Archiv für Religionsgeschichte

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Sealing the Demons, Once and For All: The Ring of Solomon, the Cross of Christ, and the Power of Biblical Kingship

Abstract: This paper traces the historical development of the tradition that King Solomon made use of a signet-ring to marshal the demons as a labor-force for the construction of the Jerusalem Temple and analyzes the shifting ritual uses to which this tradition was put. We argue that this tradition, which is most fully articulated in the *Testament of Solomon*, is a Christian innovation of the third and fourth centuries rather than a venerable Jewish tradition with roots in the Second Temple period. This branch of the Solomon tradition first emerged within the context of internal Christian debates of the third century concerning proper baptismal practice, where the power of baptism to provide protection from the demons was linked to debates concerning the efficacy of Solomon's act of sealing the demons in the temple. In the post-Constantinian period, the ring of Solomon was venerated by pilgrims to Jerusalem as a "relic" of Israelite kingship alongside the True Cross. Like certain strands of the *Testament of Solomon* literature, the pilgrimage practices performed at this potent site figure Christ's victory on the cross as the fulfillment—once and for all—of Solomon's only provisional mastery over the demons. In this context, Solomon's ring gave concrete expression to Christian claims on the Old Testament past, while also mediating between imperial and ecclesiastical power.

Introduction

Objects associated with figures from the Hebrew Bible, such as staffs, swords, cultic vessels and garments, and, of course, scrolls and books, appear in a wide range of ritual texts from late antiquity.[1] As artifacts linked to venerable persons or institu-

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1 See, e. g., Harari 2005.

tions from the biblical past, they imbued a given practice, practitioner, or perform-
ance with authority and thereby rendered the ritual especially efficacious.[2]

Prominent among these sacred insignia is the signet-ring or seal of Solomon,
which was understood to point to—and thus, under the right circumstances, to
serve as a conduit for—the Israelite king's legendary capacity to repel or control
the malevolent spirits that plague humanity. This emblem of Solomon's ritual
power appears in either discursive or iconographic form from the first-century on-
wards in sources as diverse as: Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, written in Flavian
Rome;[3] the *Greek Magical Papyri* from late-Roman Egypt;[4] apotropaic amulets from
across the late antique Mediterranean;[5] Aramaic incantation bowls from Sasanian
Iraq;[6] numerous so-called magical gems from Roman Syria and Palestine;[7] and per-
haps even Christian pilgrimage tokens from the Holy Land.[8] Indeed, it is fair to say
that Solomon's signet-ring was one of the most broadly distributed and recognizable
elements of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern "semiotic koiné" of late antiquity,
moving with ease across religious, linguistic, and political boundaries.[9]

Yet, precisely because Solomon's signet-ring was deployed in so many different
media and for such varied ritual purposes, we think it crucial to resist the temptation
to treat these materials as reflexes of a more or less unified "tradition." Where tradi-

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2 On the use of this type of authorizing tradition in the "magical" literatures of late antiquity, see
especially Swartz 1996, 173 – 205; Betz 1982.
3 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 8.45 – 49 (ed. Niese).
4 See, e. g., *PGM* IV.3009 – 3085, translated in Betz 1992, 96 – 97; also *PGM* XII.270 – 350, where the
ring is not identified as Solomon's, but appears alongside other biblical figures, such as Abraham.
5 See, e. g., the bilingual silver amulet from third-century Egypt, Ashmolean Museum Oxford
1921.1121, line 16, which invokes "the ring of the seal of King Solomon" (עזקת חתמת דשלמה
מלכה), in Kotansky, Naveh, and Shaked 1992, esp. 8 (Aramaic text), 11 (English translation), and
17 (commentary).
6 The ring or seal of Solomon or the act of sealing by Solomon appear in numerous bowls; see, e. g.,
Shaked, Ford, and Bhayro 2013, 208 – 9 (bowl JBA 46); Isbell 1975, 32 – 33 (bowl 7), 32 – 33 (bowl
18), 108 – 9 (bowl 47), 110 – 11 (bowl 48), 114 – 15 (bowl 50), and 116 – 17 (bowl 51); Gordon
1934, 324 – 26 (text B); Montgomery, 1913, 170 (No. 11) and 231 – 32 (No. 34).
7 This particular type of gem, which is most commonly inscribed with the phrase "seal of God"
(*sphragis theou*) and incised with a depiction of Solomon riding a horse and spearing a prostrate fe-
male demon, likely emerged only in the late third or early fourth century. For reproductions as well as
up-to-date assessments of their dating, see Spier 2007, 83 – 84; Spier 1993; Michel 2001, 1:268 – 81.
See also the searchable online Campbell Bonner Magical Gems Database (http://classics.mfab.hu/tal-
ismans/) as well as the classic studies in Goodenough 1953 – 68, 1:68, 2:226 – 38, 7:198 – 200, and
9:1044 – 67; Bonner 1950, 208 – 11; Perdrizet 1903. In the early medieval period, Byzantine crafts-
men produced a group of medallions that integrated overt Christian symbolism (esp. the cross) into
the older and more religiously indeterminate tradition of Solomon as "holy rider." An example of this
group was first published in Schlumberger 1892, 74 – 75; see now Nuzzo 1993.
8 Rahmani 1999; Tameanko 2003.
9 On the notion of a late antique "semiotic koiné," see Sizgorich 2009, 149 and 276 – 78. The trans-
cultural and interreligious nature of this tradition continued into the Middle Ages and beyond; see
Shalev-Eyni 2006.

