationship between a given form of material and literary work has been increasingly debated. They posit that the literature that has come down to us from the first millennium in extant manuscripts contradicts assumptions of “books”, which are presented as firm, distinct, discernible and relatively substantial blocks of text.<sup>147</sup>

According to these two scholars, tracing “books” in transmission in a manuscript culture implies tracing entities that change and evolve, that take on new titles and that appear in various shapes and formats<sup>148</sup>. According to Lied and Kartzow, Eva Mroczek posits that contemporary academic conception of the literary world of Jewish antiquity is not parallel to the imagination of those who produced and engaged with the texts we study. They assert that we impose finitude to literary clusters that are evolving. Also, we define borders to collections and archives that at the time were conceived as open-ended. So Mroczek’s work per Lied and Kartzow implies current scholarly imagination of a first-millennium library may not equal the imaginations inherent to these centuries<sup>149</sup>.

So, it becomes obvious that the scholarly perception of a literary world that is largely established on a precisely defined materially existing books offers a narrow understanding of the richness of the literary forms that filled this imagined library. It can, however, be inferred from the above that the contemporary theoretical developments, the re-imagination of the first-millennium library and its constituent is long overdue<sup>150</sup>. However, this is the phenomenon of “books” known only by titles or referred to in other manuscripts. We can therefore conveniently designate these books as postulated books. These postulated books might be fictitious books in the sense that they are serving fictions as literary devices, never circulating as anything else than imagined books. It could also be assumed that such entities such as the Book of Noah

---

<sup>147</sup> Lied and Kartzow 2018, p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> Lied and Kartzow 2018, p. 2.

<sup>149</sup> Lied and Kartzow 2018, p. 2.

<sup>150</sup> Lied and Kartzow 2018, p. 2.

herein discussed might have once existed as material documents that are no more preserved, and could, therefore, be conveniently designated as lost if we can accept it as such.

However, the situation may be more complicated. Because a book that once served as a narrative device could later be ascribed textual contents. Also, a book may be conveniently designated as fictitious in one context but a similarly named extant text might have circulated elsewhere. Lied and Kartzow, however, posit that in neither of these situations are these books known only by titles unreal. They assert that research inspired by cognitive perspectives has shown that in cultural interactions “books” are far more than their extant text.

“Books”, therefore, may be cognitive placeholders, cultural signifiers, and conveyers of identity. Just as books are read, so are they also talked about. Hence, book titles, and the practice of mentioning them serve communicative and rhetorical functions in their own right and are not reducible to extant inscribed text.<sup>151</sup> From this one can understand that the “book” of Noah might be a book only known by mentions and title as it appears in the manuscripts. It perhaps represents an identified and identifiable literary entity. The mention of the Book of Noah in several sources suggests that it has a shared historically circulating conception at the time of the writing of the sources wherein it is mentioned.

To conclude, this chapter has shown that understanding of the “book” needs to be nuanced since the “book” has a compound meaning. And our present understanding of the “book” is influenced by recent scholarly ideologies of what a “book” is. The understanding of the “book” in Jewish antiquity is unlike our present-day conception of the “book”. In that, today we perceive the “book” as a firm, distinct, discernible and relatively substantial blocks of text, whereas in Jewish literature the “book” might be a metaphor. “Books” may be cognitive placeholders, cultural signifiers, and conveyers of identity and may also change form with time. The linguistic turn also suggests that language itself is a tool used to point to the truth, but neither is it the truth or perfect in itself. It does not point to any real past as we may think.

---

<sup>151</sup> Lied and Kartzow 2018, p. 2.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Three scholarly positions on the Book of Noah**

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapters have established that in recent times there appears to be a lot of scholarly focus on the traditions of Noah. Some of these works focus on the figure of Noah and his role as a Jewish ancestor. Others always compare him to his great grandfather Enoch. Yet, others study the role he played in the field of magic and medicine.

In this chapter, I focus on the contemporary scholarly debates which argue for or against the existence of a Book of Noah. That is to say, there are some scholars who argue that Noah wrote a book or there is a book ascribed to Noah, whereas others reject such an argument. Chapter two began this discussion but briefly. This chapter puts the debates in perspective. It, therefore, focuses on modern debates about a Book of Noah. The scholars who are considered here argue their case from the primary sources they examined using different methods and arguments.

My sources will not be from the primary source they investigated, though references will be made to them where necessary. My sources which are herein examined and discussed are therefore modern scholarly works that attempt to trace the existence of the Book of Noah. I will first give a description of the main arguments of three scholars and what makes them worth a study. The next chapter of this project will show their subtexts and what makes their proposal meaningful and interesting to the larger history of the academic field. Then, another will examine the types of arguments they put forward and the kind of methods they employed. In this chapter to avoid a presupposition about the Book of Noah, as we explore the arguments of the three scholars, the term 'lost' will be replaced by claimed/postulated, to ensure a suitable discussion of the entity.

#### **Description of the argument of three scholars**

As stated above I begin this chapter by giving a description of the assertions of three modern scholars after their investigations into the primary materials about the existence and non-existence of a Book of Noah. I found several works that engages this discussion, however, my aim in this area is to focus on works of three main scholars namely Michael Edward Stone, Devorah Dimant and Richard C. Steiner. It can be observed that the article that presents the arguments of these three scholars are not in the same period. Whereas that of Stone, was published in 2006, that of Richard C. Steiner and Devorah Dimant were published about a

decade before, that is 1995 and 1998 respectively. In the context of this current presentation, this discussion does not seek to arrange the arguments in chronological order. It will rather examine and categorise them in relations to their positions. Hence, it chooses to discuss the scholar who argues for the existence of the postulated book first, followed by the one who argues for the non-existence, then finally the one who takes a middle path of the argument. The third scholar does not argue for the existence or non-existence of a Book of Noah. The purpose of this choice of presentation is for rhetorical purpose and will have a little bearing on later chapters of this work. This is because it is important to examine the key moments in the discussions of the Book of Noah: to know the current positions or perspectives about the Book of Noah.

The choice of these three scholars is not to imply that their works are by necessity the only or best in the ongoing discussion about the Book of Noah. There have been pioneers in the search for a Book of Noah<sup>152</sup>, this project seeks to look more into more recent contributions since such contributions hold new opinions or findings of the Book of Noah. Also, it appears that their works hold three distinctive positions or perspectives about the Book of Noah which is worth examining. This is not to say that other scholars will not be mentioned in this discussion. But these selected works, at least, will help group the views/positions of different scholars into three overall categories. In the next few paragraphs, the arguments of the above scholars are examined.

### **Michael Edward Stone's Position**

The argument on the existence and non-existence of the postulated Book of Noah opens in this chapter with the article of Professor Michael Edward Stone, "The Book(s) Attributed to Noah"<sup>153</sup>. He is a Professor Emeritus of Armenian Studies and Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was born in 1938 in Leeds, England and raised in Sydney, Australia. In 1960, he obtained a bachelor's degree in Semitic and Classics from the University of Melbourne. Five years later from Harvard University, Stone received a PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. It is recorded in his biography that Stone took up a faculty position at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Here he was established as the pre-eminent scholar of

---

<sup>152</sup> See James 1920, p. 11, VanderKam 1989, p. 60, Steiner 1995, pp. 66-71, Himmelfarb 1994, pp. 129-130, Those that are more recent are Orlov 2000, Schiffman 2004, Baxter 2006, Himmelfarb 2015.

<sup>153</sup> Stone 2006, pp. 4-23.

the two fields; Armenian Studies and Second Temple Judaism<sup>154</sup>. In 1995, Stone became the founder of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Later in 2002, he was awarded the first Landau Prize for lifetime achievement in the Humanities<sup>155</sup>.

Stone is known for his creative writings. He is notable for the consistency of high-quality works in the two fields of his professionalism. Evidence of his quality work can be seen in his article that is herein examined for the theme of this project; “The Book(s) Attributed to Noah”. In this article Stone argues for the existence of the postulated Book of Noah using a combination of several sources and methods. He opines that this postulated Book of Noah is real, in the sense that it existed as a materially extant book. Therefore, according to him, this book is not a fictitious or an imaginary book.

In the above-mentioned article, Stone argues his point by adhering to places in the ancient literature where the title Book of Noah or a book related to Noah is explicitly mentioned. The article sets out two approaches to categorise the method it applies. First, it examines texts in ancient literature in which the title or a Book of Noah is clearly mentioned. Second, it examines texts that scholars in the course of their study of ancient sources have come to regard as Noahic sources. This second category is further categorised into two subcategories by Stone as a) texts in which Noah is the central actor or speaks in the first person and b) those texts that for one or another reason have been regarded as belonging to Noahic literature. Nonetheless, the article is focused on the first category of materials that the Book of Noah or a book transmitted by Noah is mentioned.<sup>156</sup>

We can see that Stone makes a distinction between mentions to such a book in several ancient Jewish sources and the scholarly attribution of various ancient passages to this postulated work. But he limits himself to the first type of proof, although his opinions have a bearing also on the scholarly reconstruction of “a lost Book of Noah.” Using these methods Stone answers the question of whether the Book of Noah existed or not.

---

<sup>154</sup> For more details on the life of Stone see Stone, (M. E.), Chazon, (E. G.), Satran, (D.), & Clements, (R. A.) (Eds.). 2004. *Things revealed: studies in early Jewish and Christian literature in honor of Michael E. Stone* (Vol. 89). Brill.

<sup>155</sup> See Michael E. Stone full Life Story in the introductory chapters of; Stone, (M. E.), Chazon, (E. G.), Satran, (D.), & Clements, (R. A.) (Eds.). 2004. *Things revealed: studies in early Jewish and Christian literature in honor of Michael E. Stone* (Vol. 89). Brill. and East, (M.) 2017. *The Embroidered Bible: Studies in Biblical Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Honour of Michael E. Stone*.

<sup>156</sup> Stone 2006, p. 5.

## Stone's Approach

It is worth mentioning that the methods he employed to arrive at the above conclusion are not so easy to grasp. It can be said that his work seems to be more complex or complicated to grasp than the other two scholars herein discussed. This is because Stone combines several methods and sources to establish his point. The methods he employed can be best described as literary analysis, para-textual analysis<sup>157</sup>, codicological analysis and rhetorical analysis.

