



Firstborn *Shor* and *Rem*: A Sacrificial Josephite Messiah in *1 Enoch* 90.37-38 and Deuteronomy 33.17

DAVID C. MITCHELL

Av. Maurice César 62, 1970 Wezembeek-Oppem, Belgium

Abstract

1 Enoch 90.37-38 feature a messianic white bull and a *nagar*. Following a discussion of interpretational *crucis*, this article concludes that the latter represents the aurochs. A comparison is made with Deut. 33.17 in which the same two oxen represent an anticipated Joseph–Joshua deliverer, who is on the one hand servile and destined to sacrificial death and on the other regnant and free. The coincidence of imagery in the two passages suggests that *1 En.* 90.37-38 is dependent on Deut. 33.17, leading to the conclusion that the oxen of *1 En.* 90.37.38 depict a Joseph–Joshua Messiah destined to sacrificial death then resurgence in power. This has implications for the dating of beliefs about the Josephite Messiah, for the integrity of other second-century BCE texts, and for Christian origins.

Keywords: *1 Enoch* 90.37–38, Deuteronomy 33.17, Messiah ben Joseph, Josephite Messiah, sacrificial Messiah

The Animal Apocalypse of *1 Enoch*, dating from about 165 BCE, is a theriomorphic depiction of the messianic age.¹ The central figures are a

1. E. Isaac dates the Animal Apocalypse from 165 BCE or earlier ('1 Enoch', in *OTP*, I, pp. 5-89 [7]). P.A. Tiller (*A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch* [Atlanta: Scholars, 1993], pp. 78-79) dates it shortly after 165, and J.T. Milik to 164 BCE

white bull and its successor, a mysterious entity called in Ethiopic *nagar*, that is, 'thing, word, deed'. Commentators agree that the white bull represents the Messiah.² But what of the *nagar*? Some sixty years ago C.C. Torrey suggested that it represents Messiah ben Joseph,³ the mysterious slain Messiah of rabbinic literature.⁴ At the time his view was largely dismissed.⁵ However, since it seems to me that Torrey was looking in the right general direction, even if he did not quite secure his arguments, and since no satisfactory hypothesis for the passage's unique symbolism has yet been proposed, it is perhaps time to revisit the proposal that this text features a Josephite Messiah.

Therefore by a comparison of *1 En.* 90.37-38 with what I shall propose is its source text, Deut. 33.17, I hope in this article to confirm Torrey's

(*The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976], pp. 44, 244). Such a date is consistent with the Qumran fragment 4QEn^f of the Apocalypse dating from 150–125 BCE (Milik, *Books of Enoch*, pp. 41, 244–45).

2. A. Dillmann, *Das Buch Henoch* (Leipzig: Vogel, 1853), p. 286; M. Buttenwieser ('Messiah', in *JE*, VIII, pp. 505–12 [509]); R.H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893), p. 258 n. 1; F. Martin, *Le Livre d'Hénoch* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1906), p. 235 n; Isaac, '1 Enoch', p. 5; C.C. Torrey, *The Apocryphal Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945), p. 112; idem, 'The Messiah Son of Ephraim', *JBL* 66 (1947), pp. 253–77 (266); B. Lindars, 'A Bull, a Lamb and a Word: 1 Enoch xc.38', *NTS* 22 (1976), pp. 483–86 (485). Milik, *Books of Enoch*, p. 45, and Tiller, *Commentary*, p. 388, prefer the term 'eschatological patriarch' or 'second Adam', the latter noting also his universal dominion (Tiller, *Commentary*, p. 385). As far as I am aware, the passage has not yet been covered in the University of Michigan's Enoch Seminars.

3. C.C. Torrey, 'The Messiah Son of Ephraim', *JBL* 66 (1947), pp. 253–77 (267).

4. There are references to Messiah ben Joseph in rabbinic literature of all periods and genres. Among the older texts, see *Suk.* 52a; *Targ. Tos.* to Zech. 12.10; among midrashic literature see my translations of *Aggadat Mashiah*, *Otot ha-Mashiah*, *Sefer Zerubbabel*, *Asereth Melakhim*, *Pirqei Mashiah*, and *Nistarot Rav Shimon ben Yohai*, in D.C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter* (JSOTSup, 252; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 304–50. I have also cited the Messiah ben Joseph traditions from the *Midrash on Psalms* in the third section of my article 'Les psaumes dans le Judaïsme rabbinique', *RTL* 36.2 (2005), pp. 166–91. For discussion of the content and dating of these traditions, see my articles 'Rabbi Dosa and the Rabbis Differ: Messiah ben Joseph in the Babylonian Talmud', *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 8 (2005), pp. 77–90; 'The Fourth Deliverer: A Josephite Messiah in 4QTestimonia', *Biblica* 86.4 (2005), pp. 545–53; 'Messiah bar Ephraim in the Targums', *Aramaic Studies* 4.2 (forthcoming). An older classic work on the subject is G.H. Dalman, *Der leidende und der sterbende Messias der synagoge im ersten nachchristlichen Jahrtausend* (Berlin: Reuther, 1888).

5. See particularly H.H. Rowley's influential article, 'Suffering Servant and Davidic Messiah', in *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2nd edn, 1965 [1952]), pp. 63–93.

view that the *nagar* represents a Josephite Messiah. I hope also, *contra* Torrey, to show that both the white bull and the *nagar* represent the Joseph Messiah in two different manifestations or *avatars*, one sacrificial, the other sovereign. Finally, I hope to show that the Josephite Messiah was not a later idea read into Deut. 33.17, but a necessary deduction from it from earliest times.⁶

1. 1 *Enoch* 90.37-38

Although sections of the Enoch compendium have been found in both Aramaic and Greek, and parts of the Animal Apocalypse in Greek, vv. 37-38 are found only in the Ethiopic, a text showing some signs of corruption. There are therefore interpretational issues to address before we proceed, particularly in v. 38, which reads as follows:

And I saw till all their generations were transformed, and they all were-became white bulls; and the first among them was-became a *nagar*; the *nagar* was-became a great beast and had great black horns on its head.

