

Plato's 'Noble Lies' – The Pentateuch and the New Testament

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CUCK-OLD-RY-ISM

pla-gia-rism (*abducting* an egg *from* someone else's nest, and claiming to be its true parent)

plagiarism

cuck-old-ry-ism (*laying* an egg *in* someone else's nest, intentionally concealing its true parentage)

cuckoldryism is **plagiarism** in *reverse*. Yes, I have just now coined this new word!

This *short note* is an afterthought arising from my recent article, touching on the topic of 'plagiarism', "**Christianity Is a Western Branch of Buddhism**" & **C.S. Peirce's 'Abduction'** (January 8, 2023).

The metaphoric 'nest' in my recent article would be the 'brain' of any scholar who is unaware of Eusebius of Caesarea's fraudulent faking of the "Letter of Pseudo-Aristeas", and interpolated passages of Philo's *Moses* 2.36-37, and Flavius Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XII, Chapter 2.

On my view, any scholar who believes that Philo's *Moses* 2.36-37 passages were genuinely written by Philo, or that Flavius Josephus's passages in his *Antiquities*, XII, 2: 5, 6, & 13, were genuinely written by Josephus, is being mentally cuckolded by someone else. I believe this 'someone else' was the great "historian" of Christianity, Bishop Eusebius, who was writing in the 1st quarter of the 4th century CE.

It may appear that I am being very harsh with 'Saint Eusebius'. But that is not at all my intention. In *The Unknown Buddha of Christianity: The Crypto-Buddhism of the Essenes (Therapeutae and Qumranites)* (2019), I have argued, in the book's section entitled 'How Crypto-Buddhism Won the West!', pp. 147-175, that Eusebius was only following the advice of the Greek philosopher, Plato, concerning 'Noble Lies'! It was the same advice taken – more than 550 years earlier – in the Library and Museum of Alexandria, by the *compilers* of the Hebrew Pentateuch, who then *translated* it into the Greek Septuagint.

Does the reader know that the female cuckoo bird makes reconnoitering flights to check out the nest where she plans to surreptitiously lay her eggs? She takes note of her victim's onset of egg laying – even the color and size of the eggs of the poor unwitting victim! – female cuckoos are known to adjust the color and size of their own eggs as a match. **Next: How Plato's 'Noble Lies' are 'Cuckoo's Eggs'!**

Plato's dialogue, *The Laws*, provided vital foundational influence on the rise of Christianity in the second quarter of the second century CE. Influence (in English translation) often called 'Noble Lies'. Metaphorically I would call these the 'Cuckoo's Eggs of Purposeful Misinformation'. It has been understood that Plato's ideal ruler, his high officials, and scholars *would know that they were not true*. But every effort would be made by the ruling class to keep the ordinary citizens ignorant of the truth.

Disclaimer: *In this article, I [ML] am not at all intent on determining what Plato may have really meant by his discussion of these so-called 'Noble Lies'. What I want to emphasize here is the historical use made of his discussion by later rulers, their administrators, and advisors.*

Neil Godfrey, writes of such *later* events in "How Plato Inspired Moses: Creation of the Hebrew Bible" < <https://vridar.org/category/book-reviews.../gmirkin-plato-and-creation-of-hebrew-bibl...> >, which comments on one of Russell E. Gmirkin's epoch-making books, *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible [PCHB]* (New York: Routledge, 2016), and is filed under 'Gmirkin: Plato and Creation of the Hebrew Bible', in Godfrey's blog, 'VRIDAR':

"Plato's *Laws* provides the only example in antiquity of an ethical or national literature comparable to the Hebrew Bible. . . ."

One may therefore reasonably propose that the biblical authors not only found in Plato's *Laws* a blueprint for the creation of a persuasive legal code, but a mandate and program for the creation of an authoritative national literature intended to supplement and bolster the laws of the Torah. (Gmirkin, 264)

After having demonstrated the many details, themes and values that the books of the Hebrew Bible share with Greek literature, practices and ideas, Russell Gmirkin concludes with a chapter examining how closely the biblical canon appears to match Plato's recommendations for a national curriculum. There are certainly Canaanite and Mesopotamian fingerprints in the "Old Testament" but these Scriptures are unlike anything else produced in the ancient Near East. The Hellenistic heritage explains that difference.

The ancient Judean and then Christian authors used to say that Plato got his best ideas from Moses. Gmirkin's thesis is that the evidence points to the borrowing being in the other direction, that the Judean authors of the Bible found their inspiration in Plato.

I doubt that any Westerner can read Plato's *Laws* and not at some point think of a comparison with the Bible. I certainly could not avoid the comparisons. [...]

Laws had an ancient and divine origin

Gmirkin [...] emphasizes the importance to Plato that the new laws should not appear to be innovations. On the contrary, myths had to be composed to give the laws an air of great antiquity and divine origin. The peoples' ancestors, it must be taught, had always kept these laws. *PCHB* quotes one of several key passages from *Laws*:

If there exist laws under which men have been reared up and which (by the blessing of Heaven) have remained unaltered for many centuries, so that there exists no recollection or report of their ever having been different from what they now are, then the whole soul is forbidden by reverence and fear to alter any of the things established of old. By hook or by crook, then, the lawgiver must devise a means whereby this shall be true of his State. (Plato, *Laws* 7.798a-b) (Gmirkin, 254)

Plato was imagining a brand new colony being established with a perfect start. The citizens were to be new arrivals into the territory and to be taught that they were the descendants of the original inhabitants divinely commissioned to restore the ancient city or "nation". The new settlement was to be divided into twelve nominal tribes.

Laws to be presented through a charter myth

A third goal was to create a charter myth for those divine laws in the dramatic narrative form of a foundation story that forged a powerful sense of national identity in those who adopted this literary narrative as their own historical past as descendants of the ancient children of Israel. The refounding of the Jewish nation in the early Hellenistic Era, with new civic and religious institutions and a new constitution and laws, was thus successfully portrayed as a new edition of the ancient writings of Moses, the divine legislator, educator and founder of the ancient Jewish nation, in line with the Platonic legislative agenda. (Gmirkin, 262)

Gmirkin argues that a Judean scribal elite took up the task of fulfilling Plato's ideal from around the year 270 BCE in the Great Library of Alexandria, Egypt. It follows that the books comprising the Jewish Scriptures were composed within a relatively short span of time and not, as has long been believed, over centuries.

Although Plato's *Laws* promised eternal fame to any legislator who followed his bold legislative plans (12.969a-b), Plato also said it was essential that the legislators contrive to portray the laws as having been observed for untold centuries (7.798a-b), a goal that would seemingly require the legislators to obscure their role to future generations. The incompatible objectives of legislative fame and anonymity was historically achieved for the Seventy of ca. 270 BCE, who were credited with the Septuagint and honored at Alexandria by subsequent generations as inspired prophets and legislators on

a par with the seventy elders at Mount Sinai (Philo, *Life of Moses* 2.41-42), but in the role of translators, not authors. (Gmirkin, n. 113, p. 289)

And it worked

Plato imagined his ideal colony settling in a brand new (unoccupied) land, beginning with the young who had been separated from their parents, in order to work. Falling short of such an “ideal”, the Jews have nonetheless been known as the “people of the book”. Their identity, their history, their religion, their ethics and laws, are all defined by “the book”, a book which has long been known to contain echoes of Plato.

Jewish, Christian and “pagan” authors alike more-or-less independently rediscovered the extensive and striking commonalities between Plato and the Hebrew Bible. It is remarkable how often scholars in the Hellenistic and Roman eras were compelled to comment on the striking parallels between the Hebrew Bible and Greek literature, especially Plato’s dialogues. Comparisons between Platonic philosophy and biblical teachings were made by Jewish intellectuals such as Aristobulus (fl. ca. 150 BCE), Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE - 50 CE), and Flavius Josephus (37 - ca. 100 CE); Church Fathers such as Justin Martyr (ca.150 CE), Clement of Alexandria (ca.150-215 CE), Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339 CE), and Augustine (354-430 CE); and even Gentile writers such as the Neo-Pythagorean philosopher Numenius of Apamea (2nd century CE). Virtually every scholar in antiquity who was proficient in both Platonic and Mosaic writings agreed that there was a direct relationship between the two. (Gmirkin, 271)

It is not enough to grasp only the concepts of what Gmirkin and Godfrey are pointing out. One must follow through with the realization that when one studies the origins of Christianity, one should thus guard one’s mind (one’s mental “nest”) from being ‘cuckolded’ by eggs filled with ‘Noble Lies’!

The Greeks, long before Plato, were founding numerous “city-states” outside their own territories. First and foremost of concerns for prospective rulers and their administrative, military, and cultural leaders would have been to determine the *laws* that would guide them. Were the ruling class in all of these colonies filling the minds of their common people with ‘Noble Lies’? Very probably they were, since this deceptive practice can be traced back to King Nebuchadnezzar-II (r.y. 605-562 BCE), some 200 years before Plato.

Irving Finkel, in the YouTube video, “[The World's Worst Script: Cuneiform](#)” (from 35:40 to 38:50), informs us that Nebuchadnezzar-II, in the inscription Finkel calls the “East India House Inscription”, clearly reveals why the Babylonian king had ordered the inscription to be engraved in an *archaic script*. Yes, Nebuchadnezzar’s precise excuse for deceiving his subjects (giving them false impressions of these laws being divinely established, long prior to the 6th century BCE) is that his subjects will be more law-abiding! – thus pre-dating Plato’s similar excuse by some 200 years.

Plato died ca. 348. *Plato’s student*, **Aristotle**, would have continued disseminating Plato’s views, as well as developing his own theories. **Alexander the Great**, *was a student of Aristotle*, and later, when he became king, and *Aristotle was still living*, he carried out his plan of defeating the Persian empire, putting into practice what he had learned from Plato and Aristotle, in governing this greatest of empires, which included Egypt and Palestine, from 332 BCE. Nine years later, in 323, on his way back from India, Alexander, age 32, died in Babylon. On the break-up of Alexander’s empire, **Ptolemy**, one of Alexander’s most trusted generals, & his boyhood companion & *fellow student with him under Aristotle’s tutelage*, became satrap (viceroy) of Egypt and Palestine. We, thus, should understand Ptolemy became the *de facto* ruler of Egypt and Palestine, in 323 – though it was only 18 years later that he assumed the title ‘King’, or more precisely, ‘Pharaoh’, and is now referred to as Ptolemy-I (Soter), founder of his dynasty.

Let me summarize:

- 1) We have, here, very clear-cut evidence, engraved on stone, in the 6th century BCE inscription of **Nebuchadnezzar-II**, where the king orders his scribe to engrave his edict using an *archaic script*. (Evidently, the king's ordinary subjects, were not literate, and yet were obviously still able to distinguish between the appearance of contemporary and ancient writing – *and thus be deceived!*)
Note: all the king's scribes, as well as his top advisors would be aware of this deception.
- 2) **Plato**, through the character of Socrates in his *Dialogues*, made well-known this idea of so-called 'Noble Lying'. Plato, himself, *ca.* 368 BCE, traveled to Syracuse to tutor the grandson of its fearsome tyrant ruler, Dionysius the Elder (recently deceased), and son of Dionysius the Younger (a more moderate ruler). It did not end well. Justice is not easily served by Plato's doctrine.
- 3) **Aristotle**, Plato's student, was invited by King Philip-II of Macedon to his court to tutor his son, Alexander. Ptolemy (a friend of Alexander, some ten years older) joined him as a fellow student of Aristotle. Thus, surely, they learned *together* the momentous lesson of Plato's 'Noble Lie' *directly* from Plato's most famous student!
- 4) **Alexander**, embraced the 'Noble Lie', becoming the consummate actor, playing various roles: as ruler of Persia, he wore Persian clothes, married a Persian princess; and as ruler of Egypt, playing the part of a god-like Pharaoh. This is foundational myth-making of the highest degree, in order to increase his influence on the defeated populations. But don't believe for a moment that his own Greek officers and men were likewise impressed.
- 5) **Ptolemy[-I]**, after Alexander's sudden death, also adopted the same use of the 'Noble Lie' and quickly established himself as the *de facto* ruler of Egypt, following in Alexander's footsteps by assuming the mythological role of pharaoh, an Egyptian demigod, and striving in every way to show that he, indeed, was Alexander's rightful heir.

It becomes important, at this point, to show how Ptolemy-I, as ruler of Egypt, faced a very different situation than what the rulers of the earlier Greek colonies had faced. As Plato had already theorized, his colonists were coming from single city-states and they were to settle in "unoccupied" lands – not ruled by any powerful state. In contrast, Ptolemy took charge of a country which had been ruled for millennia by numerous dynasties, whose central power had firm control over its cities, towns, & villages.