An examination of his sources can reveal that Stone used an explicit mention of book titles as they appear in the manuscript, narrative style, and content of the literary text. Since he posits that evidence of the existence of a Book of Noah can be seen in the explicit mention of book titles in literary texts as they appear in ancient manuscripts or texts; one can say that Stone worked on manuscripts and literary accounts. He imagines that if a Book of Noah existed then it should have a bearing on early Jewish literature. If we can find a work mentioned in known Jewish literature, then it presupposes that the entity existed.

He proposes some of these ancient manuscripts as the *Genesis Apocryphon*. He claims that in this manuscript is a phrase on line 29 which reads, כחכ מלי נוה [פךשנן]. Per Stone, this phrase means, “[copy of] the book of the words of Noah”<sup>158</sup>. Hence, this is an explicit reference to a Book of Noah, per Stone. He is therefore confident and asserts that this reference to a Book of Noah in this ancient manuscript indicates that a real book attributed to Noah actually existed. Stone has also observed that the title (Book of Noah) in the *Genesis Apocryphon* introduces a new section, probably a first-person narrative, which seems to have continued until column 17. He opines that these columns drew on the lost Book of Noah. He mentioned that this material is different from the preceding narrative in columns 2 to 5, in line 29. The subject in the preceding columns is the account of the miraculous birth of Noah<sup>159</sup>. In this regard, Stone argues that the different accounts perhaps came from the same source since it concerns the same figure<sup>160</sup>. However, this account is rather in the third-person style rather than the first-person

---

<sup>157</sup> Per Gerard Genette, para-textual elements are textual, liminal devices that mediates a book to a reader. Or it is the medium through which a text makes itself and proposes itself as a text to its readers. See Genette 1997, pp. xviii, 2, 7 and Genette and Maclean, (M.) 1991, p. 261. Hence, paratextual analysis could be explained as using elements that mediates a text to its readers to determine whether a text can be describes as a text.

<sup>158</sup> Stone 2006, p. 6.

<sup>159</sup> Stone 2006, p. 6

<sup>160</sup> Stone 2006, p. 6

style of the postulated reworked material from a Book of Noah. In favour of this, one can clearly see that Stone employs a narrative style to establish his point.

Arguing that the postulated work of Noah is predominantly in third-person style Stone gives a similar account of the miraculous birth of Noah told in *1 Enoch 106-107*. However here the story is set in the mouth of Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah. Whereas the material in the *Genesis Apocryphon* column 2-5 is placed in the mouth of Lamech, Noah's father. Stone postulates that the account in *1QapGen* column 2-5 does not draw from the same source as that which starts with the title "copy of the Book of the Words of Noah" at the bottom of column 5 of that scroll. He argues that the change of the framework and speaker, the blank line and the beginning of a new section appears to indicate this more than does the variation of grammatical person, and they mark the beginning of a different literary work<sup>161</sup>. Here he seems to be doing a literary analysis.

It can be inferred from the above that per Stone, the stylistic differences indicate that not all of the passages in question could have stemmed from one and the same work. He has observed that such stylistic variety in the same work can be found elsewhere. He gives an example of this in the birth story of Melchizedek in *2 Enoch 71*<sup>162</sup>.

Another ancient document which per Stone makes reference to the Book of Noah is *Aramaic Levi Document* (ALD). Stone argues that in the passage on sacrifices cited by the *Aramaic Levi Document* (6:1-10:10), it was cited that series of ritual commandments given by Isaac to Levi was taken from the phrase "of the Book of Noah concerning the blood". Though Stone stated that this phrase in the Aramaic version has a lot of ambiguity, he postulates that no matter what interpretation is correct, the phrase is the oldest explicit reference to the Book of Noah. This is due to the fact that according to Stone the *Aramaic Levi Document* is dated to the third century before the Common Era<sup>163</sup>. He also mentioned that the phrase did not survive among the Qumran fragments of *Aramaic Levi Document*, nor in the *Geniza Aramaic* folios, only in excerpts from a Greek translation. But he states that there is no reason to doubt its originality<sup>164</sup>. Here it is clear that Stone argues from a codicological perspective.

---

<sup>161</sup> Stone 2006, pp. 6-8.

<sup>162</sup> Stone 2006, pp. 7-8.

<sup>163</sup> Stone 2006, pp. 9-10.

<sup>164</sup> Stone 2006, p. 10.

The quotation is cited below:

“[f]or my father Abraham commanded me to do thus and to command my sons,” 10:3 and in 10:10 we read “[f]or thus my father Abraham commanded me for thus he found in the writing of the [B]ook of Noah concerning the blood”.

In this regard, one can observe that the teaching about the sacrifices is attributed to the Patriarchs, who learnt it from Noah (10:10). In this vein, Stone argues from a literary analysis that it is likely that the detail, length and tight structure of this passage of priestly teaching come from a source document. He, therefore, claims that that source document is explicitly the Book of Noah. According to him, this teaching was also cited in *Jubilees*<sup>165</sup>. We can deduce from this argument that Stone, moves away from just ancient document mentioning a Book of Noah and states that the passage of priestly teaching in the *Aramaic Levi Document* comes from a source document which is the Book of Noah.

This brings us to the last document which Stone claims make an explicit reference to a Book of Noah. Using *Jubilees* Stone makes reference to a book of remedies Noah wrote down (*Jub.* 10:13-14), and to a book that stipulates the division of the earth among the three sons of Noah (*Jub.* 8:11) as evidence of the existence of a Book of Noah. *Jubilees 21:1-10*, is also considered as another priestly instruction given by Isaac to Levi. Stone mentioned that in *Jubilees* Abraham concludes the first part of this instruction with the words, “for so I have found written in the books of my forefathers (in the words of Enoch and the words of Noah)”<sup>166</sup>. Turning to a remark by R. H. Charles, that “there was probably no ground for the statement made by our author”, Stone argues that it appears to be likely that since the chapter of *Jubilees* is dependent on *Aramaic Levi Document* (ALD), the reference to “words of Noah” has been taken from there, that is ALD 10:10. He added that the additional mention of Enoch is either an expansion of the information in ALD or else *Jubilees* knew a tradition that the words of Enoch were transmitted through Noah<sup>167</sup>.

According to Stone, the book of *Jubilees* was composed in the first third of the second century before the Common Era. There are complete texts of it in Ethiopic, fragments in Latin and a

---

<sup>165</sup> Stone 2006, p. 10.

<sup>166</sup> Stone 2006, p. 10.

<sup>167</sup> Stone 2006, p. 11.

substantial number of fragmentary copies from Qumran. He explained that *Jubilees* 10:10-14 is a passage dealing with demons that afflicted Noah's children after the flood. Noah prayed to God for help and God commanded an angel to teach Noah all the remedies against them. This account is stated below:

And we explained to Noah all the remedies against their diseases, together with their seductions, and how to heal with herbs. And Noah wrote down everything in a book, as we instructed him about every kind of remedy; thus were the evil spirits kept from doing harm to Noah's sons. And he gave everything he had written to Shem, his eldest son; for he loved him most of all his sons. (*Jubilees* 10:12-14).

From this passage Stone explained that Noah wrote a book of remedies and transmitted it to his son Shem, who subsequently gave it to all of Noah's descendants.

In a nutshell, one can observe from the above description that Stone argues for the material existence of a Book of Noah since he finds places in ancient documents that references are made to a Book of Noah. A closer examination of his argument based on the explicit mention of a Book of Noah in the sources he used reveals that Stone appears to propose a "one theme implies one book" argument. That is, if one finds in a passage like he referred to in the ancient documents above, "copy of the book of N", or "the writing of the Book of N" or "N wrote down everything in a book" that implies there was an actual book called the book of N. This is what I refer to as "one theme implies one book" argument. The question is whether that theme really implies a real book existed? Well, this seems to be the argument of Devorah Dimant that will be discussed in a few paragraphs below.

Using the manuscripts: *Genesis Apocryphon*, the *Aramaic Levi Document* and the *Book of Jubilees* as his primary sources, he found the places where there is an explicit mention of book titles in the literary text or as they appear in the manuscripts. In this case, he argues that explicit mention of the title (para-text) Book of Noah in these ancient manuscripts is a piece of evidence that the postulated Book of Noah existed as a material entity. His argument seems plausible and relevant because he has revealed that not only is the Book of Noah mentioned in the ancient works, but it also gives an overall impression that it existed. Since it has been mentioned and

quoted or referenced several times in different works. This is remarkable because some scholars before him had said it was not mentioned nor referred to by ancient writers<sup>168</sup>.

### **Devorah Dimant's Position**

The position to be examined next for the existence or non-existence of the Book of Noah is that of the University of Haifa Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies, Devorah Dimant. She was born in 1939 in Israel. She studied Religion and Literature of Ancient Judaism with a special focus on Dead Sea Scrolls and Contemporary Jewish Literature Research Projects. Unlike Professor Stone, Dimant's hypothesis is the non-existence of a book by Noah. To say it differently, Dimant does not believe that the postulated Book of Noah was a real book, in terms of a materially existing textual entity. She argues this in an article titled; "Noah in Early Jewish Literature"<sup>169</sup>. This was later published in an edited volume called *Biblical Figures outside the Bible*<sup>170</sup>.

In this work, Dimant rejects the theories in contemporary research that assert the existences of a Jewish Pseudepigraphon ascribed to Noah<sup>171</sup>. She asserts that this postulated entity does not exist in the list of patristic pseudepigrapha<sup>172</sup>. She mentioned that the claim to a postulated Book of Noah has only been deduced from Noahic books, that is, to say from ancient documents that refer to Noah or tell the story about the life of Noah. She stated that these references can be found in *Jubilees* 10:21, 21:10 and 2:3 of the Greek version of the *Testament of Levi* document<sup>173</sup>. She also mentioned that traces of the postulated Book of Noah are also alleged to be found in various passages of *I Enoch* and the Hebrew fragments of Midrash<sup>174</sup> about Noah

---

<sup>168</sup> James 1920, p. 11

<sup>169</sup> Dimant 1998, pp. 123-150

<sup>170</sup> Stone, M. E., & Bergren, T. A. (Eds.). (2002), pp. 123-150

<sup>171</sup> Dimant 1998, p. 144.

<sup>172</sup> Dimant took it for granted that her readers understood or knows what the patristic pseudepigrapha is or looks like. So she did not explain it.