The issues are two. First, who becomes what? Second, what is the *nagar*?

1a. Who Becomes What?

The question of who is transformed into what hinges on the Ethiopic verb 'to be' (*kôna*) which can be rendered either *was* or *became*. It occurs three times.

(a) *They all were-became white bulls*. Here the verb should clearly be taken as *became* rather than *was*, for the issue is the transformation of the beasts and birds of v. 37 into bulls. No other understanding is really possible, nor, to my knowledge, has it been proposed.

(b) *The first among them was-became a nagar*. This is harder. Does the first bull become a *nagar*? Or is the *nagar* a new unrelated figure who appears at this point as 'first' or chief among the white bulls?

6. It is probably worthwhile to note at this point my policy on rabbinic literature in this article, lest I be accused, like Torrey (Rowley, 'Suffering Servant', pp. 76-77), of importing rabbinic interpretations into pre-rabbinic texts. It will be found that I employ rabbinic literature, as I do modern scholarship, only to confirm interpretations already reached from within the primary text, not as primary evidence itself. Similarly, I cite rabbinic interpretations as supporting evidence that certain symbols were read as I suggest; or to show the persistence of certain biblical traditions into post-biblical times.

7. There is theoretically a third option, that the white bull is simultaneously a *nagar*. But this differs little from the first option since both involve dual states of being, which

The majority of commentators endorse the first option.⁸ Rightly so. For if the *nagar* is a completely new creature who appears at this point, then the white bull simply drops from the narrative after one verse. This would be surprising, given the detailed description of him and his importance among the animals. But if the *nagar* is the white bull transformed, it is consistent with the earlier transformation of the beasts and birds into white bulls. The lesser become great, the great become greater, in line with such descriptions of the messianic age as Zech. 12.8.

Here I diverge from Torrey who felt that 'the Lord of the sheep rejoiced *over them* and over all the oxen' (v. 38) is compelling evidence for two separate oxen, the first representing Messiah ben David, the second Messiah ben Joseph.⁹ For the phrase may mean simply that the Lord of the sheep rejoiced over all his creatures. Or that he rejoiced over his sheep (v. 34) as well as the oxen. (For it is not said that the sheep become bulls; and even if they do, he would rejoice in his transformed flock being no longer prey, as they were in *1 En.* 89.) Or again, *them* may indicate the *nagar* and the sheep, or even two manifestations of the one Messiah. Whichever way, Torrey's objection is not sustained on textual grounds. In addition, there are two serious objections to the white bull representing Messiah ben David. First, Ben David never precedes Ben Joseph in Israelite tradition. The principle is always 'he [Joseph] came first in Egypt and he will come first in the age to come'.¹⁰ Second, it is unlikely that Ben David would be symbolized by an ox; his symbols are always the lion or ass.¹¹

are perhaps more likely to be manifested serially than simultaneously. To my knowledge this interpretation has not been proposed.

8. Those who see the second beast as the first transformed include Dillmann, *Das Buch Henoch*, p. 287; Martin, *Le livre d'Hénoch*, p. 235 n; Milik, *Books of Enoch*, p. 45, who sees the transformation as signifying the bull's increased power; perhaps Tiller, *A Commentary*, p. 388. M.A. Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), II, p. 216, accepts that both one animal transformed or two separate animals are possible.

9. Torrey, 'Messiah, Son of Ephraim', p. 267.

10. *Sifré* on Deut. 33.16, §353; *Yalk.* on Deut. 33.16, §959. See too the midrashim in n. 4 above. Torrey's view may derive from the singular notion of G.H. Dix, 'The Messiah ben Joseph', *JTS* os 27 (1926): 130-43 (132), that Gen. 49.10 was evidence that Ben Joseph would displace Ben David.

11. The lion symbol, deriving from Gen. 49.9, occurs at, e.g., 1 Kgs 10.19-20; 2 Chron. 9.18-19; 4 Ezra 11.36-12.3; 12.31-34; *Gen. R.* 95.1; *Exod. R.* 1.16; *Num. R.* 14.1; *Est. R.* 7.11; *Midr. Tanh.* 11.3. The ass symbol, deriving from Zech. 9.9, occurs at, e.g., *Gen. R.* 75.6; *Eccl. R.* 1.9.1. The lion and ass were, of course, prohibited for sacrifice

(c) *The nagar was-became a great beast and had great black horns on its head.* Is the *nagar* a great horned beast? Or alternatively, does it become a great horned beast?

Once again the majority of commentators endorse the first option, seeing the second phrase as a description of the *nagar*.¹² Again rightly so. For if the *nagar* is transformed into a great horned beast, then the *nagar* itself would be an incomprehensible bird of passage, appearing for a trice, a 'thing' nameless, functionless, formless, an unexplained pupa of the white bull's frenetic metamorphoses into a great horned beast. And in that case, the great horned beast is itself nameless and unspecified. This would be surprising, for all other animals in the apocalypse are named by species (*1 En.* 85–90): bulls, elephants, camels, asses, lions, tigers, wolves, dogs, hyenas, wild boars, foxes, squirrels, swine, falcons, vultures, kites, eagles, and ravens; even 'birds of the air' and 'beasts of the field' are recognizable groups in the light of biblical usage. But 'great beast with great black horns on its head' is a vague description of what is clearly an important figure in the narrative. However, all makes sense if the *nagar* is itself the great horned beast. In that case, the Ethiopic translator wants to explain what the *nagar* is, and so he provided a gloss. This leads to our next point.

1b. What is the *Nagar*?

The Ethiopic term *nagar*, as noted above, generally signifies 'thing, word, deed'. However such a reading is hardly satisfactory, being inconsistent with the theriomorphism of the passage. The Ethiopic translator recognized this. For he brought the *nagar* back to the theriomorphic realm by telling us that it is a great beast with great black horns on its head. Such a beast, then, is the *nagar*. Now which beast could this be? An answer is found both in the likely derivation of the term *nagar* and in a process of zoological sleuthery. Let us start with the latter.