tion-historical approaches succeed in describing the long-run trajectory of an idea or theme, they too often reduce variegated corpora to a core set of common denominators that can be traced back to a single point of origin.[10] In the present paper, by contrast, we take up the task of showing how the shifting discursive contexts in which the signet-ring of Solomon became embedded in the course of late antiquity conditioned the symbolic valences it carried and the ritual uses to which it was put. Our interest in the dynamics of recontextualization is indebted to the observation, articulated by Arjun Appadurai, that "even though from a *theoretical* point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a *methodological* point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context."[11] This proposition is particularly apt in the case of the signet-ring of Solomon, which not only moved precipitously across social boundaries but also from one expressive form to another (as literary motif, verbal or graphic icon, and even metallic object). In highlighting the multiple trajectories that the signet-ring of Solomon traveled, we show not only how a widely shared "biblical object" could be recruited into a variety of often competing ideological projects, but also how it helped to generate religious difference.

In order to isolate how social and political circumstances informed the concrete ritual uses to which the signet-ring of Solomon was put, this paper narrows its focus to one particular strand of the "Solomon tradition," focusing on the notion that Solomon made use of a signet-ring to marshal the demons as a labor-force for the construction of the Jerusalem Temple. We argue that this constellation of themes—Solomon's signet-ring, the demons, and the construction of the temple—is a Christian innovation of the third and fourth centuries rather than a venerable Jewish tradition with roots in the Second Temple period. In particular, we show that this idea emerged within the context of internal Christian debates of the third century concerning proper baptismal practice, where the power of baptism to provide protection from the demons was linked to debates concerning the efficacy of Solomon's act of sealing the demons in the temple. In the post-Constantinian period, however, the primary context for the tradition concerning the ring, the demons, and the construction of the temple shifted to the discursive domain of Christian Holy Land pilgrimage. By the end of the fourth century, the ring of Solomon—apparently now in the form of an actual object deposited at the ecclesiastical complex of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—was venerated by pilgrims as a "relic" of Israelite kingship alongside the

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10 A recent and very fine example of this type of tradition-historical study is Torijano 2002. While we are indebted throughout this study to Torijano's comprehensive and judicious work, we question the degree of cultural and historical continuity suggested by his presentation of these materials as part of a single, unfolding tradition.
11 Appadurai 1986, 5. For a model historical study of the movement of objects and artistic forms across religious boundaries within a common cultural space, see Flood 2009, esp. 1–14.

True Cross.[12] Building on Oded Irshai's insights concerning the important role that Solomon and his temple played in the creation of Christian Jerusalem,[13] we argue that Solomon's ring gave concrete expression to Christian claims on the Old Testament past, while also mediating between imperial and ecclesiastical power.

Essential to our reconstruction is the revisionist interpretation we offer of the historical development of the Greek *Testament of Solomon*. This enigmatic text represents the fullest articulation of the linkage between the anti-demonic function of the signet-ring and the construction of the Jerusalem Temple.[14] Yet the *Testament* poses considerable technical and interpretative challenges that impede analysis of its relationship to other, comparable Jewish and Christian traditions. In particular, study of the *Testament* and especially of its overtly "Christianizing" elements has been bedeviled by unwarranted assumptions regarding the text's Jewish origins, assumptions that have been exacerbated by the erroneous notion that Christians grew increasingly hostile toward Israelite institutions in the course of late antiquity.[15] In sharp contrast, we demonstrate that there is no evidence for a Jewish *Urtext* and considerable indications that the traditions found in the *Testament* were not known to Jews in the late Second Temple period. Moreover, we argue that the Christian appropriation of the signet-ring of Solomon was part and parcel of the enthusiastic incorporation of "biblical objects" within Christian ritual and narrative.

