

Daniel Maier

Abraham's Happiness in Second Temple Literature

Tracing the Addition of Patriarchal Emotions Across the Mediterranean¹

Abstract

In contemporary Judaism and Christianity, Abraham is mostly known for his deep faith in God “counted unto him for righteousness” (*Gen* 15:6), a topic picked up by Paul in his argument for salvation by faith in the fourth chapter of Romans. But the patriarch's faith does not seem to be the only attribute he was famous for around that time: his happiness, a character trait without direct parallel in the Hebrew Bible, is referenced by multiple Jewish authors in the Second Temple Period, including that of *Jubilees*, Philo of Alexandria, and Flavius Josephus.

Firstly, *Jubilees*, a re-narration of the events from *Genesis* and the early part of *Exodus*, adds extensive descriptions of positive emotions (e.g., *Jub* 14:21; 15:17; 16:19-20, 27, 31; 17:2-4; 22:1, 26, 28) to the Abraham narrative found in its Pentateuchal *Vorlage*. Secondly, an overview of selected passages in Philo, chiefly from his works *De Abrahamo* (esp. *Abr.* 87, 108, 115, 201-207) and *De Praemiis et Poenis* (esp. *Praem.* 27, 30) reveal that the Alexandrian's descriptions of the Abrahamitic happiness are strongly shaped by his philosophical thoughts, although with a surprising amount of similarities with the conceptions of patriarchal happiness found elsewhere. Thirdly, while not as strongly influenced regarding Abraham's positive mindset as the preceding, it is still remarkable how often Abraham gets represented as happy (e.g., *A.J.* 1:155, 223-4, 228, 236, 281) in the retelling of his life by Flavius Josephus.

¹ Dieser Aufsatz ist eine überarbeitete Version meines gleichnamigen Vortrags, den ich auf der *Annual Conference* der *European Association of Biblical Studies* im August 2019 in Warschau gehalten habe. Er stellt dabei eine gekürzte Übersicht zu meiner Forschung im Hinblick auf das im Antiken Judentum verbreitete Konzept eines glücklichen Abrahams dar, welches ich ausführlicher in meiner im Druck befindlichen Dissertation darlege. Für weiterführende Literatur und ergänzende Beispiele aus den antiken Quellen sei daher an dieser Stelle wärmstens auf folgendes Werk verwiesen: Daniel MAIER: *Das Glück im Antiken Judentum und im Neuen Testament – Eine Untersuchung zu den Konzepten eines guten Lebens in der Literatur des Zweiten Tempels und deren Einfluss auf die frühchristliche Wahrnehmung des Glücks* (WUNT II), Tübingen 2021. Ich danke Herrn Prof. Dr. Stefan Jakob Wimmer herzlich für die Aufnahme in diesen Band und hoffe, dass der hier vorliegende Beitrag am Beispiel Abrahams zum Nachdenken über das Glück als Frucht einer gelingenden Gottesbeziehung in Antike und Gegenwart anregen kann.

By comparing these three depictions of Abraham, I want to demonstrate that authors on three different continents (*Jubilees* was most likely written in Palestine, Asia; Philo composed his works in Egypt, Africa; and Josephus worked on the *Antiquities* in Rome, Europe) all had the intention to characterize their forefather as an exemplar of happiness. This was partly done to establish Abraham as a role model of a good life in accordance with Jewish laws. Like the numerous conceptions of happiness in psychology (Seligman, Lawton, etc.), the descriptions of a good life differ slightly between the three authors. Nevertheless, all of them agree that Abraham achieves his happiness through both his positive relationship with God, via which he benefits enormously on multiple personal levels and his offspring.

A. The Relationship with God

Firstly, in this regard, the relationship with God must be mentioned, which in all three authors has a fundamental influence on the happy life of the patriarch. However, the relationships with God and the effects that the divine has on human happiness differ significantly. For example, Abraham is mentioned in *Jubilees* and Philo as a “friend of God” (cf. *Jub* 19:9: *οχι ληιλκ-οκκ*; *Abr.* 273), which represents a possible allusion to *Isa* 41:8 and *2 Chr* 20:7, but this title is missing entirely in Josephus. In general, Josephus’ theology seeks to make God less anthropomorphic and to rationally explain the events described in the Hebrew Bible. In the context of these efforts, Feldman attests for Josephus that a form of friendship between God and man – even for such an essential character of Jewish history as Abraham – would be counterproductive. Instead, with Josephus, God is a distant leader who holds only the decision about the happiness of every human being in his hands (cf. *A.J.* 1:14, 113, 154).