(Lev. 1.2; Exod. 13.13; 34.20). The Judahite Messiah is, however, symbolized by a bull on one occasion, at *T. Jos.* 19.5. But there the tribes of Israel are together symbolized by twelve bulls, and the bull cannot therefore be regarded as the proper symbol of Ben David in that place.

12. Dillmann, *Das Buch Henoch*, p. 288; J. Flemming, *Das Buch Henoch* (GCS, 5; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1901), p. 140; Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse*, p. 389. The same view would appear to be implied by the majority of commentators, who see the *nagar* as an animal. However Isaac, '1 Enoch', p. 71, appears to envisage three states with two intervening metamorphoses.

We seek a great beast with great black horns on its head. Although one might think that many beasts could fit such a description, in practice this is not so. For a start, most animals have grey-white medium-sized horns. Then, buffalo and ram have horns beside, not *on*, their head; the rhinoceros does not have horns on its *head*; the extinct wisent or European bison had small horns; and the unicorn has only one horn. As for goat, ram and gazelle, they are not 'great beasts'. If we make less of the horns being *on* the head, and accept side-projecting rising horns, then a large domestic bull, *bos taurus*, with abnormally dark and large horns, might be a passable candidate. But our Ethiopic translator already had a word for that animal—he had just mentioned it in the same verse—and clearly intended another beast.

In fact, in all zoology there is only one animal which fits the description. It is the extinct wild ox or aurochs, *bos primogenius*, a large long-horned ox formerly inhabiting North Africa, Europe and South-West Asia.¹³ The aurochs was famed for its size and its great black horns which rose straight up from its head. Its Hebrew name, *rem*, deriving from *r'm*, suggests its great size, which rabbinic tales dwell on. One tells how the aurochs did not enter the ark, but only its offspring, for it was too large; another tells how King David found an aurochs asleep in the desert and, thinking it a hill, climbed upon it, and being then borne away, promised to build a temple a hundred cubits high—like its horns—in return for his safety; again, we are told that its horns are larger than all beasts' and it is called *rem* because its horns are *ram* ('high').¹⁴ None of the *rem*'s competitors match these attributes or fit the Ethiopic translator's description half as neatly.

13. See F.S. Bodenheimer, *Animal and Man in Bible Lands* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), p. 108, where a picture of the aurochs shows its upright horns. He states that in his time the aurochs, although pronounced extinct, was (like the tribes of Ephraim) rumoured to be alive in the mountain fastnesses of Kurdistan. More recently its demise has been confirmed, but attempts to resurrect it by cloning are afoot. Its nearest living relative may be the ancient breed of white wild oxen in Chillingham Park, Northumberland, whose blood group, unique among European cattle, shows them to be direct descendants of the ox which roamed Britain before Roman importation of *bos taurus*. Like the aurochs, their horns grow upward on top of the head and ancestral skulls testify that they were formerly of great size. *Bos primogenius* (sometimes *primogenitus*) means of course 'firstborn bull'. The name may have arisen from the Linnaean classifier's confusion of the two animals in the Vulgate: *Quasi primogeniti tauri pulchritudo eius cornua rinocerotis cornua illius*.

14. *Gen. R.* §31.13; *Midr. Pss.* on 22.22; *Yalq. Shim.* on Ps. 22 (§688); *Midr. Pss.* on 92.11; Rashi on Ps. 22.22.

The conclusion that the *nagar* is the aurochs is supported by Dillman's 'excellent conjecture'.¹⁵ He suggested that the Ethiopic translator was working from a Greek text which had been translated from an Aramaic original. The Aramaic word for aurochs, *rēma*, had been simply transliterated into Greek, resulting in ῥῆμα, Greek for 'word'. Seeing this in his Greek text, the Ethiopic translator gave his equivalent term, *nagar*. Then, knowing what animal was intended, he provided a description. Dillman's view has since been confirmed by Qumran evidence for an Aramaic original of the Apocalypse.¹⁶

Here Lindars objected that 'there seems no strong reason why the Greek translators should resort to transliteration at this point'.¹⁷ But there is in fact a very good reason why they should have done so. If the Greek translator had no word for the aurochs in his own language, he would have had no option but to transliterate. This seems likely, as the Septuagint consistently translates Hebrew *rem* as *monokerōs*, 'unicorn'.¹⁸ As for why the Ethiopic translator did not correct the mistake, that is also simple. He too had no word for the aurochs. It did not inhabit Ethiopia.

So we conclude with the widely accepted view that the *nagar* is an aurochs.¹⁹ We may now render the passage as follows:

15. Dillman, *Henoch*, pp. 287-88; Milik, *Books of Enoch*, p. 45.

16. Milik, *Books of Enoch*, pp. 4, 214; M.E. Stone, '1 Enoch', in *idem* (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 395-406 (397).

17. Lindars, 'A Bull, a Lamb and a Word', p. 484.

18. Num. 23.22; 24.8; Deut. 33.17; Job 39.9; LXX Ps. 21.22 (= MT 22.22 [Eng. 21]); LXX Ps. 28.6 (= MT 29.6); LXX 91.11 (= MT 92.11 [Eng. 10]). The only exception is Isa. 34.7, where it is rendered ἄδποι, that is, 'large' or 'well-grown' (bovids).

19. Dillman, *Henoch*, pp. 287-88; Charles, *Enoch*, pp. 258-59; Martin, *Le livre d'Hénoch*, p. 235 n; Milik, *Books of Enoch*, p. 45; Knibb, *Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, II, p. 216. Torrey also thinks the *nagar* is an aurochs, but reaches the conclusion by another route, suggesting the Greek translator read Aramaic רמא רמא *rema* as מאמרא *word* ('Messiah the Son of Ephraim', p. 267).