<sup>173</sup> In this place it is not clear whether this Testament of Levi is the same document as Aramaic Levi Document. Aramaic Levi is rewritten scripture from the Second Temple period that tells the story of the patriarch Levi. The work is believed to have a close relationship with the book of *Jubilees*, it also served the main source for the *Testament of Levi* in the Greek *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*. See Bauckham, (R.), Davila, (J.), & Panayotov, (A.) 2013, p. 121.

<sup>174</sup> A Midrash is a genre of rabbinic literature that consists of early interpretations and commentaries on the Written Torah and Oral Torah (spoken law and sermons), also including non-legalistic rabbinic literature called *aggadah* and occasionally the Jewish religious laws called *halakha*. This usually forms a running commentary on specific passages in the Hebrew Scripture, Tanakh. It refers to a specific compilation of these writings, primarily from the first ten centuries CE. The aim of Midrash was to resolve problems in the interpretation of difficult passages of the text of the Hebrew Bible, using Rabbinic principles of hermeneutics and philology to align them with the religious and ethical values of religious teachers



and his book of medicines is also seen as proof for the existence of a postulated Book of Noah. She stated that the theory for the existence of a postulated Book of Noah gained more attention and support so that when the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was made, some scholars finding fragments relating to Noah and the flood assigned them to the postulated Book of Noah and also published under that title.

### **Her Approach**

A mere glance at the argument of Dimant can reveal that her method is a literary approach or literary criticism. Using this literary method Dimant asserts that based on the above grounds the theory that a Book of Noah once existed is shaky. Firstly, she describes the references to Noahic books in pseudepigraphic and legendary works as fictional postulations. Per Dimant, references to a Book of Noah in ancient works such as *Jubilees* and the Testament of Levi, cannot withstand criticism. She, therefore, examines a literary phenomenon against a material phenomenon.

She, therefore, posits that except reliable and independent confirmation exist, they cannot be taken as historical evidence for the existence of a Book of Noah<sup>175</sup>. Secondly, though Dimant accepts the fact that there is resemblance in the themes of the Noahic fragments from the Dead Sea scrolls, she, however, asserts that they deviate in form and details. In favour of this, she doubts how these fragments could have belonged together with Noahic passages to one and the same work<sup>176</sup>. Moreover, other passages assigned to the Book of Noah are of diverse character Dimant opines.

Thus, she examines the “one theme implies one book<sup>177</sup>” argument. Pointing to examples in *I Enoch* used by the supporters for the existence of a Book of Noah, Dimant mentions that *I Enoch 6-11* is a fragment of a narrative account which is devoted to the sins of the angels. She observes that only three verses really concern Noah. In chapter 106 and 107, she pointed out that though this passage describes the miraculous birth of Noah, the emphasis is on the role of Enoch, Noah’s great-grandfather. She postulates that the Noahic passage in *I Enoch 65:1-69:2* which is the Enochic *Book of Parable*, is not a narrative but a discourse about what Noah has

---

<sup>175</sup> Dimant 1998, p. 145.

<sup>176</sup> Dimant 1998, p. 145.

<sup>177</sup> I imagine Dimant takes Stone and other who holds such view on when she argues in this manner. See the argument of Stone above for a clearer perspective.

seen before the flood. She also claims that other passages assigned to the postulated Book of Noah such as *I Enoch 54-55* and *60*, better fit with Enoch's career than Noah's.

Dimant, therefore, concludes that the very diversity in the literary fragments assigned to the Book of Noah discredits the entire theory of the existence of a Noah book<sup>178</sup>. With regards to the general resemblance in the themes in the fragmentary Noahic materials from Qumran, Dimant opines that such be explained as a result of shared traditions rather than from a distinct written document. From the above analyses, Dimant contests the evidence for the existence of a Book of Noah<sup>179</sup>.

Like the *Aramaic Genesis Apocryphon*, Dimant argues that a case can be made for the existence of a more comprehensive Hebrew Midrash<sup>180</sup>. She says the Midrash, written in a style similar to the *Aramaic Genesis Apocryphon*, should include at least some of the materials dealing with Noah, such as the story of his miraculous birth. Such Midrash she says can cover most of the basic Genesis and patriarchal history. She suggests that all the extant Noahic narrative sections should be put together in a complete narrative framework, as is, indeed, the case for many passages in *Jubilees* and Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*.

She, however, remarked that currently improved deciphering of the first columns in the *Genesis Apocryphon* shows that it constituted such Midrash. It connects discourses of Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah. She opines that the *Genesis Apocryphon* perhaps covered the entire Genesis narrative sequence or a good part of it<sup>181</sup>. Hence, from this perspective, one can infer that Dimant is proposing instead of arguing for the existence of a Book of Noah, a collection of narratives and materials about Noah should be made. So that such collection will rather serve as an interpretative and commentary category on the life of Noah, just as the Hebrew Midrash has done for biblical figures like Enoch and those she mentioned above.

---

<sup>178</sup> Dimant 1998, pp. 145-146.

<sup>179</sup><sup>179</sup> Dimant 1998, p. 146.

<sup>180</sup> As to what she meant by Hebrew Midrash, Dimant did not explain. However, I suppose she imagines that compilation of interpretations and commentaries should be made from the literary fragments gathered on Noah that should run commentaries on Noah just as the Midrash is to the Hebrew Scriptures. This will therefore be added to the commentaries and interpretations on the written and oral Torah. See page 8 for the meaning of Midrash.

<sup>181</sup> Dimant 1998, p. 146

From the above, it can be observed that Dimant proposes for the non-existence of a material entity called the Book of Noah. The method she employed can best be described as a literary approach or criticism. From her argument, it can be seen that she rejects the stylistic difference in the ancient works that is used by some scholars as evidence for the existence of a postulated Book of Noah. She claims that these stylistic differences perhaps stemmed from shared traditions rather than from distinctive documents. Hence, per Dimant this reflects traditions in motion and not necessarily referring to distinctive or separate documents that can be seen laying somewhere. Simply they are imaginary, and not for real.

### **Richard C. Steiner's Position**

The third scholar whose work will be examined with regards to the existence of a postulated Book of Noah is the University of Pennsylvania scholar, Richard C. Steiner. He is a Semitist, born in 1945. He specialised in Northwest Semitic languages, Jewish Studies and Near Eastern texts. He holds the third position in this scholarly debate about the Book of Noah. He seems to hold the middle grounds or put differently a third and different opinion in this debate. That is, Steiner does not categorically and emphatically state that this Book of Noah did exist or never existed. He rather calls on scholars to rather examine the material in which this postulated book forms part of.

Steiner in his exploration resorted to a scientific multi-spectral imaging technique to approach this issue. He was not the main researcher who initiated and conducted this research, but a team of researchers from the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the West Semitic Research. He borrowed the successful photography they made, which brought the words on a blackened fragment of the *Genesis Apocryphon* to plain view<sup>182</sup>. These are the words “מלו כחכ נוייה” which has been translated as “he wrote the words of Noah”. He argues that this phrase is the heading of a subsection of a larger compendium. He asserts that heading and titles of the form (a) “the Words of N” or (b) “the Book of the Words of N,” or (c) “a copy of the Book of the Words N” are well-known in biblical and post-biblical literature<sup>183</sup>.

He states some examples for each of these forms. He postulates that form one which the heading or title form such as “the Words of N”, prevails in the early period. Mentioning Amos, Jeremiah,

---

<sup>182</sup> Steiner 1995, p. 66.

<sup>183</sup> Steiner 1995, p. 66.

Ecclesiastes and Nehemiah as examples of biblical books which have such headings. He also attributed this form to most of the books cited in Kings and Chronicles. He also observed that the Book of *Jubilees*, (21:10) provides two titles of such form. This he stated as “*nagara ʿēnok*” which by interpretation is, the Words of Enoch and “*nagara nox*” which can also be translated as the Words of Noah<sup>184</sup>.

He stated that form two which comes in the order “the Book of the Words of N” appears only once in the Bible. This he said can be found in 1 Kings 11:41: “the Book of the Words of Solomon”. Nonetheless, Steiner has observed that this form is a distinctive characteristic in post-biblical works such as Tobit and the Testament of Job<sup>185</sup>. That is to say, this phrase or form two of the heading of this kind are common in post-biblical works. He mentioned that some scholars such as Fitzmyer have revealed that phrases of this form appear in the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1QapGn 19:25), “[the Book of] the Words of Enoch”. He, however, stated that not all scholars accept this reading<sup>186</sup>.

The third form which comes in the word order, “A copy of the Book of N”, per Steiner only appears in works in the post-biblical period<sup>187</sup>. He gave examples as Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Dan and Benjamin, which are six of the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. He also mentioned that the works titled Visions of Amram contain a similar title: “a copy of the Book of the Words of the Visions of Amram, Son of Qahat, Son of Levi”<sup>188</sup>.

Returning to *Jubilees* 21:10, where a phrase “the words of Noah” can be found, Steiner asserts that we cannot easily disconnect it from the phrase which has been recently deciphered on the blackened fragments of the *Genesis Apocryphon* which reads “he wrote the Words of Noah”<sup>189</sup>. This is because he opines that these phrases are closely connected. He postulates that in the context of the Ethiopic and Aramaic phrase and the word “כַּחַב” refers to a book title or heading<sup>190</sup>.

---

<sup>184</sup> Steiner 1995, p. 67.

<sup>185</sup> Steiner 1995, p. 67.

<sup>186</sup> Steiner 1995, p. 67.

<sup>187</sup> This assertion seems to be very imprecise on his behalf.

<sup>188</sup> Steiner 1995, p. 67.

<sup>189</sup> Steiner 1995, pp. 66, 67-68.

<sup>190</sup> Steiner 1995, pp. 67 -71.

In this case, Steiner proposes that the phrase “the words of Noah”, refers to a title or heading or better still an introductory lemma of a subsection of a book, rather than being the title of a whole book. In this case, the phrase per Steiner does not imply a book with the name or title called Book of Noah. He further asserts that in the order of the words in the phrase of the *Genesis Apocryphon*, the word “כְּהַב” which means book suggests that the compiler imagined it as a compendium/collection of books and not as ‘one book’ on its own. He assumes that this is why certain scholars make reference to the phrase as a literary unit in style and structure and can best be divided into books such as a Book of Lamech, a Book of Enoch, a Book of Noah and a Book of Abraham<sup>191</sup>.