Andrew Erskine, in "Culture and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt: The Museum and Library of Alexandria", *Greece & Rome*, Vol. xlii, No. 1 (April 1995), pp. 33-44, writes about how Ptolemy not only created the Museum and Library of Alexandria in order to support his claim of being the rightful heir of Alexander, but took several other significant steps to strengthen that claim.

Ptolemy's creation of the Museum appears to be the result of a serendipitous effort of his to recreate in Alexandria an Aristotelian type of institution, the kind that he and Alexander had experienced first hand as students of Aristotle. Erskine quotes the geographer Strabo's brief description of the city of Alexandria, some 300 years after Ptolemy's establishment of the Museum:

The city has extremely beautiful public precincts and also the royal palaces, which cover a fourth or a third of the whole city area. For just as the kings, from love of splendour, would add some ornament to the public monuments, so at his own expense he would provide himself a residence in addition to the existing ones, so that now in the words of the poet 'there is building upon building'. But all are linked with each other and with the harbour, even those which lie outside it. The Museum is also part of the palace complex; it has a covered walkway, a hall for the learned men who share the Museum. This group of men have communal possessions and a priest in charge of the Museum, who used to be appointed by the kings but is now appointed by Caesar.⁵

⁵Strabo 17.793-4.

Erskine, in “Culture and Power in Ptolemaic Egypt”, pp. 43-44, writes of Ptolemy’s showcasing his impressive regal powers publicly with a truly awe-inspiring religious cum military procession:

A dramatic expression of Greek identity came in the form of a spectacular religious procession which took place in Alexandria in the early third century B.C. The only source for this procession is a lengthy description in Athenaeus, who found his information in a book called ‘On Alexandria’ by a certain Callixenus of Rhodes.³⁰ It is not known how common such events were in Alexandria. The emphasis in the surviving account of the procession is on Dionysus but it is evident that he was not the only god honoured in the celebration. The visual impact would have been tremendous, as some examples will demonstrate. There was a four-wheeled float, 21 ft long on which was a 15 ft statue of Dionysus, dressed in purple, saffron, and gold and surrounded by gold objects. It took 180 men to drag this float along. It was followed by an extraordinary statue, which was drawn by 60 men. This statue surprised the crowd by standing up mechanically, pouring a libation of milk, and then sitting down again. On another float pulled by 300 men there was an enormous wine press in which 60 men dressed as Satyrs trampled on ripe grapes and sang. The procession also consisted of numerous animals: there were 2,400 dogs including Indian, Hyrcanian, and Molossian dogs, sheep from Ethiopia, Arabia, and Euboea, cows from India and Ethiopia. Then there were more exotic animals: leopards, cheetahs, lions, a giraffe, an Ethiopian rhinoceros, and cages of all sorts of birds. The procession concluded with a display of Ptolemaic military forces, consisting of over 57,000 infantry and over 23,000 cavalry. Ptolemy’s control over both the human and the natural world is forcefully demonstrated.³¹

This procession is very revealing about Ptolemaic Egypt. In essence it is a religious procession, but its magnificence and its content transform it into something more than this. For anyone watching, whether they are foreigners, who might be paying a visit or there on a diplomatic mission, or Alexandrian Greeks or native Egyptians, the procession hammers out the message of Ptolemy’s enormous wealth and power.³² For Alexandrian Greeks, both those watching and those taking part, it will be a celebration and affirmation of Greekness. But it is even more than this; it is also a procession shouting out Greek superiority to any native Egyptians who happen to be in the vicinity. Thus in a popular, visual form the procession embodies those same elements which were observed above in the case of the Library and Museum.

But the Procession also reflects Ptolemaic aspirations to rule. On one level these aspirations are represented by the very fact of the procession, but they are also visible in the detail of the images used in the procession. There was a float on which statues of Alexander and Ptolemy stood together, thus emphasizing the association between Alexander and Ptolemy. Alongside Ptolemy was placed a statue representing the city of Corinth. This is rather enigmatic but it is most likely that it represents the League of Corinth, the League of Greek cities set up by Philip of Macedon and used by Alexander for the war against Persia. The implication here is that Ptolemy was now heir to Alexander’s leadership of the Greek cities of the mainland. Thus the next float contained expensively dressed women, who are said by Athenaeus to represent ‘the cities of Ionia and the rest of the Greek cities of Asia and the islands which had been subdued by the Persians’. As this cart followed Alexander and Ptolemy, it again suggests the leadership of Alexander and his heir Ptolemy, this time over Greeks won by Alexander from the Persians. So Ptolemy is emphasizing his claim to leadership over the Greeks.³³ This claim or even assertion of leadership can be found in the reigns of both Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II. The first Ptolemy announced himself to be the champion of Greek freedom, the second is praised by the court poet Theocritus for the extent of his rule outside of Egypt, and is praised by the League of the Islands of the Aegean for all the benefits he has given the islands and the rest of the Greeks.³⁴ In these statements they were echoing the image Ptolemy II was himself projecting.

³⁰ Athen. 5.197-203, *FGH* 627 F2; E.E Rice, *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Oxford, 1983)..

³¹ On the role of animals, see K.M Coleman, ‘Ptolemy Philadelphus and the Roman amphitheatre’ in W.J. Slater (ed.), *Roman Theatre and Society* (Ann Arbor, forthcoming 1995).

³² Perhaps reinforced by the presence of a 180 ft gold phallus in the procession, Athen. 5.201e.

³³ Athen. 5.201d-e; on these statues and their interpretation, Rice, op. cit. (n. 30), pp. 102-10.

³⁴ Diod. 19.62.1-2, 20.37.2; Theoc. 17.77-94; *SIG*³ 390, esp. lines 10-20

As Erskine says, Callixenus's report suggest that this religious procession was primarily in honor of the Greek god Dionysus, though other Greek gods were present, including the shoulder-to-shoulder images of those Greek 'demigods', Alexander and Ptolemy.

Understandably, there was no mention of any Egyptian god in this procession, dedicated chiefly to Dionysus. On the other hand, there is no hint of any anti-Egyptian sentiment in the procession. Of course, the 57,000 marching infantry and 23,000 cavalry soldiers would have made quite clear to everyone the Greeks' overwhelming military power.

Ptolemy's Museum was dedicated to the nine Muses, the *Greek* goddesses credited with inspiring humans to develop the various arts and sciences. But note that the 'daughter' library, next to the Museum in the palace complex of buildings, was housed in *another* temple, this one dedicated to the major *Egyptian* goddess, Isis, and her brother/husband, Osiris. When scholars credit Ptolemy-I with creating the Græco-Egyptian cult of Serapis, they may not realize that the Museum and Library formed the very foundation of that cult. Ptolemy the First's son, Ptolemy the Second (Philadelphus), later went so far as to strengthen the Egyptian flavor of this syncretic union by following the pharaonic custom of marrying his full sister, Arsinoë-II, an *incestuous* Egyptian practice followed by later male Ptolemaic rulers!



King Ptolemy-II & his sister/wife, Queen Arsinoë-II

Courtesy of Wikipedia

Plato's 'Noble Lying'

Most Christian & Jewish theologians are unaware of the pervasive influence which Plato's concept of the moral right of rulers and lawmakers to *make myths* (*lie!*) about the ancientness and the divine source of the laws that, in fact, they themselves had just then *cooked up*. From early-3rd-century BCE, Plato's concept had an impact on the the thinking of rulers and lawmakers from various nations who had come under the influence of developments at the Museum and Library of Alexandria. In my book, *The Unknown Buddha of Christianity*, in the section, 'Interlude: How Crypto-Buddhism Won the West' (pp. 147-175), I have traced in great detail how Plato's thinking about *myth-making* led to the birth of Christianity, *in Alexandria!*

King Ptolemy-II, naturally, had learned Plato's doctrine of 'Noble Lying' from his father and his Greek tutors. In fact, every scholar connected with the Museum and Library would have known Jewish scholars had created the Hebrew Pentateuch and its Greek translation, full of mythical characters: Abraham and all of his descendants, Moses, and the 'Exodus'. All dissolve away in this 'Charter Myth'.

Christianity's Birth in the Royal Græco-Egyptian Temples (*Garbha-Griha-s*) of Alexandria

In the very early-third-century BCE, Buddhist scholars, together with other Indian scholars, began to arrive at the Museum and Library of Alexandria, at the invitation of King Ptolemy-I, to learn Greek and to translate into that language their numerous memorized Indian works. Ptolemy-II, continuing his father's work, was acquiring as many as possible of all the world's literary works, in every language (written or oral; religious or secular), ***and then requiring them all to be translated into Greek! Please note that no other library on earth provided such one-language-access to worldwide literature! That's why we can know that the four Gospels were written there!***

I proposed that, within a short time after arriving in Alexandria, these Buddhist scholars associated themselves closely with their Jewish colleagues at the Great Library, and a mutually agreed fellowship was worked out, *for the first time in history*, between non-Jews and Jews, which is now referred to with such English terms as: 'semi-proselytes' or 'God-fearers'. I have also suggested that, at this time at the Museum, Jewish scholars devised, *for the first time*, an intellectual and cultural process of 'proselytization', by which non-Jews could be fully integrated with the newly engineered mythical version of Jewish "history" which they were just then creating!

Thus, we may observe that the Buddhist contingent, in Alexandria, by forming such a close relationship with their Jewish colleagues at the Museum and Library – by their being '*semi-proselytized*' – they were able to achieve the polite avoidance, along with the Jews, of joining in the worship of the national Greek and Egyptian idols, entailing animal sacrifices, on the one hand; and, on the other, gaining a path of friendly dialogue with Jewish scholars about similarly held ideals, as a means of indirectly spreading Buddhism in Jewish guise. ***This*** was the Buddhists' subtle way of selecting such shared ideals they might find in the wide-ranging Jewish thought of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible – which Bible was actually being composed, *at this very time*, by Jewish scholars at the Royal Library. This Buddhist scheme would thus allow for a safe, indirect method of bringing the 'Good News' of camouflaged 'crypto-Buddhism' to the Western world. It was a very different approach to missionary outreach as compared to the direct, straightforward introduction of Buddhism into Sri Lanka or China, for instance.

This Jewish '*semi-proselytization*' of Buddhist monks and nuns in Alexandria was, therefore, the beginning of their '*crypto*' form of existence in the West, and this fully explains the reason why, as Schopenhauer wrote, Buddhism resorted to the "necessity of grafting the doctrine of Buddha upon the mythological dogmas of Judaism." This camouflaged form of Buddhism – crypto-Buddhism – developed, over the years, into two varied forms of the so-called 'Essenes': the Therapeutæ in Egypt, and the Qumranites and their 'camps' in Palestine.

As we know from King Aśoka's mid-third-century BCE 'Calcutta Bairāt Rock Inscription', he specifically addresses, therein, both Buddhist monks ('*bhi[k]khu-s*') and nuns ('*bhi[k]khunī-s*'). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that there would have been both Buddhist monks and nuns in Alexandria, during the reign of Aśoka. Such a presence of both Buddhist monks and nuns in Alexandria would provide an explanation of the crypto-Buddhist origin of the Therapeutæ – the otherwise puzzling 'first ever appearance' in the West of a "co-ed" monastic settlement – and this was on the shores of Lake Mareotis, just outside the city of Alexandria, for it was a longstanding rule, in India, for Buddhist monasteries to be located near – but always outside – towns or cities.

For the crypto-Buddhists in Palestine, the conditions, there, led to the development of a form of the Buddhist missionary movement quite different from that existing in Egypt. The Buddhist forerunners of the Qumranites, when they first entered Palestine, had followed the usual Buddhist practice of adopting the local language(s) – Hebrew and Aramaic, in their case. They therefore lacked the broader intellectual environment of the Museum and the Library of Alexandria, and its use of Greek, the language of science and of advanced learning.

Of all the "Dead Sea Scroll" documents, less than 5% are in the Greek language. From the third century BCE till around the beginning of the first century CE, the Qumranites became more and more assimilated to a peculiarly idiosyncratic version of Judaism, and less and less anchored in Buddhism. Understand that it was only the crypto-Buddhists of Alexandria who initiated the transformation of both branches (Egyptian and Palestinian) of Essenism into "Christianity". This was brought about by four Buddhist literary scholars, ***in Alexandria***, writing the four historical-fictive Gospels, on the one hand; and, on the other, by a decidedly 'gnostic' ('crypto-Buddhist') "Paul" – certainly no real Pharisee! – who is credited with writing some of the epistles attributed to that name. All these fictional works (Gospels and epistles) belong to the second century CE.

Conception and birthing of Biblical Judaism in the Library of Alexandria

In the early-3rd-century BCE, Ptolemy-II invited a number of Hebrew scholars to the Royal Library and Museum of Alexandria in order first to compose, and then to translate into Greek, a Platonic-type “Charter Myth” (the Pentateuch) for their people, which these scholars may have hoped would transition them away from the then present polytheism to a more philosophical monotheism.