The situation with Philo regarding the giving of the joyful life is substantially different: Even if God is always the last giving authority of happiness (cf. *Spec.* 3,219) and only he possesses the unclouded bliss (cf. *Cher.* 86; *Abr.* 202-4; *Mut.* 36-37), man and especially Abraham is to a considerable extent responsible for “working out” his happiness through virtuous behavior and wisdom. This self-responsible activity for personal well-being includes both the use of virtues (*Det.* 59-60) and contemplative reflection on the world (*Abr.* 87), which leads to the vision of God (*Abr.* 58), which is man’s greatest happiness (*Praem.* 27).

While Philo and Josephus face each other in the question of how much Abraham, but also a human in general, can do for his own happiness

and to what extent God is the unconditional giver of human happiness, this question cannot be answered so clearly from the text of *Jubilees*. This is partly, of course, due to the fact that the philosophical questions that Philo and Josephus address are much more similar to each other than the metaphysical themes that were presumably common around the time of writing of *Jubilees*. Even though it is possible that the author was rudimentarily acquainted with the Greek way of thinking, it cannot be assumed that he was familiar with the elaborate concepts of happiness in Hellenistic philosophy. Rather God is a giver – but in the figurative sense also a receiver of human happiness, insofar as it is offered as an immaterial sacrifice for him (cf. *Jub* 16:27b: “A joy acceptable to the most high God”). God induces the happiness of Abraham above all through his promises of offspring (cf. *Jub* 14:21; 15:17; 16:19) and the subsequent gift of the promised offspring, which in turn is of elementary importance for Abrahamic happiness (cf. *Jub* 16:20a, 27a, 31; 18:17-19; 22:28). This grateful happiness of Abraham is expressed both directly in the form of prayers and thanksgiving to God and in the grateful celebration of feasts. But the act of giving also differs from the metaphysical way of “giving happiness” in Philo and Josephus, where happiness is sown, for example, in the soul of the wise man (cf. *Spec.* 3:219). At the same time, such considerations – also concerning Abraham – are alien to *Jubilees*. The descriptions in *Jubilees* of Abraham’s positive attitude to life, which he aims at from the functioning relationship with God, characterize this bond as successful in an implicit way. While Philo often says precisely that certain deeds of Abraham are worth imitating and while Josephus comments on the stories of Abraham as the narrator and interprets them as he wants them to be understood – also with regard to his relationship with God – *Jubilees* is not so direct but gives the reader with the enriched narrative of Abraham only a story of an ideal and especially happy ancestor by whom it is necessary to orient oneself in order to develop a relationship with God that brings happiness just as much as this exemplary ancestor of Judaism.

B. The Idealization of the Figure of Abraham

Even if it does not strictly relate to Abraham’s happiness, it is crucial to realize how Abraham gets depicted in the three accounts. While there are still striking differences between the three authors regarding the relationship with God and God’s role for the well-being of the patriarch, the three ancient chroniclers of his life mostly agree in their efforts to idealize

the figure of Abraham. The authors also openly admit that they regard Abraham as a prime example in every respect.

Jub 23:10: "For Abraham was perfect with the Lord in everything that he did – being properly pleasing throughout all his lifetime."

Furthermore, compare for Josephus, the passage from *A.J.* 1:154-7.

A.J. 1:155: "For which reason he [Abraham] began to have higher notions of virtue than others had, and he determined to renew and to change the opinion all men happened then to have concerning God, for he was the first that ventured to publish this notion, that there was but one God, the Creator of the universe; and that, as to other [gods], if they contributed anything to the happiness (*τι πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν*) of men, that each of them afforded it only according to his appointment, and not by their own power."