From the foregone description, it can be observed that Steiner does not make explicit claims for or against the existence of a Book of Noah. But he imagines that the phrase which is used by other scholars to argue for the evidence of or reference to the existence of a Book of Noah can best be seen as a heading or title of a sub-section in a book/compendium, and not a reference to a separate book. So, in his opinion, the fact that a reference is made to the entity and embedded in other documents does not necessarily provide evidence that the book existed. His approach is a scientific approach where the words on the blackened fragment of the *Genesis Apocryphon* are successfully photographed and deciphered to confirm their readings. The approach can also be best described as a paratextual approach<sup>192</sup> since he observed that the wordings deciphered on the *Genesis Apocryphon* can best be described as a title of a section of a book.

### **Comparison of the three positions of the scholars**

In this section, I compare the arguments of the three scholars whose positions have been described above. From an observation of the position of the three scholars, one can easily detect that their lines of argument are somewhat different from each other, whereas one is arguing from a scientific or para-textual perspective, another is using literary criticism to find his way through. Yet another is using several approaches: literary and para-textual analysis, codicological perspective and rhetorical analysis. This in a way makes a direct comparison of the three positions of the three scholars very interesting. Thus, in this section, I examine the different methods employed by these scholars. It is then necessary to examine: What the different approaches make them see? How are their findings and methods related?

---

<sup>191</sup> Steiner 1995, p. 69.

<sup>192</sup> Paratext will be discussed in the next section of this work and more details can be seen in the theory section of this project in chapter three.

Though this is possible, I imagine that it will be fair to also go beyond the arguments of these scholars and examine the cultural context where the material they discuss originated and also find out where the influence of these scholars is coming from. This might explain the reason why they did what they did and said what they said, hence, making our investigation even more interesting.

Therefore, in order to make a good investigation of their positions, I will move behind the scholars and attempt to find out why they argue the way they do. Why at all they refer to it as a book? Since it appears to me from my readings that these scholars have a certain perception of a book and that they have the tendency of drifting from the culture from which they investigate. It appears that all the scholars are influenced by the eighteenth century European or Western scholar's perception of a book as a material object or entity only, which has been presented in chapter three.

A question that one may seem to ask at this point is: what then are the possible understandings of the Hebrew word “כֹּהֵב” (book)? Have modern scholars only taken one understanding into account? Since, there appear to be at least two understandings of this word: (a) a discrete, substantial entity (b) a smaller section. In a cultural context or perspective what is implied by the phrase, “he wrote”? In this regard, this section will involve interpretation and play of words drawing on the presentation on what is a book, in chapter three. Nonetheless, before I come to this, I compare their argument as to say one on one mapping.

### **Literary phenomenon versus material phenomenon**

This subsection will compare the claim that one literary phenomenon implies one material phenomenon. That is to say, the perspective held that one theme implies one book argument. Here we can put the argument of Stone against that of Dimant. Since Stone argues that an explicit mention of a book title in the ancient manuscript is an evidence of the existence of a material entity and we find Dimant's arguing against such ideology.

From the argument of Stone above it was established that Stone posits that the phrase “the Book of Noah” which appears in the ancient manuscripts he used as his sources is an evidence of the

existence of a real Book of Noah<sup>193</sup>. This assumption is, however, not welcomed by Dimant. She holds that Stone's argument in favour of the existence of a Book of Noah based on the mentions of works in pseudepigraphic and legendary compositions is unlikely and cannot be taken as historical evidence or proofs for the existence of a Book of Noah.

She also rejects the argument of Stone that the several subject-matter and styles of the sections attributed to the Book of Noah suggest a coherent literary work. She posits that Stone imagine that the ancient examples prove the existence of such variety within a single work. According to Dimant, the example of the Book of Watchers (*1 Enoch 1-36*) given by Stone as proof of his point betrays his own statement. This is because, per Dimant, the Enochic work, is a compilation of different sources. It cannot serve as a piece of evidence of literary coherence for that matter. She also posits that the stylistic differences in the narrative style of Noah's miraculous birth indicate that not all the passages in question stemmed from one and the same work as others like Stone claims. She argues against the argument based on the first- or third-person style that is used to determine whether the birth story was part of a postulated Noah book.

Stone, however, argues that the response of those who deny the significance of the title's occurrence in ancient sources is to remark that some of the *Enoch* quotations in *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* are not drawn from any *Enoch* work known and so are therefore fabrications<sup>194</sup>. What is at stake here is that an impression is created that most documents that has been received as historical records and evidence are now viewed as invention, fabrication and false documents. This will make the discussion of these notions relevant to this work.

He also rejects doubts about the *Genesis Apocryphon* citing another genuine ancient composition. He postulates that the *Damascus Document* quotes *Jubilees* and the *Aramaic Levi Document*. However, according to Dimant<sup>195</sup> the common scientific view has not been proven, hence, it cannot be claimed as a fact in support of the supposed citation in the *Genesis Apocryphon*. Dimant, therefore, asserts that the claim of Stone that he has proved the existence of a Book of Noah in the third century before the Common Era is unlikely because a series of weak arguments cannot make a single strong case.

---

<sup>193</sup> This was first taken as evidence by Steiner for the existence of a Book of Noah. Hence, Stone is not the first to assume this. It also implies that he is not alone in this thinking.

<sup>194</sup> Stone 2006, p. 8.

<sup>195</sup> See Dimant, "Two 'Scientific' Fictions," pp. 242-248.

From the above one can observe that whereas Stone proposes one theme to one book argument, Dimant rejects such argument. However, one can see that they both employed different methods in arguing their point. Stone as it has been established used a variety of methods whereas Dimant used only one method. This, however, makes it somewhat difficult to draw a straightforward comparison between them. Hence, it is difficult to take sides or postulate who has a laudable argument. However, I imagine that their approach to exploring all the references to find out whether the Book of Noah is real or not is somewhat challenging. This is because there is a creative abundance of such works and that abundance in themselves are very interesting. The idea of one theme is to one book mapping recalls the theory of linguistic turn which is discussed by Elizabeth Clark<sup>196</sup>.

The term linguistic turn seems to advocate that language and literature do not provide access to any real past as it was once assumed by some scholars. In this instance, this perception reveals the danger of assuming a one to one relationship between books mentioned in various literary accounts and real inscribed artefacts of the past. Hence, for one to imagine that words describe what actually happened in the past is now assumed to be something of the past<sup>197</sup>. Language, as we can see, is itself a tool used to point to the truth, but neither is it the truth or perfect in itself. Therefore, one may argue that for Stone to assume that the explicit mention of the Book of Noah in ancient literary works is an evidence for its existence cannot be accepted as true by the linguistic turn theory.

To add to the above assertion, one may ask if the explicit mention of a book or the giving of a title in a manuscript is enough grounds to establish the existence of a claimed book. What does it imply to give a title or what is a title? When and what did they call the entities? What does a title imply? What kind of an entity does that title suggest and what does a title carry with it? These are questions that can be investigated by proposing a study into para-text.

Gerard Genette, a French literary theorist, associated in particular with the structuralist movement, defines para-text as the accompaniment of a literary work<sup>198</sup>. That is, it is the medium through which a text makes a book of itself and proposes itself as a text to its readers.

---

<sup>196</sup> Clark 2004.

<sup>197</sup> See Kartzow and Liv 2018, p. 2.

<sup>198</sup> Genette 1991, pp. 261-272



Examples of para-text are titles, the author's name, a preface among others. This implies that para-textual elements are textual, liminal devices that mediate a book to a reader. Hence, since it is not the actual text or the whole text but its accompaniment, to use one aspect of the literary work to represent the text and prove that there is a text that has such accompaniment is very interesting. This is because as we may see in this project these paratextual elements may be used only as a literary device for the circulation of an idea.

### **Scientific approach and paratextual approaches versus literary and material approaches**

Although the content of the columns on the *Genesis Apocryphon* column 5, line 29 has been a mystery for decades due to their fragmented condition. Thanks to a scientific device and technology have made it possible to translate its content. But the issue is, though, the scientific technology helps to decode/translate the content of the *Genesis Apocryphon*, the explanation as to whether it was a book or not, or what the content indicate was not determined by technique. The human agency was required to do the interpretation. From the above, Richard Steiner used this translation to argue persuasively that the words on the *Genesis Apocryphon* are the heading for what follows in the text and does not imply a separate literary work.

From chapter two it can be noted that Schiffman is of the same view as Steiner. Since Schiffman like Steiner proposes that the heading in the *Genesis Apocryphon* is an introductory title to the section of the work that is supposed to be the Book of Noah. According to Schiffman, the heading is not a hint that the author is referring to or citing from a real book. But rather it is just a heading or title the author gave to that portion or section of his work. Per him, the phrase "Book of Noah", is a literary device or an earlier imaginary work or pseudepigraphal book that appeared or was mentioned in another pseudepigraphal book.

These positions of Steiner and Schiffman have however not been without criticism from their contemporaries. They have not been able to convince other scholars such as Stone, Himmelfarb and Florentino Garcia Martinez. Stone proposes that the heading is a title of separate work which is the postulated Book of Noah. Hence a separate book and not just the title of a subsection. Himmelfarb and Florentino Garcia Martinez like Stone imagine that the deciphered content is a summary of the Book of Noah and the heading is the title of that book. These three scholars agree that this "content-summary" was the sourcebook for the authors of the *Jubilees* and the *Genesis Apocryphon*. They, therefore, assert that there was a real Book of Noah which was in circulation, but Steiner does not believe so.

Another point of comparison is the paratextual aspect of Steiner's position. It was stated in the above presentation of Steiner's position that his method can also be described as a paratextual approach. Because he asserts that the wordings deciphered on the *Genesis Apocryphon* can best be described as a title of a section of a book or an introductory lemma. What then is a title and what is an introductory lemma? Also, what does this implies? What entity is named by a lemma?

From the above, we understood that para-text is the accompaniment of a literary work. This is the medium through which a text makes a book of itself and proposes itself as a text to its readers. A title is an example of para-text. So is a lemma. Because lemma is the argument or theme of a composition prefixed as a title or introduction. The heading or theme of a comment or note on a text can also be described as a lemma<sup>199</sup>. An introductory lemma may imply that a composition or full text that it represents exists. But since it is just the theme/title of a composition or comment or note and not the composition or note or comment itself it may be misleading to assume that it is an indication that the lemma signifies that there is an actual text that it represents as Stone and other seems to propose. This the problem with language and how we can be misled by it.