And, indeed, by the 1st century CE, the Pentateuch had been generally established throughout Palestine and the diaspora as the “ideal” set of laws for the *hoi polloi*. **But keep in mind** that leaders, such as the 1st century “Jewish” philosopher Philo of Alexandria, who felt free to pursue a Platonic philosophical study of theology, unencumbered by any *narrative myth* of the Torah; or as his contemporary “Jewish” historian, Flavius Josephus, who felt free in surrendering himself to the Roman general Vespasian, because both he and the general (educated elites) knew full well that the Jewish rebellion was being fueled by the *hoi polloi* mired in the context of their tragic ignorance of the true nature of the Platonic ‘Noble Lies’ of the Pentateuch.

For over 2000 years academics, in general, have not been able to grasp this basic fact that when the group of Hebrew scholars arrived at the Royal Library and Museum, they came from a *polytheistic* society – not a *monotheistic* one! The largely mythical Torah (in Hebrew) was yet to be written **by them**. The major characters of the Torah (the Pentateuch) – Abraham, his family and numerous descendants, and Moses, with his followers – were only *forthcoming* figments of these scholars’ fertile imagination, set randomly, at times, in historical settings! These five sacred books of the Hebrew Bible (the ‘Law’), which they soon would begin to write, would almost immediately thereafter be translated **by them** into the Greek ‘Septuagint’ for the Library’s collection of scrolls.

My claims in the above paragraph may seem preposterous, even ‘idiotic’, in the Greek root-meaning of ‘springing from a single individual’s mind’, contra thousands of years of myriad scholarly studies, but there are **two** present-day scholars who have written highly important pioneering books which, **when their findings are correlated**, will, I suggest, support my radical, revolutionary claims.

(1) **Russell E. Gmirkin’s** books, *Berosus and Genesis*, *Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (New York/London: T. & T. Clark, 2006); *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible* (London: Routledge, 2016); and *Plato’s Timaeus and the Biblical Creation Accounts* (New York: Routledge, 2022), I believe, persuasively establish that the Pentateuch was both **written** and **translated** into Greek at the Library of Alexandria, in the early-3rd-century BCE.

(2) **Yonatan Adler’s** recent book, *The Origins of Judaism: An Archaeological-Historical Reappraisal* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2022), to my mind, substantiates Gmirkin’s dating of both the **composition** and Greek **translation** of the Pentateuch – though Adler, himself, would flatly disagree with Gmirkin’s early-3rd-century-BCE dating and Alexandrian location of its **composition**.

In the journal *Mosaic* (Nov. 28, 2022), Jon D. Levenson wrote an astute review of Adler’s book. Levenson’s review was titled “When Did Judaism Begin?”, with the sub-statement, “A new book called *The Origins of Judaism* places the momentous occurrence much later in time than that proposed by most scholars. Is it right?”:

Yonatan Adler, a professor of archaeology in Israel, provides a highly learned and carefully reasoned contribution to this longstanding and often contentious discussion, but he does so with a relatively novel focus, “my interest here,” he writes at the outset, “is decidedly not in the history of *ideas* or *intellectual history*, but rather in social history, focused on the behavior of a society at large.” The goal is not to ascertain when the various compositions were composed and for what purposes. Instead, the driving question is when “rank-and-file Judeans” adopted the Torah “as their authoritative law.” [p. 2]

Adler needed this careful delimitation of his archaeological investigation because of its shocking results. Levenson continues:

His [Adler's] method is simple and straightforward. He takes the 1st century CE – a period rich in datable archaeological and literary sources [...] – as the benchmark for establishing the existence and widespread observance of a given norm. Then he seeks to trace how far back in Jewish history such evidence can be found, paying keen attention as well to data suggesting the norm in question was either unknown or generally violated. [...] The period in which Adler places that momentous transformation turns out to be much later than that proposed by most scholars [...]. [p. 2]

Graven images, including idols, statues, and coins, are forbidden! Yet Adler, before the 2nd century BCE, finds no archaeological or epigraphical evidence of any such prohibition of them in the lands of the ethnic “Hebrews”!

Adler conducts the same sort of massively learned inquiry about a host of other characteristic Jewish practices – dietary laws, ritual purity, *t'fillin* (phylacteries) and mezuzahs, ritual circumcision, Sabbath, Passover, the seven-branched menorah, and the synagogue. In each and every case, he concludes, “we learned that the trail of the available evidence ends in the 2nd century BCE at the earliest.” That is thus when Judaism as he understands it must have emerged. [p. 4]

To my mind, Adler and Levenson's devotion to their faith has acted as a powerful cognitive-dissonant barrier to their perception of the real nature of the Torah. In defense of its divinity, on p. 5 of his review, Levenson mentions the maxim, “the absence of evidence is no evidence of absence”. But that maxim is absolutely overwhelmed by the arguments in Gmirkin's three books: *Plato's presence in the Pentateuch!*

It is supremely ironic that Levenson, p. 4 of his review, discusses Adler noting a “critical change” in Ptolemy-II's reign, the significance of which neither he nor Adler understands – I wonder whether Gmirkin is aware of Ptolemy-II's actions – which give wonderful support to his own theories!:

Adopting a theory of the Bible scholar Michael Lefebvre's, Adler then points to a critical change that occurred in the reign of the Hellenistic Egyptian king Ptolemy II, who also controlled the Land of Israel in the 3rd century BCE. Ptolemy set up separate courts to hear the cases of different groups but importantly, according to each group's own laws. Lefebvre conjectures that this change “may have served as a catalyst for a recharacterization of the Pentateuch from descriptive to prescriptive law, and for the adoption of this law code as the Judean *politikoi nómoi*,” or community laws.

Adler, Levenson, and LeFebvre simply don't realize that the Hebrew Torah and its Greek translation had been compiled and immediately translated into Greek just a few years earlier in Ptolemy-I's reign, and that it was **just one among the series** of “Noble Lying” ‘Charter Myths’ which his son, Ptolemy-II, was in the process of implementing, during his reign, as a syncretizing follower of Plato's scheme. The ethnic groups in the Ptolemaic kingdom were being ruled by separate court-systems, backed up by sets of different narrative-foundation myths. Not only have the Hebrew people been totally blind to the Græco-Hebraic syncretism of the Torah, fashioned in the Great Library and Museum of Alexandria, but so has the scholarly world, in general. This is why the truly revolutionary works of Russell Gmirkin, who stands on the shoulders of the ‘Minimalists’ of the ‘Copenhagen School’, are so significant! – while Levenson ends his review with uncertainty and *faith*: “[A]ll this [which has been discussed] just pushes the question about the origins of Judaism further back in time. From where did those long-neglected laws come? How, finally, *did* Judaism begin?”, followed by this dissonant-barrier paragraph of his:

Such questions of absolute beginnings are, alas, ones that historians cannot answer. In a brief article based upon his new book, Yonatan Adler, who studied at the Orthodox Yeshivat Merkaz Harav and received ordination from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, concludes with “A Personal Reflection” on his findings that is helpful on this. For he both acknowledges the divergence of his historical reconstruction from the traditional picture and refuses to allow that divergence to refute the claim that the Torah continues to hold transcendental meaning: The focus of traditional Jewish thought has invariably been on the ultimately authoritative status of the Torah, which is wholly a normative/prescriptive judgment rather than a historical/descriptive one.

In simpler terms, the traditional interest in Torah has always centered on the “ought” rather than on the “is.” As such, the traditional appreciation of the Torah has remained – and must always endure – entirely beyond the purview of history, archaeology, or any other scientific endeavor.
[p. 6]

Levenson claims that “questions of absolute beginnings are, alas, ones that historians cannot answer”! This claim, I would suggest, is a mere form of Jewish apologetics. It is unwarranted and prejudicial. It appears to me that the historian, Russell Gmirkin, has already accomplished, with overwhelming evidence in three books, that which Levenson pronounces to be impossible. I have even supported, above, Gmirkin’s general conclusion of an early-3rd-century BCE date, by noting deep irony in Adler (in book) and Levenson (in review) pointing out detailed *epigraphical evidence* of King Ptolemy-II setting up separate ethnic-based courts to hear cases of the different groups, according to each group’s own *laws*, without Adler or Levenson realizing that all of these ‘laws’ were, precisely, *Charter-Myth laws*!

These laws provide key evidence for dismissing the fairy-tale ‘Letter of Aristeas’. In my article, “Christianity Is a Western Branch of Buddhism” & C. S. Peirce’s ‘Abduction’” (pp. 10 -13), evidence is marshaled which identifies the Christian historian Eusebius of Cæsarea as this Letter’s author. Eusebius, *in the early-4th-century CE, after composing it, also interpolated statements about it into the works of Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus!* (Eusebius, thus, was only following Plato’s *lying* advice, in trying to keep *hidden* the *untruth* in the ‘Charter *Myth* of Christianity’, which, in Eusebius’s mind, was also closely related to the centuries earlier *untruth* of the ‘Charter *Myth* of Judaism’ – the Septuagint/Torah.)

One would be badly misled if one were to believe the widely circulated ‘Letter’ of pseudo-Aristeas, purportedly written *in mid-3rd-century BCE*, which painted a picture of 72 aged Jewish scholars taking a copy of the “centuries-old” Torah from Jerusalem to Alexandria in order to translate it into Greek for the Royal Library! The Alexandrian Hebrew scholars composing the Hebrew Pentateuch, in the Library, did not come from Jerusalem – nor were they imaginatively numbered ‘72’ or necessarily “aged”.

* * * * *

Different Usage of the Term ‘Origins’ in ‘Origins of Christianity’

The term ‘**origins**’ is ambiguous! On the one hand, it may express only a ‘**partial exterior influence**’, or, on the other hand, it can express a ‘**genetic connection**’, *i.e.*, a real ‘**organizational connection**’.

Two nineteenth-century scholars who viewed the knowledge of Buddhism somehow traveling from faraway India to Palestine, **influencing** the *historical* first-century-BCE-Jewish sage, Jesus of Nazareth, thus *giving rise* to Christianity, were Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and Paul Carus (1852-1919).

Schopenhauer, in the mid-19th century, wrote (translated in English and quoted by Felix L. Oswald, *The Secret of the East, or, The Origin of the Christian Religion* [Boston, 1883], pp. 30-31):

The essence of the Christian religion is the centre dogma of Buddhism, – the doctrine of the worthlessness of terrestrial life. With this difference only, that Christianity dates that worthlessness from the transgression of our apple-eating forefathers. This modification implied the fiction of a *liberi arbitrii indifferentiæ*: but it was required by the necessity of grafting the doctrine of Buddha upon the mythological dogmas of Judaism. The myth of the Fall offered here the only basis for the insertion of the scion from the East Indian parent-tree. [‘**Origins**’ = “**grafting**”! – ML]

– A. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille* [1844], Vol. II., p. 694.

Carus, in the late 19th century, wrote:

The idea of a Buddhistic **origin** of Christianity has been suggested more than once; but it is incumbent upon us to state that some of the men who must be regarded as the most competent to judge this matter are either extremely reticent or scorn the suggestion as quite impossible. While it is true that Arthur Lillie and Rudolf Seydel, who have done most to make the theory popular, introduce many vague speculations, we cannot regard a refutation of some of their vagaries as sufficient to settle the subject. No argument has as yet been offered to dispose of the hypothesis, which possesses, to say the least, a great probability in its favor. [**Emphasis added**]

– Paul Carus, “Buddhism and Christianity”, *The Monist*, vol. 5 (1895), p. 66.

Both **Schopenhauer** and **Carus** believed that Jesus was a *historical person*, who at some point in his life was importantly *influenced* by Buddhist scriptures.

However, neither scholar offered any explanation of how that transfer of detailed knowledge of Buddhist scriptures from India to Palestine could have happened.

Albert J. Edmunds (Honary M.A.) must be given the greatest credit for revealing to the academic world the amazing *influence* that Buddhism must have had on Christianity. See his *Buddhist & Christian Gospels: Being gospel parallels from Pāli texts now first compared from the originals* (1905).

It was some of these parallels which had, *earlier*, fueled the heated debates throughout the 19th century.

Throughout the whole 19th century, the only issues which were constantly under debate were whether Buddhism had *influenced* Christianity (and/or) whether Christianity had *influenced* Buddhism.

Charles F. Aiken's doctoral dissertation, was published in 1900 by Marlier and Co., Ltd., Boston. Its title was *The Dhamma of the Buddha and the Gospel of the Christ: A Critical Inquiry into the Alleged Relations of Buddhism with Primitive Christianity*. In the fifth & final section of its bibliography is a list of "AUTHORS COMPARING BUDDHISM WITH CHRISTIANITY AND TREATING OF THEIR ALLEGED RELATIONSHIP". It is an impressive select survey of 19th century publications for and against that "alleged relationship".