But before we can make use of the *Testament* as a historical source, we must first grapple with its complex literary formation and textual transmission. We show how an approach to the *Testament* that treats it less as a single "work" than as a multifaceted textual tradition can, in fact, facilitate the task of historical contextualization. We argue that the *Testament* (or at least some segments or strata of this work —more on this issue later) presents Christ's victory on the cross as the fulfillment —once and for all—of Solomon's only provisional mastery over the demons. Our claim that the *Testament* registers the formative function that the ring of Solomon served in the creation and legitimation of novel forms of Christian ritual builds upon Peter Busch's recent argument for Constantinian Jerusalem as the provenance for the text.[16] But, unlike Busch, we do not believe that the *Testament* can be read as a unified literary work, especially not one produced as propaganda by the clerical leadership of the Jerusalem Church.

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12 See, most notably, Wharton 2006, 18; Wharton 1992, esp. 324; Ousterhout 1990, esp. 47; also Wilkinson 2002, 63.

13 Irshai 2009, 476 – 80.

14 The fullest critical edition remains McCown 1922b. On the limitations of McCown's edition, see below. The two most important complete English translations of the *Testament* are Duling 1983 – 1985, 1:935 – 87 (which translates McCown's eclectic edition), and Conybeare 1898 (which translates Paris, BN, Anciens fonds grecs, No. 38 [Colbert 4895] = McCown's MS P).

15 See especially Klutz 2005; Klutz 2003.

16 Busch 2006; Busch 2013.

The paper proceeds as follows. We first establish what we believe to be a workable approach to the *Testament*, arguing that it must be treated as a literary tradition rather than as a discrete composition. Next, we argue against the view that the *Testament* was an originally Jewish composition that was only belatedly Christianized, a position for which we find no evidence. By contrast, the earliest sources that attest the specific collocation of themes in the *Testament*—Solomon, demons, and temple— turn out to be Christian sources in various languages and genres beginning in the late third and fourth centuries. Moreover, from the late fourth century on, Christian sources reflect direct knowledge of themes and even specific passages from *Testament* literature. This pattern of evidence fits well with and helps to illuminate the shifting ritual and ideological functions that the signet-ring of Solomon played in Christian culture from the third to sixth century.

I *The Testament of Solomon*, from "Text" to "Literary Tradition"

The *Testament of Solomon* is a multilayered composition that largely consists of lengthy passages that catalogue the demons, their attributes, and the proper means by which they can be subdued. These "ritual" passages are framed by and interwoven with narrative materials that recount Solomon's construction of the Jerusalem Temple as well as other chapters in the king's life and colorful career. Yet, the *Testament* does not represent a unified and stable work that was the product of a linear literary development, but rather a family of related textual forms made up of shifting configurations of units. Indeed, even after the *Testament* had undergone several formative stages of redaction, it continued to circulate in a wide variety of forms serving a diversity of ideological and practical functions for various religious communities. Consequently, interpretation of the significance of Solomon's ring and its relationship to Christ's cross within the *Testament* literature fundamentally depends on one's approach to its complex literary and textual history. At the same time, we believe that, if treated with sufficient care, the *Testament* has the potential to illuminate how Christians in late antiquity appropriated the "biblical" past for new ends. In this section, we argue for an approach that enables historical contextualization, while remaining sensitive to the fluid and dynamic nature of the textual and manuscript tradition of the *Testament*.