Though it has been established that para-textual elements are textual, liminal devices that mediate a book to a reader, but they not the actual text or the whole text. It is, therefore, not enough to use them as proof that the text was created or has a correspondence. Unless there can be other indicators present. Using one aspect of the literary work to represent the text and prove that there is a text that has such theme or bears that title is very interesting. Since pieces of evidence exist that paratextual elements may be used only as a literary device for the circulation of an idea. This is the argument of Steiner and Schiffman, but Stone and his friends further suggest that the content summary that has been decoded from the *Genesis Apocryphon* together with the heading "Book of Noah" forms a coherent text that can be used to assume that it qualifies to be designated as a book.

So, we can see that both Steiner and Stone agree that the heading "Book of Noah" is an introductory lemma or title. They both, however, diverge on what this introductory lemma

---

<sup>199</sup> See the Merriam Webster online dictionary; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lemma>

implies or represents. Per Steiner, the introductory lemma is the title of a subsection of a book and does not indicate that it is a separate entity or represents the title of a separate book. Stone, however, explains that the opposite rather is true. That is, this introductory lemma implies that there is a corresponding entity or text that it represents and not part of a compendium as Steiner suggests.

Considering the comparison of the approaches of the above-presented scholars, I make some few comments and some observation that I have made in the course of this study. Taking Steiner's approach, to begin with, I realize that one major issue with the research community today is a great trust and dependent on a scientific instrument or machinery techniques where before it was just by long-term direct observation of the phenomenon. Thanks to scientific advancement. However, no matter how fast or accurate these instruments might be, we still need to make an interpretation of the result. Therefore, the human agent is still needed.

But, by human nature, there is the tendency to find evidence when or where it does not exist at all, especially when we want to prove some previous knowledge or hold unto a disciplinary conception we are do not want to discard. That is to say, we often have the tendency to see what we want to see or tend to go with the crowd. So, the temptations to screw the devices or mix methods, or hide some unpleasant data to arrive at our expectations may prevail. This can be very alarming since it might lead to falsification, putting the trust in research findings at stake. Though, in trying to verify something we do not realise how subtle it might be to falsifier the result than to verify it.

To avoid this limitation, we must adhere to the triple reduction methods proposed by the father of phenomenology Edmund Husserl<sup>200</sup> namely; (a) reduce all subjectivity and aim at objectivity; (b) only the given must be admitted and (c) reduce all tradition. By the first principle, we must try as much as we can to avoid seeing what we want to see and treat the object of study just as it is. By so doing we are accepting what is really there. That is admitting the given, and not putting it in our own way of thinking or what we think it might be. Reducing all traditions is by doing our possible best to kill all previous disciplinary conceptions about the subject matter and probe into new ways of studying it. In this vein, our disciplinary conceptions

---

<sup>200</sup> See Husserl, (E.) 1990/1999. *The Idea of Phenomenology* and Husserl, (E.) 2012. *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology*. Routledge.

will not have a lot of influence on our findings. Since every science aims at true propositions or statements, we must be very careful with our tests and the way we use language to describe of finding, since language is ambiguous, and it may betray us.

These comments are not supposed to mean that the above-mentioned scholars have falsified their work and therefore their work cannot be trusted. No, that is not the trick. These scholars are well-known for their academic integrity and expertise in their field and will not do such a thing. But it is to cautions us as research on the temptations that may occur and how relying on scientific devices and language might be misleading if we are not careful.

### **Potential role of a Noah book as a source document versus non-existence of such argument**

From chapter two we discovered that Himmelfarb and Charles assert that the postulated Book of Noah was a source document for other ancient texts such as the *Genesis Apocryphon* and *Jubilees*. Stone also holds such opinion and even claims that the *Aramaic Levi Document* also cited a Book of Noah as its source. For that matter, he stated that since the *Aramaic Levi Document* is dated to the third-century B.C.E, the Book of Noah cited as a source would have been much older. This, therefore, implies that if there should have been an entity called the Book of Noah then it would have been very ancient or old. It is evident from Stone's argument that there has been former research which proved that there have been explicit references made to the Book of Noah in ancient Pseudepigrapha and textual fragments which though are not directly attributed to a Book of Noah but are however consider Noahic by many scholars<sup>201</sup>.

He also asserts that if a Book of Noah is cited by the *Genesis Apocryphon*, then the phrase "Book of the Words of Noah" in column 5, line 29 is likely to be its title or an introductory lemma<sup>202</sup>. This assertion is laudable, but for one to perfectly understand this one must find answers to the questions; what is a title and what is an introductory lemma? Also, what does this implies? What entity is named by a lemma?

Stone has however stipulated that his aim is not to seek a definitive resolution to the composition of the existence of a Book of Noah, but rather to contribute to the solution of the contentious issue. He thus takes his point of departure to those places in ancient literature

---

<sup>201</sup> Stone 2006, pp. 4

<sup>202</sup> Stone 2006, 7.

where the title Book of Noah or a Book of Noah was mentioned<sup>203</sup>. Though he made a distinction between two categories of texts<sup>204</sup> relating to the Book of Noah, his main focus was on the materials which categorically and emphatically mentions the Book of Noah.

But we also discovered that Steiner and Schiffman would not agree to the assumption that a Book of Noah was source document to the ancient texts that Stone and his friends claim. Neither will Dimant agree to this assertion since she clearly opposes the belief that a Book of Noah existed. She would argue that since there was no material entity called the Book of Noah then it never was the source text to the ancient documents that claimed to have used such a book. We can observe from the foregone presentation that although it has now become evident that the Book of Noah has been mentioned in ancient documents and quotations exist in the ancient documents which are believed to have come from the so-called Book of Noah. Yet, it has not been successfully proven that it existed, so makes it very interesting here to consider if the assumption that it was a source book to other ancient texts true or not. Though, the arguments of the scholars are like to be so. But since its existence has not been proven we cannot make any hasty conclusion that it was a source book or not.

In a nutshell, this chapter was set to present the positions of three able scholars on the existence and non-existence of the postulated Book of Noah. This was done by first examining the positions of the scholars and then doing a comparison of their position. It was discovered that they all made different arguments based on their choice of different methods and epistemologies. Their perception of what a “book” is, and what material they took into consideration are also contributing factors to their different opinions. The chapter also made an attempt to compare their argument based on the methods, epistemologies and the materials that they employed. It was however, not easy to make a straightforward comparison of their stance because of these factors. The next chapter make some analyses of the position taking their perception of what a book is into consideration.

---

<sup>203</sup> Stone 2006, pp. 5

<sup>204</sup> (a) text in which the title or a Book of Noah is clearly mentioned in the ancient source; (b) those in which scholars, in the course of their study of ancient sources, have come to regard passages of certain works as coming from a Noahic source. These set of text was further divided into two categories as (i) texts which Noah is the central actor or speaks in the first person; (ii) other texts that for one reason have been regarded as belonging to Noahic literature. See Stone 2006, pp. 5.

## Chapter 5

### Analysis of their Arguments and Approach

#### Introduction

From the previous chapter, it can be noted that the positions of Stone, Dimant and Steiner are presented together with a comparison which presents an analysis of the differences between their arguments. This chapter is largely dependent on the discussed method and theory chose for this project. I attempt to apply the ideas discussed in the method and theory sections here in order to analyse the positions of the three scholars. The analyses will centre around their description of the postulated Noah entity as a “book”, “lost”, “imagined” or “real” and as a source entity to other collections.

#### Why is the argument for a postulated Book of Noah centred on whether it is a book or not?

Now if we move a little bit further from the arguments of these three scholars in chapter four, we would like to at least find out what is a “book” or what does the culture in which this material appeared describe as a “book”? In this case, we can move behind the scene of the arguments and find out why they think about “books” the way in which they do. This presentation is necessary because from the above we realise that a major aspect of the argument about the postulated Book of Noah is based on determining whether it a separate book or just a section of a book. Or better still whether it is a book or not. For instance, in chapter two we find out how Baxter tried to give a suggestion on how to derive the content of the postulated Book of Noah. Stone and Schiffman follow suit in this same line of thinking and even attempt to prove that it was a sourcebook for *Jubilees* and the *Genesis Apocryphon*.

A quick overview of chapter three shows that our modern-day conception of “book” is different from early Jewish cultural conception of the “book”<sup>205</sup>. It was established that the literary world and how early Jewish writers imagined “book” is very different. This can be recognised from the clues that early Jewish writers have left us in the Dead Sea Scrolls. We can glimpse an imagined world of divinely inspired writings that did not inhabit a single corpus or location<sup>206</sup>. But rather one that was ancient, multiform that was never completely accessed. We also noted that as part of the story told about Israel’s patriarchs and kings, the revelation of written text goes far back beyond the time of Moses when he received the law on Mount Sinai.

---

<sup>205</sup> Mroczek, (E.), 2016. *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*.

<sup>206</sup> Mroczek 2016, p. 4.

However, Mroczek pointed out that our understanding of early Jewish texts is constrained by two kinds of anachronism namely religious and bibliographical<sup>207</sup>. The religious constraint is the Bible, as a canon and the bibliographical represents “books”. The Bible represents the set or corpus that is collectively said to be the canon. The set called the “books” are those corpora that are said to be nonbiblical because they did not find themselves into the set of the corpora called the Bible. It appears that it is this kind of idea that we imagine what a text might look like, or to say something is “written,” or is a text or “book”.

Nonetheless, Mroczek has rightly observed that recent research on the scribal and educational contexts in which ancient writings emerged revealed that modern categories of text, authorship and publication have poorly served our sources. However, she posits that although we recognize the anachronism of such concepts, little alternative language exists for how texts were conceptualized and classified in antiquity<sup>208</sup>. This is one issue that makes our perception of how the text in antiquity looks like a little challenging. However, it is clear that our present-day conception of text is different from what it was in antiquity. Mroczek seems to postulate that the oral model or context of early Jewish literature is key to the way texts were produced and used in early Jewish literary works<sup>209</sup>.

I imagine Mroczek appears to depict that “books” are not only the material, static, and bounded entities that the modern or Protestant perception seem to speculate or portray. In fact, per Mroczek “books” in antiquity may also be imaginal. According to her, “Far more books are imagined than ever written”<sup>210</sup>. Per Mroczek, early Jews had culturally specific metaphors, symbols, foundational narratives, and modes of organizing knowledge.