Charles later changed his view, following L. Goldschmidt, *Das Buch Henoch* (Berlin: R. Heinrich, 1892), p. 90, to *nagar* as 'lamb', from a misreading of Hebrew מלה *lamb* as מלה *word* (R.H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913], p. 260; *idem*, *The Book of Enoch* [London: SPCK, 1929], p. 128). But a Hebrew text of Enoch is unattested and the argument does not hold in Aramaic. Lindars, 'A Bull, a Lamb and a Word', p. 485, suggested Aramaic אַמַר *lamb* was read as אַמַר *word*; but, he admits, such a spelling of אַמַר is unattested, and it is rare even *plene* (only *Targ.* Num. 24.3, 15). Moreover, a lamb is not a 'great beast' with 'great black horns on its head'. Isaac feels it is better to refrain from emendation and take *nagar* as 'word' ('1 Enoch', p. 71). Certainly 'word' is attested as a messianic term in later

And I saw that a white bull was born, with large horns, and all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air feared him and made petition to him all the time. And I saw till all their generations were transformed, and they all became white bulls; and the first among them became an aurochs (the aurochs was a great beast and had great black horns on its head); and the Lord of the sheep rejoiced over them and over all the oxen. (*1 En.* 90.37-38)

On this basis we can now decode the imagery of *1 En.* 90.37-38 as follows. The Messiah, symbolized by a white bull, is born. Thereafter the nations—the beasts and birds—are transformed into his likeness. Then the Messiah is transformed into a more splendid state, represented by an aurochs. Then all dwell together in the favour of God.

2. Deuteronomy 33.17

Only one biblical verse features *bos taurus* and *bos primogenius* together—namely, Deut. 33.17, the end of Moses' blessing on Joseph and his tribes (vv. 13-17). From here on I shall refer to these animals by the Hebrew terms *shor* and *rem* to avoid the ambiguities inherent in English.²⁰ Here are vv. 16-17:

Let it [the blessing] come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the prince among his brothers. The firstborn of his *shor*, majesty is his; and the horns of a *rem* are his horns. With them he shall gore the peoples, all as one, even to the ends of the earth. Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim; such are the thousands of Manasseh.

There are two issues to address here. First, what does the *shor* and *rem* imagery represent? Second, to whom does it apply?

2a. Imagery

Although the *shor* and the *rem* are both oxen, they are very different beasts. The *shor* is a slave. A bearer of burdens, a puller of loads, it lives captive among human dwellings, its great strength bent to servitude; it is milked, slaughtered, and turned to beef and hide. Above all, in Israel, where every firstborn male belonged to YHWH who smote the firstborn of Egypt, the phrase 'firstborn of a *shor*' denotes an animal destined to

Israelite literature (Jn 1.1, 14). But the Johannine term is invariably translated with Ethiopic *qāl*, not *nagar*. Moreover a word, like a lamb, is not a great black-horned beast.

20. English has no singular non-gendered word for one beast of the domestic cattle. *Bull* indicates gender rather than species, and applies to animals other than cattle, such as elephants and antelope. *Ox* is too broad, since it can be applied also to the wild ox. Hebrew *shor* is a domestic bovid of either sex.

violent sacrificial death.²¹ Any Israelite living within the sphere of the cult knew phrase and its costly implications. On hearing Deut. 33.17, they could hardly have avoided making the connection between Joseph's *shor* and the sacrifice, just as is done, for instance, at *Est. R.* 7.11.

In [the Zodiacal sign of] Taurus was found the merit of Joseph who was called ox, as it says, *The firstborn of his shor, majesty is his* (Deut. 33.17); and also the merit of the offering, as it says, *A bull [shor], or a sheep, or a goat when it is born [shall be seven days with its mother; and from the eighth day on it shall be accepted as an offering made to YHWH by fire* (Lev. 22.27)].

The *rem*, on the other hand, is not a servant but a king. A majestic wild beast, it roams unyoked in virgin forest and steppe, its proverbial ferocity inspiring fear and awe among beholders (Num. 23.22; Job 39.9-12).²² It has no fear of being delivered up as a sacrifice. Not only would none dare meddle with it, but it had no place as a sacrifice in Israel's cult (Lev. 1.2).

There is then a total contrast between the 'firstborn of a *shor*' and a *rem*. One is servile, burdened, despised and destined to sacrificial death; the other, sovereign, free, revered, and destined to life. Lest I be suspected of reading too much into two beasts, the same contrast is noted at *Gen. R.* 39.11:

There were four whose coinage became current in the world: (i) Abraham, as it is said, *And I will make of you*, etc. (Gen. 12.2). And what effigy did his coinage bear? An old man and an old woman on one side, and a youth and a maiden on the other. (ii) Joshua, as it is said, *So the Lord was with Joshua and his fame was in all the land* (Josh. 6.27), which means that his coinage was current in the world. And what was its effigy? A *shor* on one side and a *rem* on the other, corresponding to *The firstborn of his shor, majesty is his; and the horns of a rem are his horns* (Deut. 33.17). (iii) David, as it is said, *And the fame of David went out into all the lands* (1 Chr. 14.17), which means that his coinage was current. And what was its effigy? A [shepherd's] staff and bag on one side, and a tower on the other, corresponding to *Your neck is like the tower of David, built with turrets* (Song 4.4). (iv) Mordecai, as it is said, *For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went forth throughout all the provinces* (Est. 9.4); this too means that his coinage was current. And what was its effigy? Sackcloth and ashes on one side and a golden crown on the other (cf. Est. 4.1; 8.15).

21. Num. 18.17; cf. Exod. 13.2, 12, 15; Lev. 22.27; 27.26; Num. 3.13; 18.17; Deut. 12.17; 14.23.

22. Bodenheimer, *Animal and Man*, p. 108, also notes the ferocity of the aurochs. The oxen of Chillingham Park, noted above, share the aurochs' extreme ferocity and are quite unapproachable.

In each case the two sides of the coin present contrasting states of affliction and exaltation. David is raised from shepherd to royal builder of fortifications. Mordecai is lifted from the ashheap to power and dignity. Abraham is elevated from the disgrace of childless old age to the blessing of married progeny—Isaac and Rebekah—and a future. By implication Joshua's *shor* and *rem* represent contrasting states of lowliness and exaltation.

Finally the *shor* and the *rem* of Deut. 33.17 are one. This is seen principally from their symbolizing one entity, namely Joseph (Deut. 33.13-16) as the representative head of his tribes (v. 17). But it is seen also from the *shor*'s 'majesty' which befits him to possess the *rem*'s fearsome horns, its *corona*.²³ And with such horns, such a crown, the *shor* becomes the *rem*.