I have rearranged all of Aiken's dated entries in two pages, according to their chronological order, so as to more clearly illustrate their sequential development.

Chronological Rearrangement of the 5th Section of Aiken's Bibliography

- 1825 Rémusat**, Abel, *Mélanges Asiatiques*, vol. I, Paris, pp. 136 ff.
- 1849 Wiseman**, Mgr. N.P.S., *Twelve Lectures on the Connection between Science and Revealed Religion*, 2 vols., London, Lect. XI.
- 1864 Ehrlich**, Johan N. *Der Buddhismus und das Christenthum*. Prag.
- 1867 Hilgenfeld**, Adolf, "Der Essäismus und Jesus", *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*, 10, pp. 97 ff.
- 1874 Hardwick**, Charles, *Christ and Other Masters: An Historical Inquiry into Some of the Chief Parallelisms and Contrasts between Christianity and the Religious Systems of the Ancient World*, 2 vols., London.
- 1874 Hardy**, R. Spence, *Christianity and Buddhism Compared*, Colombo.
- 1877 Dods**, Marcus, *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ. Four Lectures on Revealed Religion*, London.
- 1877 Grimm**, Eduard, *Die Lehre über Buddha und das Dogma von Jesus Christus*, (Lecture held in March, in Hamburg), published by Carl Habel, Berlin.
- 1878 Peebles**, James M., *Buddhism and Christianity Face to Face*, Boston.
- 1879 Lightfoot**, Bishop J.B., *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, London, Dissertation II.
- 1879 Wells**, J., *Christ and Other Heroes of Heathendom*, London.
- 1880 Bunsen**, Ernst von, *The Angel-Messiah of Buddhists, Essenes, and Christians*, London.
- 1881 Flanders**, George T., "Christ or Buddha? A Review of Edwin Arnold's Poem, 'The Light of Asia'", *Univ. Quart.*, Jan.
- 1882 Chattopadhyaya**, Nisi Kanta, *Buddhismus und Christenthum*. Zurich, pp. 32.
- 1882 Kuenen**, A., *National Religions and Universal Religions* (Hibbert Lectures for 1882), London, Lect. V and Note XIII.
- 1882 Lillie**, Arthur, *Buddha and Early Buddhism*, New York.
- 1882 Seydel**, Rudolf, *Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinen Verhältnissen zu Buddha-sage und Buddha-lehre*, Leipzig.
- 1883 Oswald**, Felix L., *The Secret of the East; or the Origin of the Christian Religion and the Secret of its Rise and Decline*, Boston.
- 1884 Seydel**, Rudolf, *Die Buddha-legende und das Leben Jesu nach den Evangelien*, Leipzig.

- 1885 Collins, Richard, *Buddhism in Relation to Christianity*, London, 36 pp.
- 1885 Kellogg, S.H., *The Light of Asia and the Light of the World*, London.
- 1885 Lillie, Arthur, *Buddhism in Christendom, or Jesus the Essene*, London.
- 1887 Reynolds, H.R., *Buddhism: a Comparison and a Contrast between Buddhism and Christianity*, London.
- 1887 Williams, Monier, *The Holy Bible and the Sacred Books of the East*, London.
- 1888 Burnouf, Émile, "Le bouddhisme en Occident", *Rev. des Deux Mondes*, Juillet 15.
- 1888 Davids, T.W. Rhys, "Buddhism and Christianity", *Non-biblical Systems of Religion*, New York. [1887? – ML]
- 1890 Hardy, Edmund, *Der Buddhismus . . .*, Münster, Ch. VII.
- 1890 Scott, Archibald, *Buddhism and Christianity: A Parallel and a Contrast* (Croall Lectures for 1889-90), London.
- 1891 Neumann, Karl E., *Die innere Verwandtschaft buddhistischer und christlicher Lehren*, Leipzig.
- 1892 Ellinwood, Frank F., *Oriental Religions and Christianity*, New York, Ch. V.
- 1892 Liddon, Canon H.P., *Essays and Addresses*, London, Lect. I and II.
- 1892 Roberts, J.M., *Antiquity Revealed: Voices from the Spirit Realms. . . , Proving Christianity to be of Heathen Origin*, Philadelphia.
- 1893 Brodbeck, Adolf, *Leben und Lehre Buddha's des indischen Heilandes, 600 Jahre vor Christo*, Zurich, 19 pp.
- 1893 Lillie, Arthur, *The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*, London.
- 1893 Schultze, T., *Vedanta und Buddhismus als Fermente für eine künftige Regeneration des religiösen Bewusstseins innerhalb des europäischen Kulturkreises*, Leipzig.
- 1893 Schroeder, Leopold von, *Buddhismus und Christenthum, was sie gemein haben und was sie unterscheidet*, Reval.
- 1894 Lilly, W.S., *The Claims of Christianity*, London, Ch. II.
- 1896-97 Falke, Robert, *Buddha, Mohammed, und Christus: ein Vergleich der drei Persönlichkeiten und ihrer Religionen*, 2 Teile, Gütersloh.
- 1897 Carus, Paul, *Buddhism and its Christian Critics*, Chicago.
- 1898 Englert, W.P., *Christus und Buddha in ihrem himmlischen Vorleben*, Wien.
- 1898 Fluegel, Maurice, *The Zend Avesta and Eastern Religions; Comparative Legislations, Doctrines, and Rites of Parseeism, Brahmanism, and Buddhism bearing upon the Bible, Talmud, Gospel, Koran, their Messiah-ideals and Social Problems*, Baltimore.
- 1898 Klingemann, Karl, *Buddhismus, Pessimismus, und moderne Weltanschauung*. Essen, 58 pp.
- 1900 Thomas, Abbé, *Christianisme et Bouddhisme*, 2 vols., Paris.

* * * * *

The Maximalist Meaning of ‘Origins of Christianity’ A Real Organizational Connection with Buddhism

¶ This article follows a line of reasoning that investigates how Christianity may have developed out of Buddhism’s unobtrusive missionary efforts, in the 3rd century BCE, to “propagate” among the peoples living in countries around the Mediterranean, Buddhism’s knowledge of the ‘Good (“ethical”) Way’ of living their personal and communal lives.

¶ Over the past two centuries, scholars from around the world have been debating whether Buddhism *influenced* Christianity – and/or whether, in return, Christianity *influenced* Buddhism.

¶ These debates, I argue here, have all been conducted under the blinding illusion that the Buddhist authors wrote all of their scriptures in India (in the *EAST*). Whereas an “obviously” *DIFFERENT SET* of Christian and Gnostic authors wrote their scriptures in various locations in the *WEST*.

¶ (1) These perceptions of the scholarly world are mistaken. From the beginning of the 19th century, every article or book written in these debates has assumed that the authors of the New Testament Gospels have or have not been influenced by distinctly different authors of Buddhist scriptures (or *vice versa*). These views are all illusions, carefully created by the so-called “Christian” authors.

¶ (2) How is that possible? My truly simple answer is this: “It is possible because *both sets* of writers – those who wrote the New Testament gospels, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, those who wrote a very significant number of Buddhist scriptures – were actually *SUB-SETS* of a *SINGLE SET* (which included both the crypto-Buddhist-Therapeutæan authors of the NT gospels and the crypto-Buddhist-Therapeutæan writers of *all of the very many Buddhist scriptures possessing tell-tale elements from Western literatures* [allusions to works in hieroglyphics, in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek (classical and koine), Latin, etc., etc.]). **I say again:** all these Therapeut writers were using the *innumerable* reference sources of the *only library on Earth containing the world’s literature in Greek* (original or translated): the **Library of Alexandria!**”

These Therapeutæan authors, writing both in Greek & Indian languages, were Essenes/Jessæans, whose organizational foundation had been laid half a millennium earlier, when Buddhist missionaries were sent by the Indian king, Aśoka, to Egypt, at the royal invitation of Ptolemy-II (Philadelphus),

One group of Buddhist missionaries, the Therapeutæ, were headquartered just outside of Alexandria. A second group of Buddhist missionary leaders were headquartered outside Jerusalem, capital city of the Ptolemaic province of Palestine. Later, following the military takeover of Palestine by the Seleucid king Antiochus III (the Great), in 201 BCE, the Essene leadership fled into exile at Qumran.

As was the custom of Buddhist missionary outreach, it was always pursued in the languages of the local people: Thus, Greek, in Egypt; Hebrew and Aramaic, in the Ptolemaic province of Palestine.

Over the half-millennial existence of these two crypto-Buddhist branches of Essenism (Jessæanism), the Alexandrian branch kept closer to its Buddhist heritage, while the Palestinian branch turned apostate!

Also, keep well in mind that during these five centuries, several Gnostic “seedlings” of Essenism took independent root in Alexandria. It cannot be overemphasized that it was *only* the literary scholars of these various limbs of the Alexandrian branch, having direct access to the vast, worldwide literature in **Greek or Greek translation**, who were in a position to write the various works of the original **Greek NT**.

When the Buddhist monks and nuns first arrived in Alexandria from India, in the 3rd century BCE, those of them who were literary scholars joined the many other different linguists in the Royal Library, each translating their own literature and scriptures into the *required* Greek language copy.

Two Different Views about Buddhism’s Relation to the ‘Origins of Christianity’

- 1) Christianity was *indirectly influenced* by *only* **INFORMATION** coming from India concerning Buddhism. This is the view held by nearly all scholars dealing with ‘Christian Origins’.
- 2) Christianity was *literarily created*, in early 2nd cent. CE by **BUDDHIST MISSIONARY SCHOLARS**, whose forebears had come to Alexandria from India, in the mid-3rd century BCE.

I suggest that the literary scholars of the Therapeutæ (Essenes/Jessæans) had access to the Library of Alexandria’s vast collection of world literature – *all in Greek translation* – and that four of those scholars wrote the **Greek** Gospels of the NT. Others wrote a great number of **Pāli** and **Sanskrit** Buddhist works.

A list of Duncan Derrett’s studies on parallelisms between Buddhist & Christian works is given next. No one seems to have realized that all of these – both Buddhist & Christian – were written in Alexandria!

Theologians and Historians of Early Christianity Have Ignored the Evidence (Prof. Duncam Derrett's Ignored "Gold Mine" of Buddhist-Christian Parallelisms)

List of his studies in, "Versatility, Angels and Space: The Meaning of Buddhist and Non-Buddhist Parallels", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, Vol. 16, No. 3 (2006), pp. 231-242.

Only the Derrett entries, from p. 241 – A select bibliography of his Buddhist-Christian studies:

- Derrett, J.D.M., "A problem in the Book of Jubilees and an Indian doctrine", *ZRGG* XIV, 3, 1962, pp. 247-262.
- Derrett, J.D.M., "'Every valley shall be exalted': borrowings from Israel in ancient India?", *ZRGG* XXIV, 2, 1972, pp. 153-155.
- Derrett, J.D.M., "The Samaritan Woman in India", *ZRGG* XXXIX, 4, 1987, pp. 328-336: *Studies in the New Testament* V, pp. 162-170.
- Derrett, J.D.M., "Der Wasserwandel in christlicher und buddhistischer Perspektive", *ZRGG* XLI, 3, 1989, pp. 193-214.
- Derrett, J.D.M., "A Moses-Buddha parallel and its meaning", *Ar. Or.* LVIII, 4, 1990, pp. 310-317.
- Derrett, J.D.M., "Homer in India: the birth of the Buddha", *JRAS* 3rd ser. II, 1, 1992, pp. 47-57.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (1995a), *Two Masters* (Northampton, 1995), ridiculed by P.O. Ingram at *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, March 22, 1997.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (1995b), "Diffusion: Korah and Devadatta", *Ar. Or.* LXIII, 1995, pp. 330-333.
- Derrett, J.D.M., "An Indian metaphor in St John's gospel", *JRAS* 3rd ser. IX, 2, 1999, pp. 271-286.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2000a), *The Bible and the Buddhists* (Bornato in Franciacorta (BS): Sardini, 2000).
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2000b), "Angels Jewish and angels Buddhist", *Indologica Taurinensia* XXVI, 2000, pp. 73-92.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2000c), "St John's Jesus and the Buddha", *Ar. Or.* LXVIII, 2000, pp. 71-82, reprinted, *Journal of Higher Criticism* VI, 2, pp. 161-174, also Malek, R. 2002, pp. 127-140.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2002a), "Consolation and a parable; two contacts between Ancient Greece and Buddhists", *BSOAS* LXV, 3, 2002, pp. 518-528.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2002b), "Christ, the Messiah, and Bodhisattvas descend into hell", *Ar. Or.* LXX, 2002, pp. 489-504; abridged in *Journal of Higher Criticism* IX, 2, pp. 234-245.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2002c), "Early Buddhist use of two Western themes", *JRAS* 3rd ser. XII, 3, 2002, pp. 343-355.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2002d), "The teacher as physician: Mark 2, 17 and Milindapañha VI. 6", *Bibbia e Oriente* XLIV, 1, no. 211, 2002, pp. 43-55.
- Derrett, J.D.M., "The true meaning of John 9, 3-4," *Filologia Neotestamentária* XVI, 2003, pp. 103-106.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2004a), "Mishnāh, 'Avôt 5:13 in early Buddhism", *BSOAS* LXVII, 1, 2004, pp. 79-87.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2004b), "The Picnic, the Buddha, and St Matthew", *JRAS* 3rd ser. XIV, 1, 2004, pp. 1-5.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2004c), "The Buddhist dimension of John", *Numen* LI, 2, 2004, pp. 187-210.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2005a), "Avalokiteśvara and voices from heaven", *BSOAS* (forthcoming).
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2005b), "Unregarded Buddhist-Christian parallels", *Ar. Or.* LXXIII, 2005, pp. 91-110.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2005c), "Miracles of feeding: a Biblical-Buddhist dilemma", *Bibbia e Oriente* XLVII, nos. 223-224, 2005, pp. 89-99.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2006a), "Two more Homeric scenes in India", *Ar. Or.* LXXIV, 2, 2006, pp. 173-181.
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- Derrett, J.D.M. (2006c), "The Epistle of James and the Dhammapada Commentary", *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift* LXXXII, 1, 2006, pp. 36-39.
- Derrett, J.D.M. (2006d), "'Over five hundred at one time' (1 Cor 15.6)", *Journal of Higher Criticism* XI, 2, 2006, pp. 50-54.