Mroczek suggests that the term “books” in Jewish antiquity could be metaphors. In her book, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*, she seems to assert that certain mentions of books in the texts that have come to us from Jewish antiquity in the lists of patriarch records and so forth but without their presence or which material entity could not be found might best be described as “imagined books” which never did exist.

---

<sup>207</sup> Mroczek 2016, p. 4.

<sup>208</sup> Mroczek 2016, p. 4.

<sup>209</sup> Mroczek 2016, p. 5

<sup>210</sup> Howsam 2006, cited in Mroczek 2012, p. 1.

Mroczek's observation of book culture in ancient Judaism suggests that book culture is a misnomer. This is because in her point of view, the "book" as we know it did not exist in the scribal scroll culture of antiquity. It can, therefore, be understood from Mroczek's observation that, our modern book culture, has predisposed our understanding of the texts from Jewish antiquity. We are driven by the history of the biblical canon, the print codex, and scholarly practices of cataloguing driven us to ask questions that do not match the nature and status of the texts that have come to us from ancient times.<sup>211</sup>

A scrutiny of the positions of the scholars seems to make it evident that the scholars' imagination of the "book" is only directed to a certain entity which has a unified text, authorial and physical presence. This ideology, per Mroczek, is an influence formed by the history of the codex and print as well as the academic tradition of cataloguing titles, classifying works and ascribing texts to give order to our written works<sup>212</sup>. Unfortunately, this is how it appears the scholars have imagined "books" to be in antiquity and their approach to them is somewhat shaped by such perceptions. So, their perception of books has been shaped by the Western-Protestant or European description of the "book".

Again, the ascendancy and reinforcement of the bibliographic have led to the domination of the text at the expense of other ways of configuring the textual landscape, Mroczek opines. She explained that the concepts and principles by which texts are identified, delimited and classified in modern scholarly practice do not fit ancient ways of conceptualizing literary production. However, the drive for the organization and study of Jewish materials is the concerns of scholarly bibliography establishing a date, provenance, author, and authoritative text. She acknowledged that book as a concept emerged from a specific history of the transmission of text in the modern West and the very specific way in which we have become accustomed to accessing, reading, and organizing writing<sup>213</sup>.

From chapter three Reed<sup>214</sup> has also noted that our modern-day understanding of what a book is, differs from how Jewish literary culture was like in antiquity. She postulates that there are

---

<sup>211</sup> Mroczek 2012, p. 2.

<sup>212</sup> Mroczek 2012, p. 3.

<sup>213</sup> Mroczek 2016, p. 10.

<sup>214</sup> Reed 2015.



several ways of transforming and preserving information in the past, however, our modern way of thinking has little considerations for these. She, therefore warns about how Western scholars envisage or read about the past. She opines that the propensity of Protestant or European scholars to limit their method of evidence for history to the transmission of religious traditions as a textual domain still exists. This is the way they think about the text.

She, however, posits that it is vital to reflect on the potential character of the constituent parts of much the complex and much more than survives in writing in early and known forms. Pieces of evidence exist from the Dead Sea Scrolls that the premodern Jewish and Christian encounter with the biblical past involves more than only the text of what comes down to us as the Tanakh<sup>215</sup>. It encompasses a fluidly dynamic and surprisingly stable complex of motifs and traditions, circulating in oral and written forms.

It can be inferred from the presentation of Mroczek and Reed that a misconception if not an error may exist, about what the textual domain of antiquity was like. That is if we only base our arguments or explanations on what has come to us in the form of written accounts only. Because it is clearly evident that cultures still exist<sup>216</sup> in the world which preserve materials or traditions such as religion, science, philosophy, politics and so on in oral traditions such as proverbs, arts, memory-making, symbols, folklores dance and songs or music. Such unwritten texted information is held as textual domains or books.

It clear from Reed and Mroczek that the reason why the scholars described the postulated Book of Noah as book or not is because of how they read about the past with their Western perception of “books”. However, it has become clear that Jewish culture in antiquity from where this so-called Book of Noah emerged does not treat or describe books with such ideas. Books in Jewish antiquity could be metaphors or imaginal without presence. What the Jewish culture may refer to as text may incorporate a fluidly dynamic and surprisingly stable complex of motifs and traditions, circulating in oral and written forms.

This, therefore, makes it a little bit of a challenge to describe/treat text from Jewish antiquity, such as the postulated Book of Noah, like a “book”. Because the literary culture of Jewish

---

<sup>215</sup> Reeds 2015, pp. 3-5, 7, 16-17.

<sup>216</sup> Examples are the African traditional culture and some Eastern cultures.

antiquity lacks such fixed descriptions. The literature that has come down to us from the first millennium in extant manuscripts contradicts assumptions of “books”, which are presented as a firm, distinct, discernible and relatively substantial blocks of text. In fact, the literature does not correspond to the disorderly glory of the texts inscribed on the manuscript pages<sup>217</sup>.

Thereby, there is a methodological issue in describing this Noah book in the ancient writings as a “book”. It might be a “book”, perhaps, in the sense that modern and Protestant scholars seem to describe “books”. But a comparison with the literary culture in Jewish antiquity will pose a great challenge. This becomes clear in the arguments that have been presented above.

Some scholars try to determine the content to prove that it is a book, but they are not able to convince their contemporaries who are aware of this fluidity and complexity in Jewish literary culture in antiquity. It is still difficult to designate the postulated Book of Noah as an imagined book. Since it has now become clear that apart from the mentions of it in ancient texts captions of what this book might contain is incorporated into the *Book of Asaph*. Unless we can prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the author(s) of this Jewish medical and magic book used this text or the mentions of Noah in the text for authoritative purposes. Or better still, that we can prove that this postulated book was a fictitious book in the sense that it was serving fictions as literary devices, never circulating as anything else than imagined books as a literary device. Lied and Kartzow<sup>218</sup> have noted that this, however, is not as easy as it may appear to be. Since a book that once served as a narrative device could later be ascribed textual contents. Consequently, a book may be conveniently designated as fictitious in one context but a similarly named extant text might have circulated elsewhere. Perhaps, this postulated Book of Noah is an example of such books.

The chapter further explored the reason why the argument of the scholars as they described the postulated Book of Noah as a book or not. It was discovered they have been influenced by the understanding of the “book” as presented by the European/Western Protestant scholars. But the Jewish literary culture of antiquity did not have such understanding of the “book”.

---

<sup>217</sup> Lied and Kartzow 2018, p. 2.

<sup>218</sup> Lied and Kartzow 2018, p. 2.

### **Analysis of their use of the term: “lost”, “imagined” or “real” or a source entity collection**

After examining why, the scholars refer to the entity as a “book” in the way they did. We can now move to further examine their positions to find out other issues that need to be analysed. A close observation of the argument of the scholars reveals the use of the term “lost” and “imagine” or “real”. For something to be described as “lost,” it assumes that that thing once existed. So, we can see that the use of the term “lost” by some of the scholars is somewhat problematic. They directly or indirectly acknowledge that this postulated book existed, and it was, therefore, a real book and even complicate the issue by arguing further that it was a sourcebook for other ancient texts. Those who refer to it as an imagined entity also give the implication that it was fictitious and was not but just a literary device as we see from their argument. Perhaps this can best be considered a problem of language. But we will do the language analysis soon.

But coming to the argument on lost and real, we can notice that all the scholars we have discussed make some remarkable observation that is worth considering. For instance, Stone appears to posit or say that if we could hold the assumption that; if a Book of Noah existed it should have a bearing on early Jewish literature or group identification. That is, should we find such a bearing then it is an evidence that such a book existed. Hence, it is acceptable to describe it as lost. We are aware that books have an influence on people and their culture as well as in their literary culture. A Book of Noah should have the same effect on Jews in antiquity and we can see this in the Jewish text that has come to us from antiquity.

I imagine this is a laudable idea. Because this will imply that we must see Jewish literature influenced by a Noah story and there must be a Jewish group influenced or that had held this Book of Noah in high esteem or discuss it in their literature. That is, which Second Temple Jewish group appropriated the text? How did they use the text in their own document? Should we find traces of this in early Jewish antiquity then it implies that a Book of Noah existed? I believe that the document that has been examined has these bearings and the Noah traditions as well seem to portray how different Jewish groups have been influenced by a postulated Book of Noah. Or put differently: for a book that hypothetically did not exist as anything else than an imagined book – the Book of Noah must be one of the most mentioned ones. The degree of visibility is rather remarkable.

But Dimant and others come in to make another good observation that gets us thinking. She observed that the themes about the Book of Noah or the Noahic traditions in the fragment of the Dead Sea Scrolls that have come down to us have a lot of deviations in their forms and details. Deviations, therefore, imply that they are not from the same source, as Stone and his friends may claim, from a Book of Noah. Per Dimant, if they come from the same source or passage then the accounts must be the same or have the same character. But here is the case that they have diverse character.

But Stone has proved that these deviations do not appear only in the so-called Book of Noah but elsewhere, that is in the *Book of Enoch*. Baxter and others have also argued that some deviations and divergence exist that can be compared to that of the Gospel criticism, where the authors use the passages based on their audiences and their focus<sup>219</sup>. In fact, this is quite a common feature in ancient literature. Whereas some of the text purporting to have the writings of Noah focused on the devils or demons of the so-called Book of Noah source, others focused on the medicinal or magical aspect of the book. This makes the whole issue very interesting, though complex too.

But one scholar Esther Eshel<sup>220</sup>, has observed that the existing fragment of the *Genesis Apocryphon* produces three cycles about three different kinds of biblical figures namely; Enoch, Noah and Abram. Per her, each cycle is thematically distinct and physically separated from the following blank line in the *Genesis Apocryphon*. She imagines that the three cycles might have drawn on other traditions. But then again, they expertly are interwoven into a coherent sequence, by the literary connections and parallelisms between the three blocks.

Though she noted that Noah was allocated an important place in the *Genesis Apocryphon*, she stresses that “it seems to be an integral part of the composition, not an independent work taken from a written source”<sup>221</sup>. By this observation, she effectively discarded the claims that the formula “a copy of the book of the words of Noah” in the *Genesis Apocryphon* introduces an actual citation or reworking of “a lost Book of Noah”. This, therefore, implies that in Eshel’s opinion there was no separate entity called the Book of Noah that the *Genesis Apocryphon* draws from as others may want us to believe.