As for Philo, for example, *Abr.* 60-61: "⁶⁰ Now he [Abraham], being an admirer of piety, the highest and greatest of all virtues, labored earnestly to follow God, and to be obedient to the injunctions delivered by him [...]. ⁶¹ for if anyone observes the arrangement which exists in nature, and the constitution according to which the world goes on, which is more excellent than any kind of reasoning, he learns, even though no one speaks to him, to study a course of life consistent with law and peace, looking to the example of good men."

Although the way to Abraham's knowledge of God varies from author to author, all three books describe how Abraham himself realizes that there is only one God (cf. *Jub* 11:11-24; 12:3; *Abr.* 68-89; *Virt.* 216; *A.J.* 1:154-7). In the same way, all three authors tend to omit or at least relativize Abraham's less glorious moments in order to further increase the exemplary ability of this figure (cf. *Gen* 12:10-19 in *A.J.* 1:163-4, *QG* 4:60-61 and *Jub* 13:11-16).

Moreover, Abraham is stylized by all three authors as a model of Torah faithfulness, which is crucial for his happiness, although the Thora was de facto not yet written down by Moses at Abraham's time.

C. Abraham's Faith

Although the description of Abraham's faith can be added to the exemplary representation, it is to be listed here in an extra sub-item since it plays a central role for the well-being in the depictions of Abraham's

life in Philo and *Jubilees*. As is well known, the faith of Abraham in *Gen* 15:6 (“Abram believed the Lord, and he counted it to his righteousness”) is already one of the most widely received verses in the Bible (cf. *Ps* 106, *Neh* 9, *Sir* 44, *4QPseudo-Jubilees* (4Q225), *1 Macc* 2; *Rom* 4:3, 9, 20; *Gal* 3:6; *Heb* 11:8; *Jam* 2:23) and also in the further course of world history, so that the three authors considered here are by no means an exception.

According to this tradition, *Jub* 14,6; 15:17; 16:19; 17:15-8; 18:14-16; 19:9; 23:10 and many more draw out the theme of Abraham as the faithful lover of God who conformed his own will to the divine, as Terence Fretheim remarks.² Especially at the beginning of the story of the patriarch’s life, Abraham’s trust in God and his promises provide for his happiness resulting from gratitude.

See, for example, *Jub* 15:17: “Abram was very happy and told all these things to his wife Sarai. He believed [God] that he would have descendants.”

In the sense of the exemplary character just described, Abraham is truly a “hero of faith.”³

Philo also puts great importance on the faith (*πίστις*) of Abraham for his good life, that he points out at the end of his book about Abraham:

Abr. 268: “Therefore, the only real, and true, and lasting good is trust in God (*πρὸς θεὸν πίστις*), the comfort of life, the fulfillment of all good hopes, the absence of all evils, and the attendant source of blessings, the repudiation of all unhappiness (*κακοδαιμονίας*), the recognition of piety (*εὐσεβείας*) and the inheritance of all happiness (*εὐδαιμονίας*).”

Likewise, in *Praem.* 27 this Abrahamic trust in God is also synonymous with happiness, for which the primogenitor is the model par excellence.

Following these considerations, however, it is remarkable that Josephus completely lacks the use of *πίστις* in the context of Abraham’s tradition, that is, the classical connection for “faith”. Instead, Josephus’ semantic field around the term *πίστις* encompasses – and I quote Adolf Schlatter’s famous book *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament* here – “the whole diversi-

² Cf. Terence FRETHEIM: *Abraham. Trials of Family and Faith* (Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament 1), Columbia 2007, 158.

³ Daniel MACHIELA: *On the Importance of Being Abram: Genesis Apocryphon 18, Jubilees 10:1-13:4, and Further Thoughts on Literary Relationship*, in: Eric MASON (Ed.): *A Teacher for All Generations. Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam. Volume Two* (JSJ.S 153,2), Leiden 2012, 731.

ty of human interaction, but in such a way that it has become noticeably duller, emptier.”⁴ Adolf Schlatter draws this realization from the fact that *πίστις* is never used in direct reference to God but is instead mainly limited to political statements of confidence – and in a few cases to the explanation of what the *πίστις* of the Jews is. While Josephus seems familiar with the use of *πίστις* and its derivatives as used in the LXX and in contemporary religious literature like the New Testament, he practically does not use them and thereby refrains from mentioning the – as shown – generally known faith of Abraham in the Second Temple Judaism. Because of this, Josephus could hardly associate it with the happiness of the patriarch.