At least since Chester McCown produced his edition of the *Testament of Solomon* in the 1920s,[17] much scholarship on the text has been predicated on the notion that an *Urtext* can be recovered and can serve as the basis for literary and historical interpretation. In recent years, however, Sarah Schwarz and others have convincingly demonstrated how tricky—even misguided—it is to approach the *Testament* as a sta-

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17 McCown 1922b.

ble textual entity or to use the tools of traditional philology to generate a standard critical edition from the disparate text-forms found in the extant manuscript witnesses.[18] As Schwarz has persuasively shown, the methods used by McCown for his eclectic edition of the *Testament* generated a pure textual fiction masquerading as an ancient and complete work. In fact, the *Testament* never crystallized into a final or even dominant textual form, but continued to circulate in shifting configurations of elements that might best be imagined as "streams" within a broader literary tradition.[19] The activities of the writers and copyists who composed, transmitted, and, at times, quite aggressively recycled the *Testament* tradition should be treated not as noise obscuring a lost original, but as an opportunity to study the ongoing production and deployment of its constituent units of literary tradition. Like many other literatures from late antiquity, especially those that never underwent processes of canonization or standardization, the *Testament* literature circulated in what we might call a "modular" fashion.[20]

For this reason, the various manuscripts of the *Testament* do not capture definitive stages in the text's redactional development, but rather represent provisional snapshots of a nonlinear process of transmission. The scholar-scribes who produced the *Testament* literature in its various forms included, omitted, ordered, and reordered its constituent textual units for shifting and highly localized purposes. In this view, it is not possible to reconstruct either a fixed *Urtext* or a finally redacted form of the *Testament of Solomon*, and in all likelihood such stable beginning and end points of the transmission process never existed. Rather, the dynamic relationships among single units of tradition as well as the relationship of those units to the larger whole are the proper objects of study.

Striking evidence for the "modularity" of the *Testament* literature is provided by a fragmentary papyrus roll (*rotulus*) of uncertain provenance but datable to the sixth or early seventh century.[21] This so-called Vienna Papyrus, containing a version of what McCown's edition designates as chapter 18.27–28, 33–40, appears to have circulated independently of other portions of the *Testament* as a stand-alone document. While the Vienna Papyrus represents the earliest extant textual witness to *Testament* literature (or at least a portion thereof), it bears a highly uncertain relationship to the more elaborated forms of the work that were transmitted in many of the medieval and early modern manuscripts. Schwarz has proposed that the *rotulus*-form of the

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18 Schwarz 2007a; Schwarz 2005. See already the assessment of the issues and evidence in Harding and Alexander 1999.

19 See especially the articulation in Schwarz 2007b.

20 This situation is analogous to the literary processes that produced the late antique and early medieval Jewish mystical and magical corpus known as Hekhalot Literature; see Boustan 2007, 138–39.

21 The *editio princeps* was published in Preisendanz 1956. For re-editions of the fragments as well as for revised assessment of their date and relationship to the rest of the *Testament*, see Daniel 1983; Daniel 2013.

papyrus reflects the liturgical or ritual uses to which its creators put this particular passage.[22] If she is correct, the papyrus does not so much tell us about the earliest literary layers of the *Testament*, but rather is a product of the ongoing scribal processes by which units of text could become either embedded in or disembedded from other, often larger blocks of associated literary traditions.[23]

Following this fresh and convincing line of analysis, we emphasize the textual fluidity of the *Testament* literature. At the same time, we believe it possible to identify compositional units or configurations of units that lend themselves to *relatively* specific historical analysis. In this regard, we follow the recent work of Peter Busch, who has demonstrated the utility of a contextual approach. But, in our view, Busch goes too far in the other direction when he insists that the major recensions go back to a single, shared "Grundschrift" produced by the clerical leadership of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in post-Constantinian Jerusalem.[24] His approach is particularly problematic when he posits that, despite clear evidence to the contrary, the "Grundschrift" must have included precisely those key passages on which his proposed dating and provenance depend.[25] Still, Busch's core contention that the *Testament* registers the local dynamics in fourth-century Jerusalem is a crucial starting point for our argument.

We, therefore, attempt to steer a path between the rightly skeptical, but overly atomistic approach taken by Schwarz, on the one hand, and Busch's historically sensitive, but harmonizing approach, on the other. In our view, it is not necessary to restrict study of the *Testament* to its subsequent transmission and reception by medieval and early modern scribes. Provided that one keeps in check the urge to reach global conclusions regarding the *Testament* as a unified composition, we think it possible to trace the specific historical contexts within which key elements of the *Testament of Solomon* literature initially circulated.

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22 Schwarz 2007a, 218 – 25.