That a transformation of *shor* to *rem* is envisaged is seen from the options. For if the two were simultaneously one, it would be a hybrid without the distinctive characteristics of either. That would make nonsense of the imagery. If, however, the *rem* were to become a *shor*, in defiance of their order of appearance in the text, they would depict a hero who briefly triumphs and is then consigned to humiliation. That would be a mediocre fate altogether compared to the suggested alternative, ascent from humiliation to lasting triumph, if the *shor* becomes the *rem*.

But how does the *shor* become the *rem*? How does a creature destined to sacrifice become triumphant? Clearly not by avoiding its destiny. Its way to resurgence and transformation must be in some way through sacrifice and death.

2b. Referent

The oxen of Deut. 33.17 are then one entity in two contrasting states of lowliness and exaltation. But whom do they represent? Three possibilities exist.

First, being part of the blessing on Joseph, they represent Joseph and his tribes. In fact, on the basis of this text, the ox—firstborn, domestic, *rem*, or generic—and its horns become in Israelite literature the proper symbol of the Josephites forever. In the Kingdom of Ephraim, military have a punning brag about acquiring by their strength horns for themselves in reconquering the Transjordanian town of Karnaim (Amos 6.13). In their sword-songs they sport iron horns to gore (*ngh*) the nations, a

23. As with Latin *cornus* and *corona*, so Hebrew *qrn* supports a complex image-cluster symbolizing kingship (Ps. 148.14), anointing (1 Sam. 16.1) and radiance (Exod. 34.29-35).

clear allusion to Deut. 33.17 (1 Kgs 22.11; 2 Chron. 18.10). In Ps. 22.22 (21), the horns of the wild oxen and the mouth of the lion surely represent Ephraim and Judah—signifying by merismus all Israel—united under Saul against David. In Ps. 29.6, Mount Hermon-Sirion on the northern horizon of the Kingdom of Ephraim is likened to a frisky young *rem*. The identification continues in post-biblical literature. In the *Testament of Naphtali* 5.6-7, Joseph seizes a great black bull with two great horns and eagle's wings and ascends into the heavens. In *Numbers Rabbah* the camp of Ephraim are said to have marched through the Sinai under a banner adorned with a bull-emblem (2.7; cf. 2.18). Elsewhere in rabbinic literature, as we shall see below, there are scores of instances where the oxen of Deut. 33.17 represent Joseph or his descendants.

Such *shor-rem* symbolism surely befits Joseph, the blameless youth compelled into servitude and delivered to the virtual death of pit and dungeon (Gen. 37.24; 39.20), but later raised to sovereignty, freedom and life (41.39-45).²⁴ Like the sacrificial victim, his affliction ultimately gave life to Israel (50.20). Then, having become the exalted *rem*, his horns would represent his vigorous offspring, Ephraim and Manasseh. The verse is routinely applied to Joseph in rabbinic literature.²⁵

However a second interpretation is possible. One can see in the 'firstborn' a reference to a descendant of Joseph through Ephraim. The term *firstborn* has a particular resonance with Ephraim who, though not a natural firstborn, obtained, like three generations of his progenitors, titular primogeniture.²⁶ And if, on the basis of v. 16, the first *his* pronoun of v. 17 refers to Joseph, then the 'firstborn of his *shor*' would be some

24. Ancient Near Eastern prisons were underground dungeons, and so there developed a widespread association between imprisonment and death (see O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World* [London: SPCK, 1978]). Cf. Isa. 24.22; 42.7, 22; Jer. 37.16; 38.6; Zech. 9.11.

25. *Gen. R.* 75.12; 86.3; 95.1; 95 (MSV [Vatican MS. Codex 30]); 99.2; *Exod. R.* 1.16; 30.7; *Est. R.* 7.11; *Lam. R.* on 2.3 §6; *Midr. Tan.* Wayyigash (Gen. 44.18), §11.3 (Buber 102b/204).

26. Isaac's acquisition of primogeniture is well-known (Gen. 27). Joseph was Rachel's firstborn, but not Jacob's. However, 1 Chron. 5.1-2 says Joseph was granted the rights of Jacob's firstborn in place of disgraced Reuben. In this, the Chronicler draws on what is implicit in Genesis, where Joseph is not only honoured above his brothers (Gen. 37.2, 3, 14), but receives the firstborn's double portion (48.22), by which his sons Ephraim and Manasseh each become tribes of Israel in their own right with their own inheritance (Josh. 14.4; 17.17-18). Ephraim, like his father, becomes an honorary firstborn when his grandfather Jacob again bestows pre-eminence on a lesser son (Gen. 48.13-20). Joseph, like his father, adopts his grandson as his direct heir (50.23).

generations down from Joseph—Joseph, his *shor*, its firstborn—and would represent a hero to arise from Joseph through Ephraim.²⁷ The obvious candidate for the reference is Joshua. He too, like Joseph, knew both lowliness and exaltation. According to E.G. Hirsch, in rabbinic literature ‘Joshua is regarded as the type of the faithful, humble, deserving, wise man’.²⁸ Though an Ephraimite prince, he did not rebel in the desert, as did others.²⁹ Instead, he humbly served Moses until he was eventually appointed commander of Israel in preference even to Moses’ own sons.³⁰ Like Joseph, his voluntary humiliation was ultimately life-giving, delivering Israel from the desert and bringing them into the Promised Land. The horns of the aurochs would again represent the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh who followed him and gored the nations of Canaan. Rabbinic literature frequently refers Deut. 33.17 to Joshua also.³¹

Finally the passage can be taken as referring to a future descendant of Joseph and Joshua. In fact, as Strack and Billerbeck note, such an idea was bound to be inferred from Joshua’s merely partial fulfilment of the words of the blessing.³² For Joshua did not *gore the peoples, all as one, to the ends of the earth*, but only the seven nations of Canaan. The discrepancy between prediction and event would have led naturally to the conception of a future Joshua who would fulfil the prophecy entirely. Such a figure, known in rabbinic literature as Messiah ben Joseph or ben Ephraim,³³ is frequently associated with Deut. 33.17.³⁴ Like Joshua, he

27. Similar usages elsewhere support this conclusion. At Num. 18.17, ‘the firstborn of a *shor*’ is the offspring of the *shor*; two beasts. At Deut. 15.19-20, ‘the firstborn of your *shor*’ is the offspring of the *shor* of the owner; three individuals, as here in Deut. 33.17.