D. The Role of Offspring

Following on from the previous theme, faith – especially in *Jubilees* – has to do distinctively with the protagonists’ happiness about the offspring in the immediate sense to the next generation and in the figurative sense to the people of Israel. Instances like *Jub* 14:21 and 17:1-3 show this connection between faith and offspring very clearly.

Jub 17:1-3: “¹ In the first year of the fifth week, in this jubilee, Isaac was weaned. Abraham gave a large banquet in the third month, on the day when his son Isaac was weaned. ² Now Ishmael, the son of Hagar the Egyptian, was in his place in front of his father Abraham. Abraham was very happy and blessed the Lord because he saw his sons and had not died childless. ³ He remembered the message which he had told him on the day when Lot had separated from him. He was very happy because the Lord had given him descendants on the earth to possess the land. With his full voice, he blessed the creator of everything.”

But also, outside the context of faith, concretely, when the children or even the grandchildren generation have already been born, this parental happiness is thematized in *Jubilees* (cf. *Jub* 16:26; 22:1, 26, 28).

A substantial similarity to this can be found in Josephus: “Abraham also placed his own happiness (*εὐδαιμονίαν*) in this prospect, that, when he should die, he should leave his son in a safe and secure condition” (*A.J.* 1:223) and nothing makes him “happier (*εὐδαιμονήσειν*) than to see you [Isaac] grown up to a man’s estate, and that I might leave you at my

⁴ Adolf SCHLATTER/Peter STUHLMACHER: *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*, Stuttgart ⁶1982, 586. Translation by the author of this article.

death the successor to my dominion" (*A.J.* 1:228), furthermore *A.J.* 2:213 in a retrospective show the importance of the offspring at this point for the life of the primogenitor, which can hardly be overestimated.

In Philo, there are few representations of the primogenitor's happiness about his offspring without an allegorical interpretation. But the real value of progeny for Abraham only becomes apparent through this very allegorical interpretation of Isaac as the lasting joy of his father (*Abr.* 200-7). For Philo, Isaac is the *γένος εὐδαιμονίας* – the "lineage of happiness" (*Cher.* 8; *Det.* 56) because he is destined from the beginning to a happy life according to his natural dispositions, which also has reciprocal effects on the father (cf. *Virt.* 187-227).

These three proofs show that around the time of the Second Temple, Abraham's offspring was reckoned to be fundamental for his happiness. Although the foundations for this extensive description of the Abrahamic happiness about the offspring are already laid in *Gen* 17:17 and 21:6-7 with the laughter of Sarah and those who will hear of her motherhood and the connection with Abraham in the next sentence, this is not connoted with such a lasting form of ongoing happiness as it is the case in all three authors examined here. This strong connection between Abraham's descendants and his happiness can only be found in this written form from the time of the Second Temple onwards.

E. The Aqedah - The Attempted Reappraisal of a Never-Finished Story

Of course, we cannot speak of Abraham's offspring without also going into the history of the binding of Isaac. This eternal pole of unrest within early biblical history has always been one of the most intensive and controversial objects of interpretation of Jewish and later also Christian and Muslim writers and continues to experience up to the present time new interpretations of its significance for the respective faith.

The three authors analyzed here also belong to this tradition of interpretation. However, they do have three clearly distinguishable patterns of explanation, each of which relates to the happiness of Abraham.

Jubilees tells a framework legend to the story according to which the demon prince Mastema reproaches Abraham before God that the joy of life that Abraham draws from his offspring and especially from his son Isaac is more important to him than anything else and demands God to examine him (cf. *Jub* 17:16), which answers the question about the background of this examination. Philo, on the other hand, after a de-

scription of Aqedah (*Abr.* 167-76), explains the moral superiority of the Abrahamic sacrifice over reports of child sacrifices in other cultures known to him (*Abr.* 177-99), before he turns to the allegorical interpretation – the gift of happiness to the wise (*Abr.* 200-7), which in his opinion also gives this story meaning and significance.