As I've written elsewhere, Duncan Derrett, *in retirement*, established himself as the unrivaled authority on the range and complexity of Buddhist-Christian comparative studies. No one has come close to him! These studies of his, which involved detailed analyses of innumerable *parallelisms* between passages in Buddhist and so-called "Christian" scriptures, also dealt with *their parallelisms* compared with passages in the scriptures of other religions, or in other types of worldwide literature. But all this is myth, fiction!

Derrett, writing of "Buddhist and non-Buddhist parallels", assumed that Christians weren't Buddhists! My research for the last 25 years, indicates that Christianity metamorphosed out of Essenism in Egypt, during the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian. And my research has sought to establish the fact that the historical Essenes, indeed, were crypto-Buddhists – not 'non-Buddhists'.

So I clarify, here, that Derrett – together with the entire academic world (*for over 2000 years*) – have failed to grasp the *elusive fact* that *all* of the **so-called Christian works** (*listed above on page 15*), are historical-fictive works *alluding* to passages in a surprising variety of languages – in hieroglyphics, in Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin, and others. *They could never have been referenced in Greek from any other library in the world than from Alexandria's*. My conclusion: all of the above Christian & Buddhist works were indeed fictional, & were written in Alexandria by crypto-Buddhist Therapeutæ (Essenes / Jessæans)!

One of Derrett's articles, which deals with the most important subject for any missionizing religion, is "Versatility, Angels and Space: The Meaning of Buddhist and Non-Buddhist Parallels", in the *JRAS*, Series 3, 16, 3 (2006), pp. 231-242; *here*, pp. 231-232:

I Introduction

My purpose is twofold. We are to conjecture (a) how a preaching technique employed by St Paul comes to resonate with the Mahāyāna, and (b) that a conundrum in the solemn *Mahānibbāna-sutta* is Jewish, whence it reappears comically in Europe. Struck by these new oddities we ask at long last what can emerge from so many diverse parallels between Buddhist texts and their non-Buddhist counterparts. It is time those many threads were drawn together.

II Preachers' versatility

Two new parallels alert us to possible Jewish sources. The first relates to missions (in which Buddhists and Christians were keenly interested); the second to *devatās* who in many respects recall angels. At *I Corinthians 9:19-23* ¹ Paul states his strategy, some say hyperbolically.²

For though I am free in all respects, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might "win"³ more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the Law as one under the Law (though I myself am not under the Law) in order that I might win those under the Law. To those outside the Law (I became) as one outside the Law (though I am not so much outside God's law as within Christ's law)⁴ in order that I might win those outside the Law. With the "weak"⁵ I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become its partner.

The Epistle belongs to about AD 54.⁶ Paul teaches how to disseminate a new religion. He used to adapt his message and tone to his audiences: he did not pretend to live two or more sorts of life simultaneously. Indeed a pious Jew might sometimes make concessions to attract converts.⁷

¹H. Chadwick at *New Testament Studies* I, 454-55, pp. 261-275. Fuller bibliographic details to footnotes appear at the end of this article under references.

²Sanders (1983), pp. 179-180.

³Daube (1956), pp. 352-353, 355; Sanders (1983), p. 177.

⁴C.H. Dodd, "Ennomos Christi", in *Studia . . . Johannes de Zwaan* (Haarlem, 1953), pp. 96-106; W.D. Davies, *Christian Origins and Judaism* (London, 1962), pp. 49-50.

⁵Those unable (under social pressure) to jettison Jewish taboos.

⁶W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London, 1966), p. 205. For our passage see H. Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (Göttingen, 1969), pp. 187-191.

⁷Hillel at Bab. Talm., *Shab.* 31a; *Avôt de R. Nathan 15. Daube (1956), pp. 336-337.

This technique was “economy”: in Buddhist terminology “skilful means”⁸ [*upāya kauśalya*]. Paul’s words have no Greek or even rabbinical parallels. They have in the Mahāyāna.

The imaginary model missionary, Gadgadasvara, a Bodhisattva, preaches as Indra, Śiva, Kubera (to Hindus), or as a king, a minister, merchant, citizen, villager, or Brahmin. He preaches in the shape of a monk, nun, lay devotee (male or female), merchant’s or citizen’s wife, a boy or a girl, he even preaches as a goblin to convert a goblin, or likewise a demon, or other mythical being or serpent. He preaches to the beings in hell. Assuming many shapes, even a woman’s, he preaches the Saddharma puṇḍarīka (“SDP”) as a supporter of creatures. His wisdom and special powers are not diminished thereby (SDP 23, trans. Kern, pp. 401-402).

Likewise Avalokiteśvara (in ancient Cambodia Lokeśvara) assumes many shapes for a similar purpose:

He preaches the Law to creatures in the guise of a Buddha, or a Bodhisattva, or (even) a *pratyekabuddha*, a (Theravāda) disciple, or Brahma, Indra or a *gandharva*. To those *who are to be converted* by Īśvara (Hindus) he preaches the Law in the shape of Īśvara; to those *who are to be converted* by Maheśvara . . .; to those *who are to be converted* by Vajrapāṇi he preaches in the shape of Vajrapāṇi.

All religionists, no matter how antiquated their religion, may be converted to the Mahāyāna by his taking their shape (so SDP 24, trans. Kern, pp. 411-412). He even converts the “devils” of Sri Laṅkā and in Benares he preaches in the form of a bee.⁹

Opinions will differ whether the nucleus of this is already at Dīgha ii 109 (trans. Rhys Davids ii, p. 117).¹⁰ There Gautama charms eight types of “assembly”, lay, religious, or heavenly, and instructs them by *looking like them*¹¹ and *talking like them*. Perhaps the Mahāyāna developed this in the light of the Pauline “hyperbole”? If the seed was Indian, foreign inspiration seems to have watered it. Paul can hardly have known the Buddhist ideal – though a Buddhist cliché did come his way (Derrett (2006d) – but Judaeo-Christians would cherish his formula, part of their charter. So the link would be Jewish.

⁸ Lubac (1937), pp. 341, 349. Pye (1978); Klimkeit (1983), p. 243. Origen, *c. Cels.* IV. 18, also 15 (Ante-Nicene Christian Library XXIII, pp. 175, 178). Chrysostom, *hom.* 22.2 in *1 Cor.* (Gaume 10. 195A). Theodoret on 1 Cor. 9.21 (Schultze-Noesselt III. 223).

⁹ Derrett (2002b). So Avalokiteśvara-guṇa-Kāraṇḍa-vyūha, p. 43. G.C.C. Chang, ed., *Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras* (University Park, 1983), p. 267.

¹⁰ Lubac (1937), pp. 339, n. 4, 341, citing Origen, *In Joannem* I, n. 34 (ed. Preuschen, pp. 38-39). Christ became an angel for the salvation of angels.

¹¹ Klimkeit (1983), p. 243.

Derrett, thus, thinks that St. Paul was a historical person, writing his epistle, *First Corinthians*, ca. AD 54, not realizing that the New Testament epistles and gospels are historical-fiction, composed in Alexandria, during Hadrian’s reign (117-138 AD), by literary scholars of the Therapeutae, who were making good use of the Royal Library, as I’ve said, referencing the multitude of allusions they make in their works to a wide variety of hypotexts, *in different languages – all available to them in Greek translation!*

* * * * *

As my own views are so starkly counter to the generally held beliefs about Buddhism and Christianity, I was thus most pleasantly surprised when I serendipitously came across the online article in French, “*Essénisme et Bouddhisme*”, by Professor André Dupont-Sommer [Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres Année 1980 124 - 4, [pp. 698–715](#)], which provides great support to my own theories, acknowledging in his own words that “Asoka sent to the kingdoms of the Eastern Mediterranean not only his ambassadors, but also [...] his missionaries in large numbers.” Though Dupont-Sommer didn’t realize the mythical nature of the main characters of both the OT and NT.

On the following pages is my own translation in English of Dupont-Sommer’s important Lecture:

Essenism and Buddhism

By

M. André Dupont-Sommer

Permanent Secretary

My dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Three years ago, in November 1977, I had the honor of presenting to you in this Dome of the Institute a lecture entitled “Thirty years of research on the Dead Sea Scrolls (from 1947 to 1977)”. These manuscripts, Hebrew and Aramaic, date from approximately 150 BC to 70 AD; they were, and remain, of exceptional importance. From the start of the research, all of these documents appeared to me to represent the remains of the library of an ancient Jewish sect and, more precisely, of the mother house of the Essene Community located very close to the west bank. of the Dead Sea, at the very location of Wadi Qumran.

Let me remind you that according to the testimony of Flavius Josephus, Jewish historian of the first century AD, the Jewish world, during the two centuries preceding the destruction of the Second Temple, in 70 AD, was divided into three sects: the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Essenes. The same Jewish historian, in two famous notices, described these Essenes as mystics, living in community, separated from the world and the rest of Judaism, most of whom were devoted to celibacy. Around the same time, the illustrious Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria also recounted, with great praise, their ascetic and community life.

On the other hand, the pagan Latin author Pliny the Elder, who also lived in the 1st century AD, devoted to the Essenes a fairly short but dense notice, which vividly described in detail their rigorous continence, their contempt for money, their spirit of penance, the large number of their followers, and which at the same time indicated the situation of the Essene lavra: “To the west (of the Dead Sea), we read, the Essenes move away from the shores for the entire distance where they are harmful. They are a people

unique in their kind and admirable in the whole world beyond all others: without any women, and having entirely renounced love; without money; having only the society of their palm trees. From day to day, it is reborn in equal numbers, thanks to the crowds of arrivals; in fact, they flock in very large numbers, those whom life leads, tired by the fluctuations of fortune, to adopt their morals. Thus, for thousands of generations, incredible thing, there subsists a people which is eternal and in which, however, no one is born: so fruitful for them is the repentance which others have for their past life!"

• • •

Among modern historians of Judaism, there are few who, dealing with the Essenes, were not struck by the multiple peculiarities that were brought to their attention by Philo of Alexandria, Flavius Josephus and Pliny the Elder, did not also ask themselves this question: Should Essenism be considered a pure fruit of Judaism? Or was it marked by foreign influences? For more than 200 years, the most diverse answers have been given to this question. Let's briefly review them.

Here first are those who sought to explain the characteristics of Essenism through internal developments in Judaism. For many scholars, the Essenes were nothing other than a variety of Pharisees who took the principles of Pharisaism to the extreme. Others, without leaving Judaism, have sought to look at the problem more closely. For Ritsch,¹ for example, Essenism wanted to realize, in a consistent manner, the idea of the universal priesthood; the true Israel, in fact, must be, according to the expression of Exodus, XIX, 6, a "kingdom of priests". Bestmann² remains in the same line, but links Essenism more precisely to the idea of the Aaronid priesthood. For Lucius,³ on the other hand, the Essenes, during the Machabean era, would have separated from the cult of the temple of Jerusalem, which they considered illegitimate, and it is this schism which would explain their peculiarities. Hilgenfeld's idea is completely different:⁴ the Essenes would essentially be a school of Jewish apocalypticists, their asceticism having no other goal than to make them more apt for divine revelations.

