

Albert Pietersma "Yohanah and his Brother," *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James Vanderkam. Oxford University Press 2000, 2008, 1000-1001.

Yohanah and his Brother.

Yohanah and his brother are the henchmen of Belial in the Damascus Document (CD v.17b-19; 4Q266 3.ii.6-8 [13-15]; 4Q267 2.1-3; 6Q15 3.1-2). Referring to the biblical Exodus, it states, "in ancient times, Moses and Aaron arose by the hand of the Prince of Lights and Belial in his cunning raised up Yohanah and his brother when Israel was first delivered." They are not encountered elsewhere in the documents from the Judean Desert, though with a new identity they appear frequently in later Jewish, Christian, and pagan literature as Jannes and Jambres , the Egyptian magicians. Starting in 1910 with Solomon Schechter's publication of the Cairo Genizah manuscripts of the Damascus Document, the two pairs of brothers have been consistently but erroneously equated without proper qualification.

Linguistically, the Greek Jannes is clearly derived from the Hebrew Yohanah and is sometimes given in its longer and more familiar form, Yohannes. The second brother, nameless in the Damascus Document, with time acquired a name (Jambres), apparently based on the Hebrew root mrh ("agitate, rebel"). In biblical literature their appearance is limited to 2 Timothy 3.8 , where they are mentioned only in passing ("as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses").

That Yohanah and his brother are portrayed in the Damascus Document as opponents of Moses and Aaron at the time of Israel's Exodus from Egypt is explicitly stated; less clear, however, is their ethnic affiliation. In part due, one suspects, to Schechter's identification of the brothers with the Egyptian magicians of later tradition, many scholars have judged the passage in question to be intrusive in its present context. P. R. Davies (*The Damascus Covenant*, Sheffield, 1983 , p. 121), however, has rightly seen it as integral to the argument at hand and illustrative of the preceding charge that Israel had shown a lack of understanding. More broadly, just as Israel committed the other acts of waywardness enumerated in the Damascus Document (4Q266 3, 4Q267 2, 4Q269 3-4, 6Q15 1.3), so she had followed false leaders rather than the divinely appointed

Moses and Aaron. This tradition of Israel's apostasy in Egypt, though at variance with the account of Exodus (cf. Ex. 5.21), is not only found in other biblical passages (Ezek. 20.7–8, 23.3; Jos. 24.14) and rabbinic literature (L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, vol. 2, p. 345 [Philadelphia, 1920 , 1969]), but is also attested elsewhere in the Damascus Document, namely, CD iii.5–6 (cf. 4Q269 2), which states that the descendants of Jacob's sons acted stubbornly and willfully transgressed God's commandments.

Only if the Damascus Document (CD v.17b–19) is read anachronistically in light of the later Jannes and Jambres tradition can it be maintained that Yohanah and his brother are identical with the Egyptian magicians of Exodus fame. Read in context, however, it is clear that the pair had an Israelite following and that they themselves were apostate Israelites, as is underscored by the Hebrew name of the named brother.

Viewed in light of the inner-Jewish conflict of the last two centuries bce, the typological role of the ancient apostate leaders becomes distinctly possible. Georg Molin (1951) and A. Dupont-Sommer (1962) suggest that "Yohanah and his brother" was a veiled reference to Hyrcanus II (63 – 40 bce) and his brother Aristobulus II (67 – 63 bce). L. Moraldi (1971) favored Aristobulus I (104 – 103 bce) and Alexander Jannaeus (103 – 76 bce). But a more likely pair are the Maccabean brothers Jonathan and Simon who, according to 1 Maccabees (9.33, 9.37, 9.65, 10.74), regularly acted in concert. Since the linguistic distinction between the Hebrew Yonatan and Yohanah (Yohanah = 4Q266, 4Q267) is more apparent than real, as well-known confusion of the names demonstrates, it presents no obstacle to this identification.

Yohanah and his brother, the apostate Israelites, continued their literary life as Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians and stereotypical opponents of Moses and Aaron. A book was written about them, probably sometime in the first century ce, in Greek on Egyptian soil (Pietersma, 1994).

[See also Alexander Jannaeus ; Hasmoneans.]

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