See *Abr.* 201: “The victim who was about to be sacrificed is called in the Chaldaean language, Isaac; but if this name be translated into the Grecian language, it signifies »laughter«; and this laughter is not understood to be that laughter of the body which is frequent in childish sport, but is the result of a settled happiness and rejoicing of the mind (ἀλλ’ ἢ κατὰ διάνοιαν εὐπάθεια καὶ χαρά).”

Finally, Josephus remains to be mentioned, who of the three authors in *A.J.* 1:222-36 stays closest to the version of Genesis. Except for the massive addition of accounts of happiness and Isaac’s willingness to make the sacrifice (*A.J.* 1:232), the story undergoes less change with Josephus than with the other two authors. Of further interest is the fact that here the tension is not resolved as to why God demands this proof of faith from Abraham.

Although the descriptions of Isaac’s bond obviously differ significantly, there are similarities regarding the protagonists’ happiness. One of these is the happiness after the scene. Therefore, after the revelation in *Jubilees* that Abraham does not need to sacrifice Isaac, he establishes a festival:

Jub 18:18-19: “¹⁸ He used to celebrate this festival joyfully for seven days during all the years. He named it the festival of the Lord in accord with the seven days during which he went and returned safely. ¹⁹ This is the way it is ordained and written on the heavenly tablets regarding Israel and his descendants: (they are) to celebrate this festival for seven days with festal happiness.”

At the end of the account of Philo – after God orders Abraham to restrain from the sacrifice – God, who “is the only nature which possesses complete happiness and blessedness (εὐδαιμονίας καὶ μακαριότητος)” (*Abr.* 202) says to Abraham:

Abr. 204: “I well know that the whole species of joy and rejoicing (τῆς χαρᾶς γένος καὶ τὸ χαίρειν) is the possession of no other being but me, who am the Father of the universe; nevertheless, though it belongs to me, I have no objection to those who deserve it enjoying a share of it.”

For Josephus finally, the *εὐδαιμονία* of Abraham is seen in his son in the context of the Aqadah again and again thematized. Both in the introduction to the scene, where the significance of Isaac for his happiness is explained twice (cf. *A.J.* 1:223-24), and in the context of the preparations for the sacrifice itself (*A.J.* 1:228), as well as in the disbandment of the situation, the happiness of the father and the son, plays an important role. In the aftermath of the binding, God promises Abraham, “that his son should live to a very great age and that he should live a happy life (*βιώσαντα εὐδαιμόνως*), and bequeath a large estate to his children, who should be good and legitimate” (*A.J.* 1:234) and afterward “they returned to Sarah and lived happily together (*διήγον εὐδαιμόνως ἐφ’ ἅπασιν*), God affording them his assistance in all things they desired.” (*A.J.* 1:236).

All three texts deal with Abraham’s happiness in this incomparable situation, sometimes more and sometimes less but always significantly different from the original text. While in *Jubilees*, the happiness and joyfulness is still mentioned in the supposedly appropriate place, namely in the feast after the turning away of the sacrifice of Isaac (cf. *Jub* 18:17-19), Josephus uses this description of the happiness of Abraham again and again while he actually expresses the complete despair of Abraham (cf. *A.J.* 1:223-24, 228). Furthermore, the meaning of the scene as a symbol of the gift of happiness to the *Wise Men* in the metatext of this scene, as Philo believes to recognize it, seems utterly alien to the two authors mentioned above or – if they knew it – not worth mentioning enough to be included in their description of the events.

F. Common Sources and Reasons for the Chosen Representation of Abraham

The question which arises in the observations just made is to what extent all these representations go back to a common source, or whether it is a widespread representation of Abraham in the synagogues, which extended at the latest from the 2nd century B.C. over the whole eastern Mediterranean area in the form of theological-exegetic conversations among Jews of all countries of origin.

The direct literary dependence of Philo towards *Jubilees* can neither be clearly confirmed nor denied and was discussed in detail by various authors, including Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer⁵, Ellen Birnbaum⁶, and Alan

⁵ Jutta LEONHARDT-BALZER: *Jewish worship in Philo of Alexandria* (TSAJ 84), Tübingen 2001.