1. *Über die Essener*, in *Theologisches Jahrbuch*, 1855, p. 315-356; *Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche* (2nd ed., 1857), p. 179-203.

2. *Geschichte der christlichen Sitte*, Vol. I (1880), p. 308 ff.

3. *Der Essenismus in seinem Verhältnis zum Judenthum*, Strasbourg, 1881.

4. *Die jüdische Apokalypik*, 1857, p. 243-286.

These various explanations seemed insufficient to many. Hilgenfeld himself pointed out, in later studies, the possibility of Iranian influence, and even Buddhist influence;⁵ we will come shortly to this influence of Buddhism on Essenism, which is properly the subject of our reading today. It is, on the contrary, Alexandrian Hellenism which, according to Friedländer⁶ and Conybeare,⁷ would have influenced Essenism, while, according to Wellhausen,⁸ it would be both Parsism and Platonism.

But, for these various authors, foreign influence would have been only an accessory element. For many others – and they are the vast majority today – Essenism presents so many traits foreign or contrary to traditional Judaism that we must admit at its origin the determining, characteristic action, essential, of an influence or several influences coming from outside. For some, this influence would be that of Pythagoreanism. The precursors of this thesis were F. Chr. Baur⁹ and Gfrörer;¹⁰ but it was supported, more than a hundred years ago, by the eminent historian of Greek philosophy Eduard Zeller.¹¹ Flavius Josephus himself (*Jewish Antiquities*, XV, 4, § 371) had already expressly put Essenism in relation to Pythagoreanism: “This race (of the Essenes)”, we read, “practices the kind of life that Pythagoras taught among the Greeks.” This text, it is true, does not say that the Essenes borrowed their way of life from the Pythagoreans; but the clear connection established by Josephus, who was a contemporary of the Essenes, certainly deserves attention. Would the Jewish historian, if he had simply wanted to pique the attention of pagan readers, have used such a categorical formula? In another place, Josephus liked to compare the sect of the Pharisees to another Greek philosophical school, that of the Stoics, but there, let us note, he expressed himself in nuanced terms (*Vita*, II, § 10): “... the sect of the Pharisees, which is almost similar to that which the Greeks call Stoic”. Whatever the case, Zeller’s thesis has attracted a large number of authors for

5. *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Théologie*, III (1860), p. 358 ; X (1867), p. 97 sq.; XI (1868), p. 343 sq.; XIV (1871), p. 50 sq.; XXV (1882), p. 257 sq.; *Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums* (1884), p. 141-149.

6. *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Christentums* (1894), p. 98-142; *Die religiösen Bewegungen innerhalb des Judentums im Zeitalter Jesu* (1905), p. 114-168.

7. Art. *Essenes*, in Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. I (1898), p. 767-772.

8. *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte* (2nd edn., 1895), p. 292-296.

9. *Apollonius von Tyana und Christus*, in *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Théologie*, 1832, p. 224 sq.

10. *Philo und die alexandrinische Theosophie*, II (1831), p. 299-356.

11. *Theologisches Jahrbuch*, XV (1856), p. 401-433; *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, III, 2, 4th edn., p. 307-377; *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Théologie*, 1899, p. 195-269.

more than a century; to mention in particular, Herzfeld,¹² E. Schürer,¹³ A. Dietrich,¹⁴ Isidore Lévy,¹⁵ Franz Cumont,¹⁶ etc.

However, the Pythagorean thesis, despite its growing success, was far from gaining unanimous support. Several authors of considerable authority have considered the influence of Pythagoreanism in Palestine itself unlikely, and, given that post-exilic Judaism, as a whole, had already, in the judgment of many, made significant borrowings from Iran, they considered it more plausible to look in the Iranian – or Iranian-Babylonian – religious world for the origin of the characteristic features of Essenism. The influence on the Jewish sect would therefore be a new Iranian contribution, deeper and more extensive. This Iranian thesis, with various modalities, is represented in particular by Cheyne,¹⁷ Bousset,¹⁸ Holscher.¹⁹

To these authors, it is appropriate to add W. Bauer,²⁰ although the latter, while admitting an Iranian-Babylonian influence, does not consider it unique, but rather considers it as one of the elements of a broad syncretism of which Essenism would be a product. The influence of Buddhism could even be considered to explain celibacy and the community of goods. As for Charles Guignebert,²¹ he admits both a “very active Pythagorean influence” and a certain Iranian influence; but it would be, according to him, “rather a spontaneous combination of influences coming from independent sources ... than the pure and simple transposition of one of them.” Thus this author, professor at the Sorbonne, more or less agreed with the syncretist thesis of W. Bauer.

This rapid review of the varied opinions which were expressed on the problem of the origin and essence of Essenism shows to what extent this problem, this very old problem, has remained complex and difficult. We can hardly imagine a greater diversity, a more worrying disagreement. But today, thanks to the finds in the caves of Qumran, the problem of

12. *Geschichte des Volkes J israel*, Vol. III, p. 368 sq., p. 388 sq., p. 509 sq.

13. *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes ...*, Vol. II (4th edn., 1907), p. 573-584.

14. *Abraxas* (1891), p. 144 sq.; *Nekya* (1893), p. 221.

15. *La légende de Pythagore de Grèce en Palestine* (1927), p. 269 sq.

16. *Esséniens et Pythagoriciens, dans Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1930, p. 99 sq.

17. Art. “Essenes”, in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Vol. II (1901), col. 1939-1400 (§ 7).

18. *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (3rd edn., 1926), p. 458 sq.

19. *Geschichte der israelitischen und jüdischen Religion* (1922), p. 207, p. 209, n. 1.

20. Art. “Essener”, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Supplementbuch*, IV, col. 426 sq.

21. *Le Monde juif vers le temps de Jésus* (1935), p. 226-232.

Essenism presents itself to the historian with completely new data, and the situation is truly transformed. Instead of simply having the notices of ancient authors foreign to the sect (Philo of Alexandria, Flavius Josephus, Pliny the Elder), – relatively brief notices, providing only incomplete information, here is now the historian of today in possession of authentic documents, preserved in their original language, copied by the very scribes of the Essene sect, documents not suspect of late rearrangements or foreign interpolations. Thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls, Essenism reveals itself to us directly, in full light, with its institutions, its rites, its doctrines, even those whose secret was protected by formidable oaths.

• • •

The first point that the Qumran texts highlight is the Jewish character, expressly Jewish, of the Qumran sect. Its foundations are the Law (the Tôrâ) and they are the Prophets (the Nebhiîm). At all times, the Qumran documents refer to these authentic sources of the Jewish faith. Conversion to the Law, to the Law of Moses, is the fundamental prescription for anyone who enters the sect: “and that he undertakes himself, by an oath of obligation, to convert to the Law of Moses, according to all that He has commanded, with all his heart and with all his soul ...”.²² Any fault against the Law results in expulsion from the Community. “Any man among them”, we read, “who transgresses any point of the Law of Moses, deliberately or by laxity, will be expelled from the Council of the Community, and he will never come back; and none of the men of holiness shall meddle with his property or with his counsel in any thing.”²³ The Law of Moses is the object of constant reading and meditation: “And let there not be lacking”, we read again, “in the place where the ten are, a man who studies the Law day and night, constantly, concerning the duties of each towards the other. And let the Many keep watch in common for a third of all the nights of the year to read the Book and to study the law and to bless (God) in common.”²⁴

But let us immediately note a second point: if the sect of Qumran, ardently and indissolubly attached to the Law of Moses and the revelations of the Prophets, is Jewish, intensely Jewish, it is also fully aware of representing an elite in Judaism, of being properly the Community of God's elect.

22. *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Théologie*, III (1860), p. 358; X (1867), p. 97 sq.; XI (1868), p. 343 sq.; XIV (1871), p. 50 sq.; XXV (1882), p. 257 sq.; *Ketzergeschichte des Urchristenthums* (1884), p. 141-149.

23. *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Christentums* (1894), p. 98-142; *Die religiösen Bewegungen innerhalb des Judentums im Zeitalter Jesu* (1905), p. 114-168.

24. Art. “Essenes”, in Hastings', *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. I (1898), p. 767-772.

The Essenes are rigorous; they are, in a way, the “Jansenists” of the Jewish world. Other Jews, in the eyes of God’s elect, are rejected by God and doomed to damnation. The sect is the sole depositary of the true Alliance; it is strictly speaking “the Covenant”, the “New Covenant”. Outside of this New Covenant, there is no salvation! To be part of this new society, which, superimposing and replacing ancient Israel, is like true Israel, the Israel of God, it is not enough just to be born Jewish; it requires, in addition, a personal decision and commitment, a long preparation, a solemn initiation. The initiate then enters a truly new world: however closely united it may be to ancient Judaism, this new Israel overflows it on all sides. Too numerous and too serious are the innovations in rites and doctrines for us to consider them simply as a spontaneous evolution of traditional Judaism. In fact, this new Judaism is considerably enriched and profoundly transformed: if the rabbis, if the official Synagogue came, around 100 AD, to excommunicate Essenism, it is undoubtedly because it appeared as a whole as too far from the norms of Judaism and, in a way, heterogeneous.

A concrete fact seems to us to clearly illustrate both the attachment of the Qumran sect to Israel’s past and what it adds to and goes beyond. What books did the Qumran library contain? On the one hand, all of the books of the canonical Jewish Bible (all of these canonical scrolls – with very few exceptions – were in fact discovered in the caves); on the other hand, a considerable number of non-biblical books, which were roughly three times as numerous. This is approximately the same proportion as that indicated by the author of the Fourth Book of Ezra for the books that Ezra, according to this apocalypse, is supposed to have miraculously found in his memory and dictated to his secretaries: 24 books intended for the “worthy and unworthy” (these are the canonical biblical books), and 70 books reserved for the “wise” (these are the secret books, specific to the initiated),²⁵ such as Enoch, the Jubilees, the Rule, the Regulations of the War of the Sons of Light, the Hymns, the Biblical Commentaries, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, etc.

This mass of writings, which the Synagogue did not retain in its canon of holy books, are precisely these “works of the ancients” to which, reports Josephus,²⁶ the Essenes “applied with extraordinary zeal”. It is there that the

25. *IV Esdras*, XIV, 37-47.

26. *De la Guerre juive*, II, 8, 6, § 136.

doctrines and customs specific to the sect are revealed to us, in all their peculiarity. Are there certain features that shed light on the problem posed here of foreign influences? It seems to us that the answer must be in the affirmative. We cannot develop, however little, in this conference, either the Iranian influence and, more especially, the influence of Zoroastrianism, nor the influence of the Hellenistic world and, more especially, the influence of neo-Pythagoreanism. What I would like to talk to you about today is the influence of the Indian world and, more especially, of Buddhism on the Essene community, which is undoubtedly the most fundamental and characteristic question.

• • •

A certain number of authors, in the 19th century, pointed out and defined the essential relationships between Essenism and Buddhism, the historical contacts between the community life of the Essenes and the community life of Buddhist monks.²⁷ We mentioned, at the beginning of our reading, two scholars, Hilgenfeld and W. Bauer, who mentioned quite a long time ago, well before the discoveries of Qumran, a certain influence of Buddhism on Essenism.

More recently, in 1925, more than half a century ago, an Indian professor at the University of Calcutta, D. R. Bhandarkar, published a work entitled *Asoka*. In this book, he pointed out “the sect of the Essenes”, we read, “whose clergy formed a small monastic Jewish order with its strange semi-ascetic practices, and who lived on the shores of the Dead Sea...” He also admitted that the Essenes had lived even before the advent of Christianity. “There existed a similar religious brotherhood, that of the Thérapeutes, who resided in the vicinity of Alexandria, and who formed another order of pre-Christian Judaism. Even here the influence of Buddhism has been recognized in their precepts and ways of life. The Buddhist influence on the religious condition of Western Asia can be traced back before the first century of the Christian era, and it must undoubtedly have been caused by the missionary zeal and activity of Asoka in those regions.”²⁸

Let us briefly recall that the illustrious founder of Buddhism was born around 563 BC; was called Śākyamuni (“the wise man from the family of the Śākyas”). In 534, at the age of 29, he abandoned his family and palace;

27. Cf. Siegfried Wagner, *Die Essener in der wissenschaftlichen Diskussion* (Berlin, 1960), p. 143-146 («Buddhistische Einflüsse» [“Buddhist Influences”]).