28. E.G. Hirsch, ‘Joshua’, in *JE*, VII, p. 281-84 (282). Bible verses such as Prov. 8.15; 27.18; 29.23 are applied to him (*Num. R.* §§12-13).

29. For the biblical and rabbinic traditions on Korah’s rebellion, see D.C. Mitchell, ‘“God Will Redeem My Soul from Sheol”: The Psalms of the Sons of Korah’, *JSOT* 30 (2006), pp. 365-84 (368-69).

30. Joshua was a descendant of the only princely line of Ephraim, and of the tribal leader Elishama ben Ammihud (1 Chron. 7.20-27; Num. 2.18; 7.48). Cf. Exod. 24.13; 33.11; Num. 11.28; 27.18-23; Josh. 1.16-18; 4.14. At *Targ. Ps.-J.* to Exod. 40.11 he is ‘the head of the sanhedrin of his people’.

31. *Gen. R.* 6.9 (*shor, rem*); 39.11 (*shor, rem*); 75.12 (firstborn *shor*); *Num. R.* 2.7 (*shor*); 20.4 (*shor, rem*: Israel under Joshua’s command).

32. H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich: Beck, 1924/1928), II, p. 293.

33. *Targ. Ps.-Jon.* to Exod. 40.11. The *meturgeman* clearly did not hold the belief, mentioned by Hirsch (‘Joshua’, pp. 282-83) and advanced by Strack and Billerbeck (*Kommentar*, II, p. 296) against Messiah ben Ephraim’s Joshuanic descent, that Joshua

stands at the head of Ephraim and Manasseh to fight the wars of the Lord.³⁵ Like Joseph and Joshua, he is raised from sacrificial humiliation to triumph, dying for the sins of Israel³⁶ and being raised to honour in the messianic kingdom.³⁷

At this stage we therefore reach an important conclusion. A coming Josephite hero, a Messiah ben Joseph, rather than being a later idea read into Deut. 33.17, appears to be implicit in it. There are three reasons why this is so: (1) the text speaks clearly of a Josephite hero, one perhaps like Joshua (referred to either prospectively or retrospectively depending on one's view of dating); (2) the imagery of the firstborn *shor* and *rem* shows that he must suffer sacrificially before being exalted; (3) since Joshua did

married Rahab and died without male issue. But the proof-texts cited in *JE* for this idea (*Zeb.* 116b; *Meg.* 14a; *Yalq.* Josh. §9) do not support the claim, while *Yalq.* Josh. §9 makes Rahab the ancestress of the Judahites of 1 Chron. 4.21. Joshua's male issue seem also to be implied at *b. AZ* 25a, where the filling of the nations by Ephraim's seed (Gen. 48.19) is said to have taken place at Joshua's conquest of the land (Josh. 10.3).

34. *Midr. Tan. Wayyigash* (Gen. 44.18), §11.3 (Buber, 103) (firstborn *shor*); *Gen. R.* 75.6 (firstborn *shor*); *Gen. R.* 95 (MSV); 99.2 (firstborn *shor, rem*); *PRE* 22a.ii: (firstborn *shor, rem*); *Aggadat Ber.* 79 (firstborn *shor, rem*); *Num. R.* 14.1 (firstborn *shor*); *Zohar*, *Mishpatim* 479, 481, 483 (*shor*); *Pinhas* 565 (firstborn *shor*); 567 (*shor*); 745 (firstborn *shor*); *Ki Tetze* 21 (*shor, firstborn shor*); 62 (*shor*). It is applied to Messiah in general at *Pes. R.* 53.2.

35. *Otot* 6.5; at *Ag. M.* 17, 20; *As. M.* 4.13; Saadia, *Kitab al amanat*, 8.5 (ed. and trans. S. Rosenblatt, *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions* [Yale Judaica Series, 1; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948], p. 301); *Zohar*, *Vayyera* 478-80, he appears in Galilee, the territory of Ephraim. See too the latterday ingathering led by the children of Rachel at *Sifrê* on Deut. 33.16 (Pisqa 353); *b. B. Bat.* 123b; *Gen. R.* 73.7; 75.5; 97 (New Version [NV] in Soncino edn; from משפטי שברעות of R. Hai Gaon, Venice 1601); 99.2; *PRE* 19b.ii.

36. Texts which see Messiah ben Joseph's death as an atonement include *Suk.* 52a; *Pes. R.* 36-37; Saadia, *Kitab* VIII.6 (Rosenblatt [ed. and trans.], *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, p. 304); *Nist. R. Shim. b. Yoh.* 23 (Mitchell, *Message*, p. 331); Alshekh, *Marot ha-Zove'ot* (Venice, 1603-1607) on Zech. 12.10; Naphtali ben Asher Altschuler, *Ayyalah Sheluhah* (Cracow, 1593) on Isa. 53.4; Samuel b. Abraham Lanyado, *Keli Paz* (Venice, 1557) on Isa. 52.13; *Shney Luhot ha-Berit* (Fürth, 1724, p. 299b), cited in German in S. Hurwitz, *Die Gestalt des sterbenden Messias: Religionspsychologische Aspekte der jüdischen Apokalyptik* (Studien aus dem C.G. Jung-Institut, 8; Zürich/Stuttgart: Rascher, 1958), pp. 162-63.

37. For his resurrection, see, e.g., *Ag. M.* 2.22; *Otot* 9.1; *Sef. Z.* 49-50; *Aser. Mel.* 4; *Pir. M.* 5.47-49; *Nist. R. Shim. b. Yoh.* 34; *Midrash Wayyosha* 15.18 (A. Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash [= BHM]* (Jerusalem: Wahrman, 1967 [Leipzig: Vollrath, 1853-77], I.35-57); Saadia, *Kitab* 8.6; *Pereq Rav Yoshiyyahu* (*BHM* VI.112-16 [115]); *Zohar*, *Shlakh Lekha* 136; *Balaq* 342.

not fulfil the conquest of all nations, nor was it even his remit (Josh. 3.10), this hero was bound to be looked for in the future.

