

FRAGMENTS OF A MIDRASH ON GENESIS
FROM QUMRAN CAVE 4

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After long anticipation the fifth volume of the series *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan*, which is the first in a series of volumes that will present the material from Qumran cave 4 has now appeared.¹ J. M. Allegro — one of eight researchers who are occupied with the editing of the material from cave 4 — here publishes his portion. A considerable part of the material brought here — is not new, and has already been published by Allegro in various periodicals between the years 1954–1964.² The material from this cave, which was discovered as long ago as 1952, has no comparison in any of the caves from Qumran, either with regard to its scope, or from the viewpoint of its importance.³

On pages 77–79 (pl. xxvii), Allegro publishes fragments from a composition entitled by him “The Ages of Creation” (fragment 180). The largest fragment (1), has already been published by him — together with a fragment from another composition (in the volume under discussion, fragment 181) — as: “Fragments of Pseudepigraphical Literature from Qumran’s Cave 4”.⁴ Allegro ascribes frs. 2–4 (pp. 78–79) to the composition “The Ages of Creation” mentioned above.

And these are the fragments (2–4, column II; Only a few letters of col. 1 are discernible):

Col. II

]ן ן[]ן יה הוא אשר שכן ן[1 אשר א[
]ן ש ן[]ת יפה א ן[יפ ן[2 אדע]
]שלושת האנשי ן[3 ן[
]ם מאלוני ממרה מלאכי ן[4

- 1 John M. Allegro (with the collaboration of Arnold A. Anderson), *Qumran Cave 4, I* (4Q158–4Q186). (= *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan*, V). Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1968.
- 2 Compare my review of the volume in *Kirjath Sepher*, 45 (1970)
- 3 For a preliminary description of the material from the cave, see: F. M. Cross *et al.*, *RB* 63 (1956), 56–67; *BA* 19 (1956), 83–96.
- 4 *Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society*, 4 (1962–63), 1964, 3–5.

חטאתמה]	יעמוד]	5
ה נא ואד ה	יה מא]	6
	שה כל לא אד]	7
א]	אש]	8
	דובר] ... [אראה כיא הכול]	9
	בטרם בראם ידע מחשב[ותיהם]	10

According to Allegro (p. 78): "Fragments 2 and 3 have been particularly badly preserved, and even infra-red photographs make their inscription barely legible."

It is clear that fr. 4, of which two lines have remained (II: 9–10)⁵, does not belong with frs. 2–3. Furthermore, like fr. 1, and in contradistinction to frs. 2–3, it has been preserved in good readable condition. Also from the verse: **בטרם** [ונהיה **כטרם בראם הכין** (line 10), which recalls fr. I, l. 2: **כטרם בראם ידע מחשב[ותיהם]** (line 10), which recalls fr. I, l. 2: **ונהיה כטרם בראם הכין**; **כטרם בראם ידע מחשב[ותיהם]**], we may conclude that frs. 2–3 do not belong to this composition.

In column II, 11. 3–4, it is possible to read (with Allegro):

שלושת האנשים]] *	3
ם מאלוני ממרה מלאכים המה]		4

Apparently, here we have a midrash to Gen. 18. Compare TJ, who interprets in ch. 18: 2, MT "אנשים" — **מלאכין בדמות גוברין** (cp. *ib.* 16, 22). The same in Neofiti to v. 2; **מלאכין בדמות גברין** (cp. *ib.* 22)⁶.

The interchanging of **אנשים** — **מלאכים**, is already found in the Massoretic text itself: **אנשים** (*ib.*; and also, 19: 5, 8, 10, 12, 16) — **מלאכים** (19: 1, 15).

Cp. likewise:

19: 12, MT **ויאמרו המלאכים**; Sam. **ויאמרו האנשים**.⁷

19: 16, MT **ויחזיקו האנשים**; LXX: *οἱ ἄγγελοι*;⁸ Syriac: **מלאכא**.

Of 11. 5–7 of this composition, Allegro was successful in reading:

חטאתמה]	יעמוד]	5
ה נא ואד ה	יה מא]	6
	שה כל לא אד]	7

5 And not as Allegro maintains (p. 79): 11. 8–10. L. 8 belongs to fr. 3.

6 According to the Bab. Tal., B. M., 86b, Ber. Rabba 50, 2. Also Josephus (*Antiquities* I, 196) speaks of *τρεῖς ἄγγελοι*.

7 With the exception of 19: 12 Sam. reads in every instance **אנושים** (a spelling which is found only here in Sam.), in order to emphasize their celestial nature, and to differentiate them from **אנשים**, who are mortal beings. Cp.: P. Kahle, *ZA* 17 (1903), 11, 12; S. Talmon, *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 8 (1961), 368, and note 96. In addition to the material which Talmon adduces (*ib.* p. 369) concerning the interchange of **איש** — **מלאך** in the Bible, cp.:

Jos. 2: 1 (Cp. 2,3,4 etc): **וישלח יהושע... אנשים מרגלים**

Ib., 6: 25 (Cp. *ib.*, 17) **...המלאכים אשר שלח יהושע לרגל את יריחו**

8 Also, in verse 10 (MT: **וישלחו האנשים**), some MSS of the LXX read: *οἱ ἄγγελοι*.

Well recognizable here are remnants of Gen. 18: 20–21, which Allegro was unable to complete:

ועמורה לִינא רבה וְחַטָּאתָמָה כְּנִיאָ
 כְּבֹדָה מֵאֵדָה [אַרְדָּה נָא וְאַרְאָה] הַכְּצַעֲקָתָנָה הַבְּאָהָה
 אֵלֵי עַשְׂה כְּלָה וְאַם לֹא אֲדַעֲנָה

The midrash to the fragment cited (beginning in 1. 8) has not been preserved.