28. *Asoka*, p. 165 (and 2 notes in the *Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics*, V, p. 401 & XII, p. 318-319).

this was the “Great Renunciation”. Around 528, he lived for seven weeks under the Bodhi tree (“the Tree of Enlightenment”), and he became the Buddha, “Enlightened One”. He found the five Brahman monks, of austere asceticism, with whom he had joined for five or six years. They immediately became the first members of the Buddhist monastic order, the Sangha, and set out as missionaries to spread the good news everywhere, the message which made known the way to escape the misery and pain of existence. Between the date of Enlightenment, in 528, and the date of the Buddha's death, in 483, forty-five years passed. At the age of 80, when his end was near, he declared to his disciples: “And now, O monks, I take leave of you. All elements of being are transitory. Work out your salvation carefully.” He reached Nirvâna, and died.²⁹

Buddhism was, and remains, one of the greatest religions in the world, and its history is extremely complex. Regarding ancient Buddhism, numerous monasteries were established during the Buddha's lifetime, some populated by monks and others by nuns. The rule of the communities was severe: poverty, chastity, obedience, and above all extreme goodness and charity. The monks and nuns wore saffron robes, and their hair was shorn. Anyone wishing to enter the Order had to follow a novitiate; the novice, when he was to become professed, took an examination in front of the entire community. In the case of serious offenses, the punishment was expulsion from the Order; concerning venial sins, various penances were determined.



After the Buddha, I would like to talk about a famous personality called Asoka, who lived in the 3rd century BC, king of Magadha, emperor of all of India, except for the extreme south. His grandfather Chandragupta (known to the Greeks as Sandracottos), founder of the Maurya dynasty, was a contemporary of Alexander the Great. Asoka was crowned in 260, and he conquered Kalinga, a vast province on the eastern coast of India. The king, in this Kalinga campaign, showed himself to be terrible and cruel. Suddenly and ardently, he converted, radically won over to the ideal of goodness, charity, all the virtues of the Buddhist Gospel; he was the most zealous proselyte and propagandist of his new religion: it was the tenth year of his coronation, in 250.

²⁹. See A. Foucher, *La Vie du Bouddha d'après les textes et les monuments de l'Inde* (Paris: Payot, 1949).

Once converted, King Asoka wanted to have inscriptions engraved in many regions of his empire attesting to his Buddhist faith: some on rocks, others on pillars or columns in pink sandstone of colossal dimensions, other inscriptions still in caves. He thus manifested on stone the ardor of his conversion and the firmness of his convictions. The lapidary inscriptions of the Indian emperor – they are called the “Edicts of Asoka” – were written in various Indian languages. They were discovered around the beginning of the 19th century, and they were deciphered and translated by numerous Indianist scholars. They made it possible to know the authentic story of the famous convert to the religion of the Buddha.³⁰

In addition to the specifically Indian inscriptions from Asoka, an extremely interesting batch of inscriptions from the same Asoka has gradually been discovered since the 20th century, which were engraved in other scripts and languages than the specifically Indian inscriptions.

A first inscription from the new batch, which was engraved in Aramaic script and language, was discovered in Taxila, in present-day West Pakistan, and published in 1915.³¹

A second inscription, in Aramaic script, was discovered at Pul-i-Darunteh, in the Laghman valley, in Afghanistan; it was published in 1932. It has only recently been possible to understand that this document was a curious double inscription, with an almost juxtalinear translation, passage by passage, in the Indian language and in the Aramaic language.³²

A third inscription, properly bilingual, first in Greek and then in Aramaic, was discovered again in Afghanistan, very close to Kandahar, the ancient Alexandria of Arachosia, and it was published in 1958.³³

30. See Emile Senart, *Un roi de l'Inde au IIIe siècle avant notre ère. Açoka et le Bouddhisme*, dans *la Revue des deux Mondes*, Vol. XCII (1889), p. 68-108; Jules Bloch, *Les Inscriptions d'Asoka traduites et commentées* (Paris, “Les Belles Lettres”, 1950).

31. L.D. Barnett and A.E. Cowley, “An Aramaic Inscription from Taxila”, in *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1915, p. 340-347; J. Marshall, *Archaeological Survey of India*, 1914-1915, p. 25 sq.

32. A first brief presentation can be found in *Kabul*, Vol. II, 1932, p. 413, and later H. Birkeland, *Eine aramaische Inschrift aus Afghanistan*, in *Acta orientalia*, XVI (1938), p. 222-233; W.B. Henning, *The Aramaic Inscription of Asoka found in Lampâka*, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XIII, 1 (1949-1950), p. 80-88; above all, É. Benveniste, *Une inscription indo-araméenne d'Asoka provenant de Kandahar (Afghanistan)*, II. Identification of the text, the Indian parts, in the *Journal asiatique*, 1966, p. 446-453.

33. D. Schlumberger, L. Robert, A. Dupont-Sommer and É. Benveniste, *Une bilingue gréco-araméenne d'Asoka*, in the *Journal asiatique*, 1958, p. 1-48 and pl. I-V.

Here is yet a fourth inscription: this one was exclusively engraved in Greek script and written in the Greek language; This considerable fragment was the translation, in remarkable Greek language, of two “Edicts of Asoka” on rock: the twelfth and the thirteenth. This fourth inscription was published in 1964.³⁴

On the same date, still in Kandahar, a fifth inscription was found, in Aramaic script, but in Indian and Aramaic languages, – an inscription quite similar to that of Pul-i-Darunteh. This valuable Indo-Aramaic “bilingual”, fragmentary one, was published in 1966.³⁵

A sixth inscription was discovered in the Laghman valley, about thirty kilometers not far from Pul-i-Darunteh; this inscription, entirely in Aramaic, was published in 1970.³⁶

Another inscription, the seventh, still entirely in Aramaic, was discovered, again, in the Laghman valley, very close to the previous inscription and almost entirely similar to this one, presenting only a few small variations. The seventh inscription was published very recently.³⁷

I had the honor and joy of publishing the third inscription (in 1958), the fifth (in 1966) and the sixth (in 1970), regarding Aramaic. Several of our colleagues from this Academy collaborated in the study of the new inscriptions of Asoka in Greek, Iranian-Aramaic and Indian: Daniel Schlumberger, Emile Benveniste, and M. Louis Robert; two of our colleagues, alas! have left us: how could we forget them?

During the thirty-three years of research during which I was deeply interested in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and while reflecting on the various problems of Essenism, I often thought on such occasion about the discoveries of the very recent inscriptions of Asoka, about Buddhism and the emperor of India who was converted to the Buddhist faith. I’m certainly not able to read to you the old and newly discovered inscriptions of Asoka; one would have to read and examine them for hours and days. Let me then give you just a few very brief quotes from Asoka’s edicts.

34. D. Schlumberger, *Une nouvelle inscription grecque d’Asoka*, dans *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, session of May 22, 1964, p. 126-140; E. Benveniste, *Édits d’Asoka en traduction grecque*, in the *Journal asiatique*, 1964, p. 137-157.

35. É. Benveniste, A. Dupont-Sommer and G. Caillat, *Une inscription indo-araméenne d’Asoka provenant de Kandahar (Afghanistan)*, in the *Journal asiatique*, 1966, p. 437-470, & pl. I-III and 3 figs.

36. A. Dupont-Sommer, *Une nouvelle inscription araméenne d’Asoka trouvée dans la vallée du Laghman (Afghanistan)*, session of March 20, 1970, p. 158-173 and pl. I-VIII and 3 figs.

37. G. Djelani Davary and H. Humbach, *Eine weitere aramäo-iranische Inschrift der Periode des Asoka aus Afghanistan*, dans *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur von Mainz, Geistes- u. sozialwissenschaftliche Kl.*, 1974, 1, p. 1-16.

Here, for example, is the so-called Bhabra inscription: "Priyadarsi, king of Magadha (Priyadarśi is the most common title of King Asoka), greets the Community and wishes contentment and well-being. You know, Gentlemen, how far my respect and my faith in the Buddha, the Law (*Dhamma*) and the Community extend. Gentlemen, everything that the Blessed Buddha said is well said. However, what, Gentlemen, would seem to me to make the Good Law lasting, I allow myself to tell you...."³⁸

Now note a passage recorded in the inscription from *Kalinga*, Volumr I: "... Let us therefore win the affection of men. Every man is my child. As for my children I desire that they have all that is good along with happiness in this world and in the next. And this is also what I desire for all men...."³⁹ And again this passage: "... They will be able to realize that the king is like a father to them and that he loves them as himself; they are like the king's children...."⁴⁰ Here is another quote from the sixth "pillar edict": "His Majesty Priyadarśi the King speaks thus: Twelve years after my coronation I had an edict of the Law engraved for the well-being and happiness of the world. Whoever would respect it must somehow achieve progress in the Law. This is how I understand the well-being and happiness of the world. As for my parents, similarly those near and far, I want to bring happiness to some, and I take measures accordingly, just as I intend to act with regard to all groups. I even paid homage to all the communities with numerous marks of homage.... Twenty-six years after my coronation I had this inscription of the Law engraved."⁴¹

One passage taken from the thirteenth "Rock Edict" is of extreme importance: "... His Majesty wishes that there be security, mastery of the senses, benevolence and gentleness in all beings. Now, the victory that His Majesty considers as the first of all is the victory of the Law. As for His Majesty, he has spread the Law here and to his bordering kingdoms, and even as far as six hundred leagues, where the Greek king Antiochus rules, and further than Antiochus, to the four kings: Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magas and Alexander; and to the south, the Chola, Pāndya, and Taprobane [Sri Lankan] kings; and likewise, here in his own empire, the Greeks and Kambogians, Nabhaka and Nabhapanti, Bhoja and Pitinika, Andhra and Parinda, everywhere one conforms to the

38. Cf. Jules Bloch, *Les Inscriptions d'Asoka* ..., p. 154.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 137. Cf. also *Kalinga*, II (*ibid.*, p. 141).

40. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 167-168. The phrase "His Majesty" is practically equivalent here to the name "the friend of the gods"; cf. É. Benveniste, *Édits d'Asoka en traduction grecque*, *Journal asiatique*, 1964, p. 142-146.

teaching of His Majesty's Law. Even where His Majesty's envoys do not go, by hearing about the conduct according to the Law, the precepts and the teaching of the Law of His Majesty one conforms to the Law and will conform to it. The benefit obtained is a universal victory. However, this conquest always gives a feeling of joy. This joy was obtained by the victory of the Law. But this joy is still little. It is only what is valid for the other world that His Majesty considers of great benefit...."⁴²

Here then are the ambassadors of Asoka sent to Antiochus (Antiochus II Theos), king of Antioch & sovereign of the Seleucid empire; Ptolemy (Ptolemy II Philadelphus), king of Alexandria and ruler of the Lagid Empire; Magas, king of Cyrene, foster brother of this Ptolemy; Antigonus Gonatas, king of Macedonia; Alexander (either Alexander of Epirus or Alexander of Corinth). The Aramaic inscription of Asoka found in the Laghman, which I published in 1970, marks the ancient route to India; it mentions "there (the place) called Tadmor", that is, Palmyra. This is the distant oasis, the great caravan city located some 3,800 kilometers from where the Aramaic inscription is engraved. This indicates, in our opinion, one of the most famous relay points on this famous route.^{42a} To reach Antioch, Alexandria, Cyrene, Macedonia, Epirus from India, it was necessary to pass by the Laghman road; further, it was necessary to pass through Palmyra, and the mention of this oasis in the Syrian desert in the new Aramaic inscription gives Palmyra a particular luster. The importance of the road to India is not only, for the Indian king, that this immense road is used for military travel, official mail, traffic, trading, but also that it is the path which allows its envoys to carry the message of the Buddhist faith to the ends of the world: this road has for Asoka, if I dare say, a real spiritual value, because it is like the infrastructure of this vast project of The evangelization of Buddhism extending to the entire earth, revealed to us by the very inscriptions with which Asoka wanted to cover his empire and also the marches of his empire.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 129-132.

42a. Upon careful study and comparison of the two Laghman inscriptions, I think it is still extremely difficult to define the exact route mentioned there. See, among others, H. Humbach, *Indologien-Tagung* 1971, p. 161-169; J. Teixidor, *Syria*, XLVIII, 3-4, 1971, p. 479-480; J. de Menasce, *Israel Oriental Studies*, II, 1972 p. 290-292, and J. Naveh, *ibid.*, p. 301-302; R. Stiehl-F. Altheim, *Klio*, 54, 1972, p. 61-66; M. Bogoliugov, *Voprosy Yazykoznaniya*, 3, 1973, p. 71-77; J. A. Delaunay, *Kratylos*, 21, 1976, p. 78-90; V. Livshitz-J. Shifman, *Vestnik drevnei Historii*, 2, 1977, p. 7-24; F. Rosenthal, *Eretz Israel*, 14, 1978, p. 97-99.