---

<sup>219</sup> See chapter two

<sup>220</sup> Stone, et al 2010, pp.77-95.

<sup>221</sup> See Stone, et al 2010, p. 79

This observation seems to confirm that the reference to the Book of Noah is only one detail in a vast narrative tapestry. It, therefore, implies that in the non-appearance of any exterior evidence of such a work, this detail cannot be taken as proof of the existence of a Book of Noah. In this vein, Professor Matthew Morgenstern, at Tel Aviv University, has observed that the numbering of the pages that survived in Hebrew, in the few fragments of the *Genesis Apocryphon* indicate that the fragments come from the end of a long scroll with some 70 to 105 columns missing. Morgenstern, therefore, concluded that the prominence of Noah in the preserved sections cannot be used as evidence for categorizing the entire scroll and for that matter “we are dealing with a *Genesis Apocryphon* and not, with an expanded Book of Noah.<sup>222</sup>”

Peters, who provided a comprehensive survey of Noah traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls and its related materials posits that

the mere existence of traditions naming a Book of Noah and references to the writings of Noah in the Dead Sea Scrolls does not require the existence of the physical remains of a literary source that was cited and excerpted by later writers. These references and allusions could be explained by a drive to create an archetype that added “writer” to Noah’s credentials in the Second Temple period and also “book” to his resume.<sup>223</sup>

From the above analysis one can see that per Peters, the idea of Noah being a “writer” or having a “book” written by him is a creation or a held tradition. She suggests that this was done to preserve the teachings and traditions so that God’s revealed wisdom would not be lost in times of threat. Therefore, per her, the portrayal of Noah as a writer in the Dead Sea Scrolls was a reinterpretation of Noah<sup>224</sup>. She mentioned that among the text that contains the traditions about Noah, the *Genesis Apocryphon* is the only text that explicitly purports to contain the writings of Noah<sup>225</sup>. She imagines that the authors of this text intentionally created an archetype of Noah as a writer and author of a “book” that contained teachings that were purportedly and reliably preserved and transmitted.

---

<sup>222</sup> Morgenstern 1996, p. 347.

<sup>223</sup> Peters 2008, p. 124.

<sup>224</sup> See Peters 2008, pp. 121-124.

<sup>225</sup> Peters 2008, pp. 123-124.

She assumed this is so because *Jubilees* has already mentioned that all the revelations were given to Moses, who wrote them down. He (Moses) according to *Jubilees*, is the recorder of the most comprehensive revelation. Hence, if the assumption is that anything important from God had been “missed” or “lost” in the transmission or translation it was ultimately revealed to Moses. So, the claim that a Book of Noah has revelations that might have been “lost” or missed cannot be accepted<sup>226</sup>. Because Moses has it all wrote down in the Torah. Moses did not mention anywhere in the Torah about a Book of Noah, or Noah writing a book.

It can be observed that all the scholars herein referred to and discussed has different opinions about the Book of Noah. Their proposals, though, derive from the application of different methodological perspectives and yet they are very meaningful and interesting. This is because, the methods reveal that we are always interpreting, and we will all arrive at a different perspective when we use different methods. And the methods that we use sometimes presupposes what we already have in mind. It is very interesting because this shows that we constantly do not know what we do not know and the best scholar who must be close to the truth is also just interpretation.

This, therefore, implies that our understanding now is shaped by what we know now. Perhaps, based on this it may be right to reminiscence my assertion in chapter two that we constantly do not know what we do not know; and our perspectives are shaped by what we think we know and are not neutral, but the scholars seem not to be aware of this. But this falls far short from saying that we are not supposed to make investigations to find out things we do not know or make assumptions about our findings. No, that is not so. But rather it suggests that we must be careful not to put “a period” on what we know based on our current perspectives. Since later research may prove otherwise like we can see from the key moments about the investigations into the Book of Noah.

From my understanding, I imagine the scholars cannot say the Book of Noah did not exist or did exist because they are all making an educated guess based on their methods and epistemologies. But they rather give alternative explanations of interest to comprehending the history behind the Book of Noah and what it might be, but not what it “really is”. This is because, in the situation where another discovery of scripts/manuscripts are made, and it is

---

<sup>226</sup> Peters 2008, p. 121.

found a script that contains the writings of Noah or a Noah book. Besides arguments that these recent scholars put forward about the existence and non-existence of a Book of Noah, we could conclude that the newly discovered manuscripts and recent publications of already known documents would prove the authenticity of what we already know or have. Then we would find out that though scholars may fight each other, manuscripts do not.

### **Analysis of language and scientific equipment**

So now with an observation of the arguments, we can see and point out the challenge of their approaches and the limitation of language to describe what we think we know, or think is there or not there. Because language is ambiguous. Unless through a thorough search in the storeroom of a library, or another adventure somewhere in the Middle East brings to light this some manuscripts that bear this postulated writing of Noah. Otherwise, we are aware that without the material presence the best of scholars who come close to the truth only does that by speculations. Such cannot convince other scholars, who are just as good/able as himself, with different opinions. Nonetheless, the speculations made by these able scholars are profound and worth noting and never to be taken for granted. They help us to have different ways of thinking about issues which might be a possibility, in the case of what we might be searching for as they tried to use language and scientific equipment.

Although, language is a very tremendous tool in research. By it, old theories are replaced with new ones. But from the explanations of the phrases and references in ancient texts that suggest that a Book of Noah existed we can observe that the language of a text is polyvalent. Especially in the case where the original language might differ from the researcher's own, it might be subject to several interpretations. Because it is not precise and more so when there is no material evidence to back up what it means. This is what makes it difficult to test or prove the existence or non-existence of a Book of Noah from Jewish antiquity.

Technical advancement in experimental sciences has made advancement possible. But it is still difficult to say which comes first; theory or better instruments. Is the technical method used to decipher the writing on the *Genesis Apocryphon* the prove or it is the interpretation that comes with it? We need, however, to remember that all models are always incomplete. However, we need models to facilitate our research, because our understanding suffers from many limitations.

Models do not investigate the problem, but the validity of our own thinking. That is whether the logic behind our argument is correct<sup>227</sup>.

From the above analyses, we can observe that a clear-cut stance on the existence of the Book of Noah is difficult. All the argument for and against the existence of a Book of Noah sounds plausible. Hence, it is very difficult to take sides and draw a conclusion. But one thing is clear: the book has been mentioned in ancient documents and quotations exist in the ancient documents which are believed to have come from the so-called Book of Noah. At this point, we cannot say whether it is imaginary or real, whether it is lost or that it never did exist. If it has been successfully proven that it existed then we consider the assumption that it was a sourcebook to other ancient texts valid, as some of the scholars claim. But since its existence has not been proven we cannot make any hasty conclusion that it was a sourcebook or not.

---

<sup>227</sup> See Papandreou 1959, Kokko 2007.



## Chapter 6

### Summary and Recommendations

#### Summary

It was clear from the onset of this project that the main subject matter is the scholarly construal of the Book of Noah. The main aim was to study three contemporary scholarly positions about the Book of Noah. A presentation of the scholars' positions was made, and these can be classified into three schools of thought. Professor Michael E. Stone who set the pace in the argument posits that a real Book of Noah existed, and it was even the sourcebook for the writing of some ancient texts. Literary analysis, para-textual analysis<sup>228</sup>, codicological analysis and rhetorical analysis are the methods he employed in his argument. His hypothesis is that categorical mentions of a Book of Noah in ancient manuscripts are evidence that an actual Book of Noah existed. Other scholars that held a similar view as Stone include Himmelfarb, Charles, Baxter and Garcia Florentino Martinez. We can say that these scholars form the first school of thought on the debate about the postulated Book of Noah.

The next scholar that followed in the discussion and held the opposite opinion is Devorah Dimant. She vehemently disagrees with the idea that there was an actual Book of Noah in circulation. Hence, her hypothesis was the non-existence of a book by Noah. She employed a literary approach or literary criticism as her method to bring her argument on board. Her stance, in this project, is considered the second school of thought. Her followers could best be listed as Eshel and Peters since they also argue that no separate book called the Book of Noah ever existed.

The third and last school of thought in this debate can be said to be Richard Steiner. He seems to hold the middle ground, because he made no emphatic and categorical statement as to whether the postulated Book of Noah existed or not. He rather posits that that the Book of Noah mentioned in the ancient text was nothing but just a literary device. He, therefore, hypothesized that it is an introductory lemma or title of a subsection of a compendium.

---

<sup>228</sup> Per Gerard Genette, para-textual elements are textual, liminal devices that mediates a book to a reader. Or it is the medium through which a text makes itself and proposes itself as a text to its readers. See Genette 1997, pp. xviii, 2, 7 and Genette and Maclean, (M.) 1991, p. 261. Hence, paratextual analysis could be explained as using elements that mediates a text to its readers to determine whether a text can be describes as a text.

The methodological and theoretical analysis of this project has shown that Stone, Dimant and Steiner arrived at different opinions because they used diverse methods and adhered to different epistemologies. The influence of the Western concept of “book” was also a major contributing factor to their different argument about the subject matter. Again, the kind of material they took into consideration also affected their discussion. These factors made their argument very interesting and complex too. Although I slightly disagree with their finds because of the choice of their methods, yet to say that they are all somewhat right makes sense by the methods they employed. However, viewed differently we cannot say Stone’s argument makes more sense than Dimant and Steiner or the vice versa in that manner. It will therefore be unfair for someone or even the scholars themselves to rate his or her argument above the other. Their arguments are very profound, but it also shows our limitation as scholars. In that, we constantly do not know what we do not know, and our perspectives are shaped by what we think we know and are not neutral. This is something we must be aware of as scholars.

### **Recommendations**

This project calls on textual scholars to come together and find better ways of treating expressions of historical textual entities that have come to us as mentions in other texts. Striving to treat them in their own right and understand the cultural context from which they emerged or from which they came to us. So that we do not put finitude on them as a result of our modern conception of things. We must be careful in trying to find proofs of the existence or non-existence of supposedly lost entities in surviving manuscripts. We must consider the various possibilities that may arise from our search and attempt employing several techniques rather than just adhering to disciplinary routines or traditions. We must also find ways of dealing with the complexities of potential multiple perceptions of “book” in Jewish literary culture.

This work will be useful to textual scholars, book historians, language analysts and to both experts and students of Pseudepigrapha. Hopefully, anyone who is interested in gaining knowledge about the literary culture of Jewish antiquity will find this thesis useful.