⁶ Ellen BIRNBAUM: *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought. Israel, Jews, and Proselytes* (Studia Philonica Monographs 2), Atlanta 2007.

Mendelson⁷, in the context of the question of Philo's Jewish education. On the one hand, there are overlapping themes in both authors, such as the origin of light before creation on the third day in *Jub* 2:2 and *Opif.* 55 and the interpretation of the Garden of Eden as a place of joy (cf. *Jub* 2:7 and *Leg.* 1,45), as well as of course the positive portrayal of Abraham and his happiness through his faith and his descendants. On the other hand, it was argued that two interpreters of the same text could come to the same conclusions so that these sporadic similarities – especially since they do not appear in the same formulation – do not make a positive statement about dependencies. Nevertheless, according to James Kugel – considering the importance of *Jubilees* at the time of Philo's work (15 versions of the book in Qumran, as well as translations into Syriac and Greek) – it can be assumed that Philo was at least indirectly influenced by the ideas of *Jubilees*, which was also reflected in his work on Abraham.⁸ Therefore, a direct dependence is to be rejected as unlikely, whereas an indirect influence of the Abraham conception of *Jubilees* through oral transmission on Philo seems quite possible.

In dealing with their sources, as in so many other things, the authors also show enormous differences: while *Jubilees* pretends that God calls Moses to Sinai and dictates to him precisely the words found in *Jubilees* (cf. *Jub* 1:1-7), so that the question of source references is by definition unnecessary, and Philo speaks willingly and much about his Hellenistic sources (cf. e.g., Plato in *Opif.* 119, 133; *Prob.* 13; *Contempl.* 57; *Aet.* 13-14 116, 141; Zenon in *Prob.* 53, 57, 97, 160 and Chrysippus in *Aet.* 48, 90, 94), but mostly conceals his Jewish sources apart from the Torah and mentions no other sources apart from the five books of Moses on Abraham, Josephus provides relatively early in his narration of the history of Abraham in *A.J.* 1:158-60 an essential reference to his literary starting points, namely by allowing various non-Jewish writers to speak who dealt directly or indirectly with Abraham to demonstrate the significance of Abraham in different cultures. Here he names the Marduk priest Berosos, who dedicated a Babylonian story to Antiochos I. Soter, Hecataeus of Abdera, and Nicolaus of Damascus, the advisor and court writer of Herod the Great.

⁷ Alan MENDELSON: *Philo's Jewish Identity* (SPhiloA 161), Atlanta 1988.

⁸ James KUGEL: *A Walk through Jubilees. Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of its Creation* (JSJ.S 156), Leiden 2012, 402-3.

Since – apart from Nicolaus of Damascus – none of the authors seemed to really know Judaism any better, Günter Mayer assumes that the sources for the Abraham story given by Josephus were Jewish propaganda⁹, which – with Berossos and Hecataeus very certainly and with Nicolaus of Damascus probably – was later inserted into their works as propaganda for Greeks interested in Judaism. The figure of Abraham was particularly suitable for propaganda since, in his covenant with God in the visible sign of circumcision (cf. *Gen 17:10-14*), the symbol for the possible conversion to Judaism was subsumed.

From this, in particular, the question arises whether the apologetically intended passages on Abraham, from the historical works which Josephus states to receive, form the origin of Josephus' tendency to represent the patriarch under the aspect of a happy life or whether this nevertheless simply happened based on possibly non-written sources which were widespread. However, since none of the sources on Abraham cited by Josephus are still available today and their actual influence on Josephus is highly controversial, it is impossible to verify their statement on the primogenitor. What is certain, however, is that Josephus is not only close to the material of *Jubilees* in the just described tendency to idolize Abraham, but also in other narrative and ideological aspects. Betsy Halpern-Amaru examines in her article "Flavius Josephus and »*The Book of Jubilees*«. A Question of Source" on the basis of 28 parallels the dependence on the works of Josephus on *Jubilees* and concludes that "the simplest, and by Ockham's razor the most credible, explanation for the affinities is that Josephus, like his contemporaries, the sectarians at Qumran, was familiar with the *Book of Jubilees*."¹⁰ Due to a large number of Haggadic elements in Josephus' works, Jonathan Klawans also concludes that Josephus is likely to be loosely familiar with *Jubilees* even if he not necessarily had access to the book itself.¹¹