23 The translation of portions of the *Testament of Solomon* into Arabic is also characterized by a similar modularity in which discrete units of tradition were incorporated within novel literary compositions, such as in the still understudied *Judgment of Solomon*. See Čéplö 2012. A still unpublished version of the *Testament* in Arabic, which appears in MS Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ar. 448, fols. 39r–54r, requires urgent attention, as does the unpublished Syriac version in MS Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fonds syriaque 194. See also the striking parallels to the *Testament* in the eighth-century Arabic account of Solomon's construction of the Jerusalem Temple in the Kitāb al-Maghāzī of Maʿmar ibn Rāshid, in Anthony 2014, 172 – 75.

24 Busch 2006, 19 – 30.

25 Most notable is Busch's analysis of *Testament* 15.1 – 15, which appears in only two manuscripts, both of which belong to the same recension (Busch 2006, 203). See below for our detailed treatment of this passage and our discussion of Busch's analysis.

II *The Testament of Solomon* among Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity

Closely related to the issue of textual dynamism is the problem of establishing the religious "identities" of those who wrote or redacted the *Testament* or at least certain specific sections or literary strata of this "work." It has long been observed that the *Testament* literature contains elements from a wide range of ancient Mediterranean religious traditions.[26] Most notably, the *Testament* exhibits strong affinities to broader trends in ancient astrological thought.[27] Moreover, versions of the *Testament* appear to have circulated across religious boundaries throughout late antiquity, in particular among Greek-speaking Jews and Christians.[28] Because the *Testament* literature draws from so many strands of religious tradition and exerted such a wide-ranging impact on late antique and medieval Mediterranean culture, efforts to determine the precise contexts of the various phases of its literary development have proven inconclusive.

Since the nineteenth century, scholars have posited that the oldest layer of the *Testament* originated in Second Temple Judaism and subsequently underwent a process of Christianization.[29] Todd Klutz has recently attempted to revive this account of the literary formation of the *Testament*.[30] Klutz's reconstruction is predicated not only on the existence of a Jewish *Urtext*, but also on the notion that the Christianized layers of the *Testament* reflect the widespread repudiation among Christians of Solomon as a ritual expert. But Klutz's account curiously overlooks the growing importance that figures such as David and Solomon played in legitimating the novel forms of Christian imperial power that emerged in the post-Constantinian period.[31] Moreover, the notion that Solomon was a type for Christ did not recede over time,

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26 On the *Testament* as a "well mixed bricolage" of various religious traditions, see Johnston 2003, 39.

27 See von Stuckrad 2000, 16–19.

28 Evidence for the shared reception of the *Testament* literature appears in the often discussed passage from the sixth-century *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* (9.6–14), where the Christian Timothy and the Jew Aquila cite and debate a unit from what they call the "testament" of Solomon (ἐν διαθήκῃ αὐτοῦ), apparently referring to the material found in the *Testament of Solomon* 26.4 (recensions A and B). Significantly, the parties in the debate both know the "testament" and treat it as an authoritative source regarding the ethical and ritual behavior of Solomon. For Greek text and English translation, see Varner 2004, 156–59. For careful analysis of this passage, see Schwarz 2005, 97–107, who is perhaps too skeptical about whether the *Dialogue* is citing a version of the *Testament*.

29 For classic examples of the anachronistic use of rabbinic sources as part of the pre-Christian Jewish "background" of the *Testament*, see McCown 1922a, 1–8; Salzberger 1907, 92–97; Conybeare 1898, 11–14.

30 See Klutz, 2005; Klutz 2003, 219–44. Klutz bases his interpretation of the literary development of the text on a single manuscript (MS P = Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Anciens fods grecs No. 38 [Colbert 4895]), which he believes represents its definitive—and fully Christianized—form.

31 See Boustan 2008, 356–62, and the literature cited there.

but remained widespread in Patristic and other late antique Christian sources.[32] Finally, *pace* Klutz, the criticism of Solomon that is articulated in the *Testament* is not to be seen as a thorough rejection by Christians of his "magical powers"; indeed, a negative assessment of Solomon's sinful character is often paired in Christian sources with affirmations of the king as a model for Christian kingship or as a master exorcist.[33] Thus, a simplistic narrative according to which Christians gradually distanced themselves from Solomon profoundly misrepresents the actual process of appropriation by which this ambivalent figure was increasingly deployed in the creation of new ritual and narrative forms.