3. A Sacrificial Josephite Messiah in *1 Enoch* 90.37-38

There is therefore a clear resemblance between *1 En.* 90.37-38 and Deut. 33.17. Both are theriomorphic representations of hero-figures; both feature the same two bovinds in the same order. This can hardly be coincidental. Rather, Deut. 33.17 seems to be the source-text for the imagery of *1 En.* 90.37-38. We are therefore justified in appealing to the former to interpret the latter.

In the light of Deut. 33.17, it seems like *1 Enoch's* messianic white bull represents a Messiah from Joseph–Joshua. This is not simply because of the symbol of the bull or ox, but because it changes into a *rem*, like the hero of Deut. 33.17. Moreover, as in Deut. 33.17, he seems to be a firstborn bull. For his birth ultimately brings about the transformation of the wild creatures into his likeness. He is therefore the first of a new transforming species, and is called the ‘first’ among those he transforms (v. 37).³⁸

This white bull also represents a sacrificial Messiah. For, as we have noted, the bull was a sacrificial animal in general, and the firstborn bull was inevitably destined to sacrificial death. He is a perfect sacrifice, whose whiteness represents his ethical perfection (cf. Isa. 1.18; Ps. 51.9 [Eng. 7]).³⁹ After his suffering and death he will be transformed into a majestic state, represented by the aurochs.

Therefore *1 En.* 90.37-38 can be interpreted as follows. The Messiah is born. His representation as an ox shows his lineage from Joseph, Ephraim and Joshua; his whiteness shows his faultless rectitude; his great horns represent his majesty and power; the homage of the beasts and birds represents his acclamation among the nations. This unblemished creature is destined, like every firstborn male ox in Israel, to die as a sacrifice. The death is not described, but its results are. The first result is that the human race is transformed into white bulls in the Messiah's image. Here the writer has moved beyond Deut. 33.17 and seems perhaps to be drawing

38. Of course he is not the first white bull, nor even the first one born—the righteous line from Adam are represented by white bulls (*1 En.* 85.3, 9; 89.1, 10, 11). But neither were the titular firstborns Jacob, Joseph and Ephraim the first of their species, or even of their families. Their primogeniture was one of pre-eminence.

39. So too Martin, *Le livre d'Hénoch*, p. 235 n.

on texts such as Isa. 53.11. The second result is that the Messiah himself is transformed—as with the *shor* of Deut. 33.17 and innocent Joseph—from his former servile state into a new one of sovereignty and power. This surely implies his return from death to life—whether by reincarnation, resurrection, or some other reappearance—as surely as the firstborn bull was destined to die. Then the exalted Messiah and all redeemed humankind live in the favour of the Lord of the Sheep, the God of Israel.

4. Final Observations

We are now in a position to respond to some final objections. Lindars remarked, ‘Why should the Messiah change from being a domestic animal into a wild animal of the same species?’⁴⁰ The answer is now clear. Since both these animals are a biblical symbol for a hero from Joseph–Ephraim, the writer chose them to represent just such a figure. If it be objected that bulls represent the line from Adam to Isaac throughout the Apocalypse (85.3–89.12), one may respond that they are not altogether the same. For the patriarchs do not become aurochs, as does the Messiah. But insofar as they are all white bulls, the writer may wish to suggest that the patriarchs, like the Messiah, were patient bearers of the yoke of Torah; and that the Messiah, like the patriarchs, is the head of a new race, not simply a continuation of Israel, the sheep.

Rowley objected to Torrey’s identification of the *nagar* with Messiah ben Joseph–Ephraim as follows:

The fact that this [*1 En.* 90.38] is generally regarded as an allusion to Deut. 33.16f., and that later speculation interpreted that Biblical passage of the warrior Messiah, is not very clear evidence that the writer of *1 Enoch* was thinking of the Messiah ben Ephraim.⁴¹

Rowley’s inability to see Messiah ben Ephraim in *1 En.* 90.38 is surely due to his failure in reading Deut. 33.17. If it is an allusion to Deut. 33.16-17, as he allows, then it cannot refer to anyone other than a coming Josephite deliverer for the reasons given above. Such a figure may justly be called Messiah ben Ephraim. Likewise Rowley’s failure to connect Messiah ben Ephraim with the War Messiah or *mashuah milhamah* appears to be due to his lack of awareness of rabbinic traditions on the subject, which repeatedly identify Messiah ben Joseph–Ephraim with this

40. Lindars, ‘A Bull, a Lamb and a Word’, p. 485.

41. Rowley, ‘Suffering Servant’, pp. 76-77.

very figure.⁴² The same shortcoming is unfortunately evident in his other remarks on Messiah ben Joseph.⁴³

5. Conclusion

I have reasoned as follows. First, in *1 En.* 90.37-38 the messianic white bull becomes an aurochs. Second, the same transformation appears in Deut. 33.17, where the two oxen represent sacrificial and triumphant aspects of a coming Joseph-Joshua hero. Third, the unique coincidence of imagery in these two passages strongly suggests that *1 En.* 90.37-38 is dependent on Deut. 33.17. Therefore, on the basis of these premises, we may conclude that the white bull of *1 En.* 90.37-38 portrays an anticipated Joseph-Joshua Messiah destined to sacrificial death, and the *nagar-rem* represents his post-mortem resurgence in sovereignty and power.