Asoka sent to the kingdoms of the Eastern Mediterranean not only his ambassadors, but also his apostles, his missionaries in large numbers. The emperor of India extended his sovereignty over the regions bordering the Iranian and Greek populations, from Taxila to Bactres. The zealous missionaries of Asoka spread not only in the island of Ceylon, but also in the south of India, and in the territories of the east and the west, and in those of the north. And the Good News of the Buddhist message in which the virtues of mercy and charity are wonderfully inscribed: "Since then, we read, evil has been reduced by all men ..., and throughout the earth (there is) peace (and) joy"; these are the very terms of the Aramaic recension of the Asoka inscription discovered in 1958 in Kandahar.⁴³ It is already the dawn of the messianic era; we find the same testimony of this universal zeal, of this kind of catholicity, which Asoka wanted to attribute to the Buddhist faith.

If the numerous missionaries sent by the Indian king reached, as his inscriptions declare, the countries of the eastern Mediterranean, and in particular the two great Hellenistic metropolises: Antioch and Alexandria, these apostles certainly exposed the edifying history of these communities of Buddhist monks and nuns in whom the pious emperor took a keen interest. This preaching took place in the second half of the third century BC. However, shortly after this, in the second century BC, we saw the appearance within the Jewish world of robust institutions of the monastic type, founded like the Buddhist communities on poverty, celibacy, obedience, kindness and charity: I want to speak of the Essenes of Palestine, and also of the Therapeutae of Alexandria and of all Egypt. For a long time, we have wondered about the origin of these Jewish mystical communities, which had no precedent, no real model either in the tradition of ancient Judaism or, indeed, in the pagan religious brotherhoods, in the "*thiases*" so widespread in the Hellenistic world. Certain authors, I told you, have proposed to look in India, where monastic institutions flourished, for the primary cause of the appearance of these Jewish monastic institutions which were very likely those of the Essenes and the Therapeutae.

Yes, would it not be the missionaries of Asoka who sowed in Palestine and in the Jewish Diaspora the idea of this monasticism of which they would have revealed to certain Jewish souls turned towards the highest forms of spiritual and ascetic life the mysterious and fascinating seductions? Certainly, these seeds deposited in Jewish soil, already so penetrated with the ancient ferments of old Semitic religions and so open to

43. *Journal asiatique*, 1958, p. 22.

the influences of Hellenistic mysticism, these seeds would have germinated in a particular way and given birth to religious Orders strongly marked both by the beliefs and practices of ancient Judaism and by more or less conscious borrowings from the surrounding Hellenistic world. It was India, at the time of Asoka, which would, according to us, be the start of this vast monastic movement which shone brightly for around three centuries in Judaism itself.



I cannot speak to you in detail today about the Community of Therapeutæ of Egypt, — whose name practically means the “servants of God” (and also the “handmaids of God”). As for Essenism, established in Palestine, I would like to underline, in the most emphatic way, the claim that their very notion of Community is properly derived from the Buddhist Community.

The Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria clearly explained what the community life of the Essenes was like: “There is no house”, we read, “which is the property of no one, none which is not in fact the house of all; because, in addition to living together in brotherhoods, their residence is also open to members of the same sect who arrive from elsewhere. Then, there is only one fund for everyone, and the expenses are common: the clothes are common, and the food is common.... Such use of the same roof, of the same way of life and of the same table, one would look in vain for it elsewhere, better realized in fact.... Their community life is superior to all praise, which is the clearest manifestation of a perfect and fully happy existence....”⁴⁴

On the other hand, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus confirms Philo’s words: “(The Essenes) are the despisers of wealth, and their community life is admirable: one would look in vain, among them, for someone who would surpass others by fortune. Indeed, it is a law that those who enter the sect abandon their property to the Order, so that nowhere among them is seen either the humiliation of poverty or pride of wealth, but that, the possessions of each being mixed, there exists for all only a single asset, as for brothers....”⁴⁵

As for the Dead Sea Scrolls themselves, those which concern the Essene Order, they constantly return to the fundamental idea of “community”; the corresponding

44. *Quod omnis probus liber sit*, § 85, 91; cf. *Apologie des Juifs*, § 4-18 (in the *Œuvres d'Eusèbe de Césarée*, by G. Dindorf, Vol. I, Leipzig, 1867).

45. *Guerre des Juifs*, II, 8, § 122.

Hebrew word, *yaḥad*, is used in these texts with characteristic frequency: it is the exact equivalent of the Greek word *koinônia*, used by Philo and Josephus. The sect is called not only “the Council of the Community”, but also “the Institution of the Community”, “the Community of God”, “the Community of the Covenant eternal”, “the Covenant of the Community”, “the Covenant of the Eternal community.” Everything is common between the brothers: “And in common they will eat, and in common they will bless, and in common they will deliberate,” we read in the Rule (VI, 2-3). The faithful belong entirely to the Community, as to their soul and also as to their goods (Rule, 1, 11-12): “And all the volunteers attached to His truth will bring all their intelligence and all their strength and all their goods into the Community of God....” The community of goods is total, at least for fully initiated confreres; in addition to the alienation of assets, it includes the payment of salary daily in the hands of the quaestor of the Community (Rule, VI, 19-20). A common mass is thus formed, “the assets of the Community”. Any damage caused to the property of the Community (Rule, VII, 6-7) and especially any fraud concerning the payment of property or salary (Rule, VI, 24-25) are severely punished.

The members of the Community, it is said repeatedly, are “volunteers”; this feature is noted very precisely with regard to the Essenes in the notices: “Their commitment”, writes Philo, “is not due to race – the word race is not appropriate when it comes to volunteers – but it is due to the zeal for virtue and the ardent love of men.”⁴⁶

The “ardent love of men” is for the perfect Essene the ideal of mercy, pity, assistance, forgiveness of offenses, peaceful spirit, gentleness, goodness, and, to crown all of these affectionate feelings, divine charity. All the nuances of altruism are encountered in the various Essene writings. Here, for example, in the scroll of Rule, is one declaration of a follower of the Community (X, 17-18):

“I will not repay anyone for evil;
it is with good that I will pursue everyone;
for with God is the judgment of every living person,
and it is He who will pay to each his reward.”

Thus the faithful must never take revenge among themselves; it is to God alone that he must entrust the care of vengeance. We must “pursue each with good”, that is, return good for evil.

46. *Apologie*, § 2.

This is also the teaching of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, an authentically Essene work, probably dating from the 1st century BC (the “Twelve Patriarchs”, these are the twelve sons of Jacob). This is how we read, for example, in the *Testament of Joseph* (XVIII, 2): “And if anyone wants to harm you, you, by a good deed, pray for him, and you will be redeemed from all evil by the Lord.”⁴⁷

Let us look at another passage in the *Testament of Benjamin* (IV, 2-4): “A good man does not have a dark eye, but has pity on all, even if they are sinners. Even if they do not have goodwill toward him, he overcomes evil by doing good, and he is protected by God”.

And here is a brief quotation in the *Testament of Issachar* (VII, 6): “I have loved the Lord with all my strength; even so I have loved every man more than my own children.”

And a few more remarkable passages in the *Testament of Zebulun* (V, 1-3): “And now, my children, I charge you to keep the commandments of the Lord, to show mercy to your neighbor and to have pity on all, not only on men, but also on animals of reason....⁴⁸ Therefore have compassionate hearts, for as each man acts towards his neighbor, so will the Lord act towards him....” Another passage (VII, 1-3): “I now report to you what I have done. I saw an unfortunate man, naked in winter; taking pity on him, I stole a piece of clothing from my father’s house and gave it to this unfortunate man. You therefore, my children, on what God grants you, having pity, give charity to all, without distinction, and give to everyone with a good heart. If you have nothing to give to him who is in need, suffer with him in the depths of mercy....”⁴⁹ Again (VIII, 1-5): “You therefore, my children, have mercy on every man, in mercy, so that the Lord, having pity on you, may have mercy on you. For in the last days God will send his mercy upon the earth, and where he finds the depths of mercy, there he will dwell.... When you went down to Egypt, Joseph did not hold a grudge against you, but when he

47. This quotation, like all the other following quotations from the *Testaments des Douze Patriarches*, are here translated into French by Mr. Marc Philonenko, professor at the University of Strasbourg; he was kind enough for me to use his translation of the *Testaments des Douze Patriarches*, which will soon be published.

48. This trait regarding pity towards animals is common in the Buddhist code.

49. Cf. Josephus, *Guerre des Juifs*, II, VIII, § 134: “On the whole, therefore, there is nothing that they (the Essenes) accomplish without the order of the administrators; but the following two things concern only themselves: assistance and pity.... It is permitted for them, in fact, and this on their own initiative, to help those who are worthy of it, whenever they ask for it, and to provide food to the needy....” Thus, Essene ethics includes the absolute primacy of assistance and pity over all other obligations.

saw you, he was filled with pity. You too, taking your model from him, be without rancor, my children, and love one another....”

Mutual love is the main leitmotif of the book of *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Let us focus, if you wish, on the immediate recommendation of the *Testament of Gad* (VI-VII): “... Love each your brother, and put hatred out of your hearts.... Love one another in action, in word and feeling. Love one another with all your heart, and if anyone has sinned against you, speak to him calmly, banishing the venom of hatred and keeping no trickery in your heart, and if he confesses and repents, forgive him. But if he denies it, do not quarrel with him, lest he take your venom and swear and you commit a double sin.... So put hatred out of your souls and love one another. with a right heart....”

• • •

The most generous ideal of the Buddhist Community, namely extreme charity, has spread in the most ardent way; it was he who set an example for the Essene Community. And the divine flame of the Essene Community in turn set ablaze the most sublime hearth of the Christian Gospel. Here is the commandment of Jesus the Nazarene, in John's Gospel: “A new commandment I give you: that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. In this everyone will know that you are my disciples: if you have love for one another” (*Gospel according to John*, XIII, 34-35). And here is another Johannine passage: “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love has not known God, because God is love” (*First Epistle of John*, IV, 7-8).⁵⁰

50. See also the Apostle Paul, *I Corinthians*, XIII: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, if I do not have love, I am only a tolling gong or a clanging cymbal. Even if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to move mountains, if I do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, even delivering my body to the flames, if I do not have love, it is of no use to me. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; does not get irritated; love does not rejoice in injustice, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away.... So now faith, hope, and love abide; but of these three, the greatest is love....”

The Essene Community was the fervent heir to the legacy of Israel's past, the Law and the Prophets. But it was her very fervor that pushed her to seek out and approach what was then, in the pagan mystical world, the highest, the strongest, the most conquering: Essene Gnosis, essentially syncretistic, integrated into the most ardent Jewish piety, the noblest, most highly spiritual conceptions of Iranian mysticism and Hellenistic mysticism, and, even more, of Indian and, more precisely, Buddhist mysticism. The product of such a synthesis was naturally of rare richness and quality. Thanks to its complex substance, Essenism found itself endowed with a considerable force of seduction on souls enamored of the divine both in the Jewish world and in the pagan world.

Thus the ground was prepared where Christianity was born, this sect of Jewish origin, Essene or Essenizing, which was to conquer so quickly and so powerfully a very large part of the world.

Concluding Remarks by ML

The ‘*Maximalist*’ meaning of ‘*Origins* of Christianity’ is that there was a real ‘*Organizational*’ identity, on the one hand, between Buddhist monks & nuns who first arrived in Egypt in mid-3rd century BCE and, on the other hand, the Therapeutæ, known to have established a monastic *organization*), at that same time, just outside the city of Alexandria.

In the beginning, of course, that monastic membership there, above the shores of Lake Mareotis, was 100% ethnic Indian! But, since all Buddhist monastics are avowedly celibate, the practice was to keep the membership numbers constant by “adopting” new adults seeking to join them, after a rigorous three-year novitiate, ending in ‘baptism’ and admission to the weekly recurring sacred communal meals.

Since membership in this organization was open to both sexes and to all the ethnic groups in Egypt, during the *ca.* 500-years of its existence, the ethnic-Indian ratio would generally have been reducing. Whereas, the crypto-Buddhist monastics in Qumran seem to have become solely male, ethnic Jews!

In the special case of the literary scholars of the Therapeutæ, in Alexandria, the authors of Buddhist scriptures *and also* the earliest (2nd-century-CE) “Christian” scriptures, it would seem that these authors would have to have had fluency in the Indian languages of Pāli and Sanskrit, besides Greek. So we may assume that these authors were likely to have been ethnic Indians!

So I reason thus: Just as caterpillars pupate into butterflies, two different forms of a single organism, I propose that the Essenes/Jessæans of Egypt and Palestine are different forms of Buddhist monasticism, being two forms of a **SINGLE SPECIES!** And that Essenism/Jessæanism is the caterpillar stage of its transformation into the butterfly of earliest Christianity!

THE END