In what follows, we challenge the twin assumptions that the *Testament* began as a Jewish work and that its subsequent Christianization entailed the rejection of Solomon as a source of ritual power. In our view, these unwarranted presuppositions have too often led to linear and even teleological reconstructions of the literary and religious history of texts like the *Testament*.[34] We argue that, during late antiquity, the *Testament* was read, used, and transmitted within primarily Christian contexts. By contrast, Jewish sources from the Hellenistic and Roman periods do not betray any awareness of the specific complex of themes found in the *Testament*; it is only in the fifth to seventh centuries that we begin to find reflexes of its narrative framework in Jewish sources. It is not our aim to fix the religious identity of the *Testament* as a whole or even of its individual themes. We presume that the boundaries between Jewish and Christian traditions continued to be permeable throughout late antiquity, as our discussion of the rabbinic materials show.[35] At the same time, we find compelling evidence for the initial impetus for the creation of the *Testament* literature in specifically Christian contexts.

As has long been observed, the idea that the signet-ring of Solomon has power over demons is explicitly attested at the end of the first century CE in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*.[36] Josephus relates that a certain figure named Eleazar made use of this object to exorcize a demoniac in the presence of Vespasian and his men.[37] Ele-

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32 See Perdrizet 1903, 44 nn. 3 and 4; Perdrizet 1922, 34; McCown 1922b, 94–96. It is worth noting that, already in the New Testament itself, Solomon's power over the demons may have stood as a model for Jesus' own exorcistic activities; see Duling 1975.

33 This juxtaposition between criticism and praise of Solomon is particularly pronounced in Ethiopian textual and iconographic traditions; see Witakowski and Balicka-Witakowski 2013, 236. Jews, too, maintained a studious ambivalence toward the Israelite king, sometimes pointing to him as a cautionary example of immoderate power, while at other times holding him up as an ideal of royal sovereignty and religious authority; see Boustan 2013.

34 Frankfurter 2003; see also Davila 2005.

35 In this regard, we follow those scholars who have stressed the interpenetration of Jewish and Christian ideas and expressive forms throughout late antiquity. See especially Schäfer 2012; Boyarin 2004.

36 Conybeare 1898, 12, already called attention to this passage.

37 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 8.42–49 (ed. Niese). For discussion of this passage, see Deines 2003; Duling 1985; also the textual notes and commentary in Begg and Spilsbury 2005, 13–15.

azar performs the exorcism by placing the ring beneath the afflicted person's nose, while he recites incantations composed by Solomon. But, significantly, this passage in no way links the exorcistic use of the ring to Solomon's construction of the Jerusalem Temple. Moreover, it is worth noting that the elaborate account of the temple, which immediately follows the Eleazar narrative here in book 8, does not so much as refer or even allude to demonic helpers or a ring of power.[38] This is true even when Josephus stresses how the stones of the temple fit together so seamlessly that the viewer could detect "no trace of a hammer or any other building tool," apparently in keeping with 1 Kings 6:7 (*The house was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron was heard in the temple while it was being built*).[39] This exegetical tradition, which had its roots in the Second Temple period, formed a crucial building block in later rabbinic accounts of Solomon's demonically-assisted construction of the temple.[40] In short, if Josephus had been aware of the narrative traditions distinctive to the *Testament*—and especially if he had had before him an early version of this text—he would have had ample opportunity in his account of Solomon's reign to draw upon that knowledge. We can safely conclude that this often-cited passage from Josephus does not refer to the tradition that links the ring of Solomon to the construction of the temple and that perhaps the first-century historian was entirely unaware of it.

Modern scholars often pair Josephus' knowledge of an exorcistic ring of Solomon with the considerably later rabbinic sources that refer to such a ring in order to support their claim that the *Testament* reflects long-standing Jewish traditions that preceded the rise of Christianity.[41] But a survey of the relevant textual materials fails to turn up a single convincing parallel among the texts of early rabbinic Judaism (ca. 100–500 CE) to the narrative framework of the *Testament*; the Mishnah, Tosefta, halakhic midrashim, or Palestinian Talmud quite simply do not contain a single tradition that connects a ring or seal of Solomon to the construction of the temple.[42] That is not to say that these Palestinian sources from the third to fifth centuries are ignorant of Solomon's reputation for mastery over the demons, but only that they simply do not connect this power to a ring or even to the building of the temple.[43]

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38 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 8.50–99 (ed. Niese). For discussion of this passage within the wider context of Josephus' portrayal of Solomon as a builder, see Feldman 1995, 147–48.

39 Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 8.69 (ed. Niese). See Begg and Spilsbury 2005, 20 n. 228.