There can be no ground for objection to such a conclusion *per se*, since a dying and resurrected Joseph-Joshua Messiah is a familiar figure in rabbinic literature.⁴⁴ The only objection can be to the dating of the idea,

42. *Gen. R.* 99.2: 'the War Messiah, who will be descended from Joseph'; *Midr. Tan.* I.103a (§11.3): 'in the age to come a War Messiah is going to arise from Joseph'; *Num. R.* 14.1: 'the War Messiah who comes from Ephraim'; *Aggadat Bereshit* §63 (*BHM* IV.87): 'a War Messiah will arise from Joseph'; *Kuntres Acharon* §20 to *Yalkut Shimoni* on the Pentateuch (*BHM* VI.79-90 [81]): 'a War Messiah is going to arise from Joseph'; *Gen. R.* 75.6; 99.2 applies Moses' blessing on Joseph (Deut. 33.17) to the War Messiah. The same conclusion is made by many commentators: Dalman, *Der leidende*, p. 6; L. Ginzberg, 'Eine unbekannte jüdische Sekte', *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 58 (Breslau 1914), pp. 395-429 (421); Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, p. 292; J. Heinemann, 'The Messiah of Ephraim and the Premature Exodus of the Tribe of Ephraim', *HTR* 68 (1975), pp. 1-15 (7); H. Freedman and M. Simon, *The Midrash* (London: Soncino, 1939), I, p. 698 n. 2; IX, p. 125 n. 3; M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York, 1950), p. 852 ('Mashiah'). Strangely enough Knibb thinks the *nagar* is a War Messiah, whom he regards as a priestly figure (*The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, II, p. 216). There are two passages where the *mashuah milhamah* is apparently a priest (*m. Sot* 8.1; *Yoma* 72b). But in eschatological contexts the reference is always to Messiah ben Joseph.

43. For Rowley's views that there is no evidence linking Zech. 12.10 with Messiah ben Ephraim in pre-Christian times ('Suffering Servant', pp. 73-74), nor any linking the suffering servant of Isa. 53 with Messiah ben Ephraim (pp. 74-77), nor any that the death of Messiah ben Ephraim was ever thought of as vicarious (p. 76), see my 'Messiah bar Ephraim in the Targums' where the allegedly non-existent evidence is cited at length; see also n. 37 above.

44. For the necessity of Messiah ben Joseph's descent from Joshua as well as from Joseph, see my 'The Fourth Deliverer', p. 552, and 'Messiah bar Ephraim in the Targums' where I present the genealogical and textual evidence for his Joshuanic descent.

for it has long been maintained that the suffering Josephite Messiah dates from long after the Animal Apocalypse.⁴⁵

I Enoch 90.37-38 therefore has implications for the dating of the Josephite Messiah. It adds its witness to the case for the idea existing in all essentials centuries before the first rabbinic references.⁴⁶ Indeed, the idea and its symbolism must have been already well established when the Animal Apocalypse appeared for its theriomorphic code to have been comprehensible.

It has implications in turn for the history of interpretation of Deut. 33.17. Its Josephite ox-hero who will subdue all nations must have elicited early speculation about an eschatological suffering and rising Joshua. This may in fact be the true source of the Messiah ben Joseph idea.⁴⁷

It has implications for the authenticity of other second century BCE texts which are regarded on ideological grounds as Christian interpolations. One thinks particularly of *T. Benj.* 3.8, whose spotless Josephite

It is worth noting at this point that the case has long been made for the existence in the Book of Similitudes (*I En.* 37-71) of a transcendent heavenly figure with features of the *mashiah* of Ps. 2, the son of man of Dan. 7.13, and the servant of Yhwh of Isa. 49; 52.13-53.12. The literature on the subject is vast, but see, e.g., J. Jeremias, 'Erlöser und Erlösung in Spätjudentum', *Deutsche Theologie* (1929), pp. 109-15, who argues that *I Enoch's* Son of Man (chs. 46-48; 62-63; 69-71) is equated with Isaiah's servant and is exalted through death; more of the relevant literature is cited in Rowley, 'Suffering Servant', pp. 76-83.

45. There is a widespread view that Messiah ben Joseph developed out to the defeat of Bar Kokhba in 135 CE. See, e.g., J. Hamburger, *Realenzyklopädie des Judentums* (Strelitz i. M.: n.p., 1874), II, p. 768; J. Levy, 'Mashiah', *Neuhebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: n.p., 1876/1889), III, pp. 270-72; A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971 [s.l. 1883]), p. 79 n. 1, 434-35; Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, II, p. 294; J. Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), pp. 487-92; Hurwitz, *Die Gestalt des sterbenden Messias*, pp. 178-80; G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London: Collins, 1973), pp. 139-40. Similarly Heinemann has suggested that an existing militant Ephraim Messiah became a dying messiah by analogy with Bar Kokhba ('The Messiah of Ephraim', pp. 1-15).

46. I have made the same point in Mitchell, 'The Fourth Deliverer', p. 553; 'Rabbi Dosa', pp. 89-90; 'Messiah bar Ephraim in the Targums'. Similar views are found in J. Drummond, *The Jewish Messiah* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1877), p. 357; A. Wünsche, *Die Leiden des Messias* (Leipzig, 1870), p. 110; D. Castelli, *Il Messia secondo gli Ebrei* (Florenz: Fues, 1874); G.H. Dalman, *Der leidende und sterbende Messias der Synagoge* (Berlin: Ruether, 1888); Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, II, p. 293.

47. My caution comes from recognizing the possibility that Gen. 49.24 may be another source of the idea, and not from any doubt that Deut. 33.17 is itself a source.

Lamb of God shall die for the ungodly, and of *Sib. Or.* 5.256-59 whose sun-stopping (Joshua) pre-eminent man shall come again from heaven to where he spread on the fruitful wood his hands.⁴⁸

Finally, there are implications for Christian origins. Perhaps the New Testament writers were not the first Israelites to believe that a second Joshua ben Joseph would die as a sacrifice for the transformation of the human race and then rise to power.

48. J.C. O'Neill regards both these passages as essentially pre-Christian; see 'The Lamb of God in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs', *JSNT* 2 (1979), pp. 2-30; 'The Man from Heaven: SibOr 5.256-59', *JSP* 9 (1991), pp. 87-102. J. Liver notes the considerable similarity in ideas, concepts and terminology between *1 Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and the Qumran literature, and suggests that they originated in closely related circles ('The Doctrine of the Two Messiahs in Sectarian Literature in the Time of the Second Commonwealth', *HTR* 52 [1959], pp. 149-85 [149]).

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