## Bibliography

- Ankersmit, (F. R.) 1994. *History and tropology: the rise and fall of metaphor*. Univ of California Press.
- Barthes, (R.) 1967. Discourse on history. *Social science information*, 6(4), 65-75.
- Barthes, (R.) 1970. Historical discourse. *Introduction to structuralism*, 145-155.
- Bauckham, (R.), Davila, (J.), & Panayotov, (A.) 2013. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* (Vol. 1). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Baxter, (W.) 2006. Noachic Traditions and the Book of Noah. *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, 15(3), 179-194.
- Bergmann, (G.) 1964. Logic and reality.
- Charles, (R. H.) ed. 1913. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English: with introductions and critical and explanatory notes to the several books* (Vol. 1). Clarendon Press.
- Charlesworth, (J. H.) 1983. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. Anchor Bible Reference Library.
- Charlesworth, (J. H.) 2013. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* (Vol. 1). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Chartier, (R.) 1994. *The order of books: readers, authors, and libraries in Europe between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries*. Stanford University Press.
- Chartier, (R.) 2004. "Languages, books, and reading from the printed word to the digital text," translated by T. L. Fagan in, *Critical Inquiry*, 31(1), 133-152.
- Chartier, (R.), Stallybrass, (P.), 2013. "what is a Book?," in *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship*, edited by Fraistat, (N.), & Flanders, (J.). Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, (E. A.) 2004. *History, theory, text. Historians and the Linguistic turns*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Darnton, (R.) 1982. What is the History of Books?. *Daedalus*, 65-83.
- Derrida, (J.) 1967. *Of grammatology*. JHU Press.
- Dimant, (D.) 1998. Noah in Early Jewish Literature. *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*, 123-150.
- Dimant, (D.) 2006. Two "Scientific" Fictions: The So-Called Book of Noah and the Alleged Quotation of Jubilees in CD 16: 3-4. In *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint* (pp. 230-249). BRILL.
- Eshel, (E.), 2010. "The Noah Cycle in the Genesis Apocryphon," in Noah and His Book(s), eds. Stone, (M.E.), Amihay, (A.), Hillel, (V.); SBLEJL 28; Atlanta SBL, 2010, 77-95.
- Evans Richard, (J.) 1997. In Defense of History.
- Evans, (J. S. B.) 1999. The influence of linguistic form on reasoning: The case of matching bias. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology: Section A*, 52(1), 185-216.
- Frankfurter, (D.) 1997. "Apocalypses real and alleged in the Mani Codex". *Numen*, 44(1), 60-73.
- Genette, (G.) 1997. *Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation* (Vol. 20). Cambridge University Press.
- Genette, (G.), & Maclean, (M.) 1991. Introduction to the Paratext. *New Literary History*, 22(2), 261-272.
- Greenfield, (J. C.), & Stone, (M. E.) 1985. The Aramaic and Greek Fragments of a Levi Document. appendix in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, A Commentary* (HW Hollander and M. De Jonge).
- Handlin, (O.) 1979. *Truth in history*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hayles, (N. K.) 2003. Translating media: Why we should rethink textuality. *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 16(2), 263-290.
- Himmelfarb, (M.) 1994. Some Echoes of Jubilees in Medieval Hebrew Literature. *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, 115-141.
- Himmelfarb, (M.) 2015. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures. Volume One*, written by Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, and Alexander Panayotov. *The Book of Noah: A New Translation and Introduction*, 22(2), 40-46.
- Howsam, (L.) 2006. *Old books and new histories: An orientation to studies in book and print culture*. University of Toronto Press.
- Howsam, (L.) 2016. Thinking through the History of the Book. *Mémoires du livre/Studies in Book Culture*, 7(2).
- Husserl, (E.) 1973. *The Idea of Phenomenology*. Translated by William P. Alston and George Nakhnikian. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Husserl, (E.) 1999. *The Idea of Phenomenology*. Translated by Lee Hardy. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Husserl, (E.) 2012. *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology*. Routledge.
- James, (M.H.) 1920. *The Lost Apocrypha of the Old Testament: Their titles and fragments*. No. 14. Society for promoting Christian knowledge.
- Jay, (M.) 1982. Should Intellectual History Take a Linguistic Turn? | *Modern European Intellectual History*. Ed. Dominick LaCapra and Steven Kaplan.
- Kartzow, (M. B.), Lied, (L.I.) 2018. Books Known Only by Title: Exploring the Gendered Structures of the First Millennium Imagined Library. (Norwegian School of Theology and Religion and Society, Unpublished article)

- Kraft, (R. A.) 1994. The pseudepigrapha in Christianity. *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves; SBLJL 06; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press 55-86.
- Kokko, (H.) 2007. *Modelling for field biologists and other interesting people*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kugel, (J. L.), & Kugel, (J. L.) 1998/2009. *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era*. Harvard University Press.
- Lied, (L. I.) 2015. Text–Work–Manuscript: What Is an ‘Old Testament Pseudepigraphon’?. *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, 25(2), 150-165.
- Lied, (L.I.), Monger, (P. M.) 2018. Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Known Only by Title. (Norwegian School of Theology and Religion and Society, Unpublished article)
- Martínez, (F. G.) 1992. *Qumran and Apocalyptic: Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran (Vol. 9)*. Brill.
- McKenzie, (D.F.) 1986. *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*. London: British Library.
- Momigliano, (A.) 1981. *The Rhetoric of History and the History of Rhetoric: On Hayden White's Tropes*. Cambridge University Press.
- Morgenstern, (M.) 1996. A new clue to the original length of the Genesis Apocryphon. *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 47(2), 345-347.
- Mroczek, (E.) 2011. Thinking Digitally About the Dead Sea Scrolls: Book History Before and Beyond the Book. *Book History*, 14(1), 241-269.
- Mroczek, (E.) 2012. *Psalms Unbound: Ancient Concepts of Textual Tradition in 11QPsalmsa and Related Texts*. PhD diss., University of Toronto.
- Mroczek, (E.) 2016. *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity*. Oxford University Press.
- Munslow, (A.) 2006. *Deconstructing history*. Routledge.
- Noegel, (S. B.) 2004. Text, script and media: New observations on scribal activity in the ancient Near East. *Voice, text, hypertext: Emerging practices in textual studies*, 133-143.
- Novick, (P.) 1988/1996. *That noble dream: The 'objectivity question' and the American historical profession (Vol. 13)*. Cambridge University Press.
- Orlov, (A.) 2000. 'Noah's Younger Brother': Anti-Noachic Polemics in 2 Enoch. *Henoch*.
- Papandreou, (A. G.) 1959. Explanation and prediction in economics. *Science*, 129(3356), 1096-1100.
- Paul, (H.) 2011. *Hayden White: the historical imagination*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Peters, (D. M.) 2008. Noah traditions in the Dead Sea scrolls: conversations and controversies of antiquity (No. 26). *Society of Biblical Lit.*
- Quine, (W. V.) 1948. On what there is. *The review of metaphysics*, 2(1), 21-38.
- Reed, (A. Y.) 2005. *Fallen angels and the history of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic literature*. Cambridge University Press.
- Reed, (A. Y.) 2009. The modern invention of ‘Old Testament pseudepigrapha’. *Journal of theological studies*, 60(2), 403-436.
- Reed, (A. Y.) 2015. *Fallen Angels and the Afterlives of Enochic Traditions in Early Islam*. (Paper for 2015 Enoch Seminar Nangeroni Meeting).
- Reed, (A. Y.) 2016. Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and post-70 Judaism. *Les Judaïsmes dans tous leurs Etats aux Ier-IIIe Siècles*, 117-48.
- Rorty, (R.), & Williams, (M.) 1979/2009. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton University Press.
- Rorty, (R.) 1967. Metaphilosophical difficulties of linguistic philosophy. *The linguistic turn*, 1-39.
- Schiffman, (L. H.) 2004. Pseudepigrapha in the pseudepigrapha: Mythical books in second temple literature. *Revue de Qumrân*, 429-438.
- Steiner, (R. C.) 1995. The Heading of the " Book of the Words of Noah" on a Fragment of the Genesis Apocryphon: New Light on a " Lost" Work. *Dead Sea Discoveries*, 66-71.
- Stone, (M. E.) 1997. The Axis of History at Qumran. *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 133-49.
- Stone, (M. E.) 2006. The Book (s) attributed to Noah. *Dead Sea Discoveries*, 13(1), 4-23.
- Stone, (M. E.) ed. 2010. *Noah and his book (s)*. Society of Biblical Literature.
- Stone, (M. E.), Chazon, (E. G.), Satran, (D.), & Clements, (R. A.) (Eds.). 2004. *Things revealed: studies in early Jewish and Christian literature in honor of Michael E. Stone (Vol. 89)*. Brill.
- Stone, (M. E.) 2003. Aramaic Levi Document and Greek Testament of Levi. *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov*, 429-37.
- Stone, (M. E.), & Bergren, (T. A.) (Eds.). 2002. *Biblical figures outside the Bible*. A&C Black.
- Sutherland, (K.) (Ed.). 1997. *Electronic text: investigations in method and theory*. Oxford University Press.
- Tosh, (J.) 2015. *The Pursuit of History*. Oxon.
- Treadgold, (W.) 2013. George Syncellus and Theophanes Confessor. In: *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, (38-77). Palgrave Macmillan, London
- Vanderkam, (J. C.) 1989. trans. The Book of Jubilees. *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 511.
- Werman, (C.) 1999. Qumran and the Book of Noah. *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature*, 171-81.

White, (H. V.) 1966. The burden of history. *History and Theory*, 5(2), 111-134.

White, (H.) 2002. The historical text as literary artifact. *Narrative dynamics: Essays on time, plot, closure, and frames*, 191-210.

White, (H.) 2014 [1973]. *Metahistory: The historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe*. JHU Press.

### **Internet sources:**

Spiegel, (G.M.) 2009. The task of the historian. Presidential Address. **American Historical Review**, fev. 2009.

Disponível em: [www.historians.org/info/aha\\_history/spiegel.cfm](http://www.historians.org/info/aha_history/spiegel.cfm). Retrieved in: 2013.

“What is a book?” <https://www.physics.utoronto.ca/people/homepages/logan/ch9-what-is-a-book.pdf>

Retrieved: 04/08/2018.