40 Esp. *bGit* 68ab; also *bSot* 48b. In addition, a number of passages from Palestinian midrashim of the late fifth century or later (*ShirRabb* 1.1.5; *Pesiq. Rbti* 6.7; *ExodRabb* 52.4) likewise assert that spirits, angels, or demons (רוחות, מלאכים, שדים variously in different texts) assisted Solomon in building the temple as a fulfillment of 1 Kgs 6:7, but without any mention of the ring or seal, which is central to both the *Testament of Solomon* and the narrative in Bavli *Gittin*.

41 See, most recently, Sasson 2007.

42 See the recent overview of the relevant sources in Langer 2013, 134–38.

43 Typical is a brief unit from the fifth-century Palestinian midrash *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 5:3 (ed. Mandelbaum 84), which is found in a collection of units cataloging how sin undermines the power of

In fact, it is only in rabbinic documents that were redacted in the sixth century or after—that is, the later Palestinian midrashim and the Babylonian Talmud—that we begin to find explicit references to Solomon's use of the demons to build the temple. Most notable and well-known is a passage in the Babylonian Talmud that recounts how Solomon availed himself of demonic assistance in the building of the temple (*bGittin* 68a–b). According to this extended narrative cycle, Solomon makes use of a signet-ring on which the Divine Name is engraved in order to capture Ashmedai, the king of the demons, and with the demon's help obtains the legendary *shamir* (understood variously as a plant, animal, or gem) with which the stones for the temple are to be cut; Solomon thereby succeeds in constructing the temple without the use of conventional human tools, as reported in 1 Kings 6:7, at least according to the long-standing interpretive tradition we looked at above.[44] Other, considerably shorter, variations of this narrative also appear in late Palestinian midrashim, although these are likely dependent on the version in Bavli *Gittin*.[45] As Richard Kalmin has shown, the specific version found in the Babylonian Talmud is strongly colored by language and themes particular to its Sasanian cultural context and the norms and institutional realities of the rabbinic academies; rather than providing evidence for the deep Jewish background of the *Testament*, the narrative cycle in the Bavli appears to have reworked traditions from Roman Palestine associated with and influenced by the *Testament* literature.[46] Rabbinic literature simply does not provide evidence that the narrative traditions at the heart of the *Testament* originated in a Jewish context, let alone as early as the Hellenistic or early Roman periods. Unless we treat rabbinic literature as a timeless body of folkloric motifs—an approach that we strenuously reject—we cannot presume that the narrative framework of the *Testament* drew on pre-existing Jewish lore.

Interestingly, an echo of this tradition of Solomon's demonic task force may be found in the late antique Hebrew magical treatise known as *Sefer ha-Razim* ("The Book of Mysteries"). This work (or closely related family of works) almost certainly derives from the pre-Islamic eastern Mediterranean, perhaps sometime between the fifth and seventh centuries.[47] But because *Sefer ha-Razim* has come down to us in much later and highly fragmentary medieval copies, scholars have not been able to fix its provenance or date with any precision; this certainly holds true for

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the righteous (e.g., the Israelites, King David). The passage exegetically derives Solomon's mastery over the demons from Eccles 2:8, but does not mention a ring nor does it elaborate on what he accomplished with that power.

44 See footnote 40 above.

45 Compare especially *MidrPs* to Ps 78:45; also *NumR* 11.3, which refers in brief to "the whole incident with Ashmedai," but without narrating the demon's capture, his help acquiring the *shamir*, or the rest of the story. In addition, a very brief mention of the *shamir* also appears in *bḤul* 63a, but without a wider narrative context.

46 See Kalmin 2014, 95–129.

47 For discussion of the text's structure, contents, language, and provenance, see Bohak 2008, 170–75.

its preface, which represents a distinct and separable component of the work. At least as transmitted in the medieval manuscripts from the Cairo Geniza, *Sefer ha-Razim* opens with a prefatory framework that claims that the treatise was first used by Noah to build the ark during the flood and that it was later handed on to Abraham and then to each succeeding generation of Israelites,

> ...until Solomon arose and the secrets of wisdom were revealed to him (ונגלו לו רזי בינה) and he became learned in the *Book of Wisdom*, such that he ruled over everything he desired, over all the spirits and the demons (ובכל הרוחות והפגעים) that wander in the world. And he imprisoned and released, and sent out and brought in, and built (ובנה), and thus prospered from the wisdom in this book. For many books were handed down to him, but this one was found more precious and more honorable and more difficult than any of them.[48]

Here, Solomon's knowledge about and mastery over the demons enables him to imprison them and perhaps even to use them in his construction projects. But even if this passage does allude to the connection between Solomon's mastery of the demons and the building of the temple, it does so rather obliquely and without mention of the seal or ring. Moreover, like other Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic sources from late antiquity, *Sefer ha-Razim* should not be used as evidence for the origins of this tradition within Hellenistic or early Roman Jewish culture. This is especially true in light of its uncertain date and complex compositional history. In the absence of Jewish evidence from before the fifth century, we ought to look to other contexts for the early development of this tradition.