That Josephus knew of the figure of Philo, nevertheless, is undisputed since he mentions the Alexandrine directly in his writings (cf. *A.J.* 18:259-60). However, since the few direct parallels in content can be explained differently and because he makes entirely dissimilar statements in other places than Philo, for example about the Essene community, it cannot be assumed that Josephus is significantly familiar with the works and the way

⁹ Günter MAYER: *Aspekte des Abrahambildes in der hellenistisch-jüdischen Literatur*, in: *Evangelische Theologie* 32 (1972), 118-9.

¹⁰ Betsy HALPERN-AMARU: *Flavius Josephus and "The Book of Jubilees". A Question of Source*, in: *HUCA* 72 (2001), 44.

¹¹ Jonathan KLAWANS: *Josephus and the Theologies of Ancient Judaism*, Oxford 2012, 138, 278.

of thinking of Philo. Since the interpretations within the Abraham-narrative by the two authors are quite different, Josephus probably did not explicitly appreciate or even know the special works of Philo on Abraham, such as *De Abrahamo* and *De migratione Abrahami*.

Taking all these considerations presented here into account, we get a picture of a loose influence of the thoughts of *Jubilees* on Philo's conception of Judaism and also in respect to Josephus a loose connection to Philo as well as to *Jubilees*. Simultaneously, however, in the context of the comparison of Abraham's representations and on closer examination of the similarities between the authors, it is evident that no author acted as a particularly authoritative or primary source for the respective later works. The primary source and thus the starting point for their narratives remained the original story from the Torah. Rather, the predecessors were passed on to a large extent by oral tradition. This also coincides with the significant differences in Abraham's portrayals, which were worked out in this paper, since all share the basic tendencies of a positive portrayal of Abraham as a luminary of happiness, but in the end, these differ considerably from author to author in the works available today.

G. Summary: The Role of Abraham and Further Implications

In summary, the "synoptic comparison" shows that all three authors undoubtedly endeavored to present Abraham as an exemplary figure of the early period. An important part of this "role-model" of Abraham was his happiness. By this comparison, it hopefully became clear that this tendency to depict Abraham as an example of happiness over three different continents in Antiquity is by no means coincidence. The first half of this analysis of the image of Abraham could also show that many ideas projected into the figure of Abraham by the individual authors overlapped to a certain extent, such as the decisive role of his offspring for his well-being and the special relation to God, which enabled him to be this happy.

However, in a direct evaluation – particularly clear from the description of Aqedah last examined here – it can be observed that a direct dependence is very unlikely since the use of the distinct individual concepts of happiness took place again and again in different instances of the story. Consequently, from the three accounts of Abraham, we looked at in this paper, we can deduct that there probably was not the one source about Abraham that influenced all of the authors because, therefore, the differences are just too significant.

What we learn from this for the field of New Testament Studies, meanwhile, can be very valuable. Considering that these accounts of Abraham can be dated before, around, and shortly after the composition of most of the books of the New Testament, we have reasons to suspect that Abraham's happiness was a specific trait for his figure around this time. So, if the figure of Abraham gets mentioned in the New Testament, which happens 73 times, we must keep in mind that maybe one image the author had of Abraham was, amongst many other character traits, his exemplary happiness.

Instances where this is most remarkable are *Lk 16:19-31*, *Joh 8:56*, and *Rom 4*. At the end of the 16th chapter of the gospel of Luke, the bosom of Abraham gets described as the opposite of suffering and as the place where Lazarus can experience that good, which his earthly life lacked. Especially considering that the bosom of Abraham is a place of happiness shortly before his death in *Jub 22-23*, which gets often overlooked by commentators, makes this an exciting passage. Furthermore, the rejoicing Abraham of *Joh 8:56*, where Jesus says: "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad", is easier to understand when Abraham is interpreted from the background we examined in this paper. Finally, there is the possibility that the multiple usages of *μακάριος* in *Romans 4* are also influenced by the idea that the patriarch was exemplary in his happiness.

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