III Solomon and the Demons in Early Christian Baptismal Discourse

In keeping with the method advanced above, we do not think it sufficient to point to sources that depict Solomon as an exorcist or to refer to the anti-demonic powers of his signet-ring. Instead, we locate literary contexts in which the theme of Solomon and the demons is paired with the construction of the Jerusalem Temple. In this section, we argue that this specific collocation of themes, which was developed most fully in the *Testament*, began to germinate in second- and third-century Christian debates about baptism and the nature of water. In that context, Solomon's mastery over the demons provided generative models—both positive and negative—for advancing a given author's claims regarding the ultimate saving power of Christ and the nature and function of "true" Christian baptism.

Given the prominence of the linkage between the ring and the temple in the *Testament*, we begin our search for this precise combination of elements by anchoring

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48 *Sefer ha-Razim* §13, translating Cambridge MS Taylor-Schechter A 45.28 (late tenth century), in Rebiger and Schäfer 2009, 1:6*. See also the translation in Morgan 1983, 19.

ourselves to specific currents within the *Testament* itself. As it turns out, much of the material dispersed throughout the *Testament* itself makes reference to overt Christian themes, such as the name Emmanuel or the crucifixion.[49] The dramatic encounter between Solomon and a female demon named Enēpsigos (Ἐνήψιγος) is a noteworthy and often cited example, to which we will shortly turn.[50]

It should be stressed, however, that these units, while interlaced with many similarly Christian themes, nevertheless present significant differences among them. As Sarah Schwarz has shown, not all of these passages are of a piece: in some the figure of Christ (or Emmanuel) is adjured just like one of the angels that are said to "thwart" the demons throughout the *Testament* literature.[51] The Enēpsigos chapter, for its part, appears in only two manuscripts, MSS P and N of McCown's recension B. Nonetheless, in his commentary on this passage, Peter Busch argues that it is "unimaginable" that this chapter (15) was not also present in recension A and, on that basis, extrapolates that this unit of text was likely integral to his hypothetical "Grundschrift."[52] The reasoning behind this claim escapes us. In our view, it is far truer to the manuscript evidence as well as to the irreducibly multivocal nature of the *Tes-*

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49 Christ is called Emmanouel in *Testament* 6.8 (Conybeare 1898, 29) (ἔστι δὲ τῶν Ἑλληνιστῶν Ἐμμανουήλ; MS P: παρὰ δὲ Ἕλλησι ἐμμανουήλ); 11.6 (52) (οὗ τὸ ὄνομα Ἐμμανουήλ); 15.11 (65) (ὅ ἐστιν Ἐμμανουήλ). The number 664, which is the sum of the numerical values of the letters in the name Ἐμμανουήλ (5 + 40 + 40 +1 + 50 + 70 + 400 + 8 + 30), appears only in MS P (chapters 29 and 52 in Conybeare 1898). But the phrase "by means of [the numerical value of the] three letters [χμδ = 644]," referring to Ἐμμανουήλ, appears in both recensions A and B at *Testament* 11.6 (52). References to the Cross, the crucifixion, or Golgatha can be found at: *Testament* 12.3 (54): "But I have my own way of being frustrated, Jerusalem being signified in writing, unto the place called 'of the head' (τόπου ἐγκεφάλου). For there is fore-appointed the angel of the great counsel, and now he will openly dwell on the cross"; *Testament* 15.10 (65): "stretched upon the cross" (τανυσθῇ ἐπὶ ξύλου); *Testament* 22.20 (122): "by the one who is going to be born from a virgin and be crucified by the Jews" (σταυρωθῆναι; or in MSS P & Q, also ἐπὶ ξύλου).
50 *Testament* 15.1–15 (65).
51 Schwarz 2012, 926–27. Compare especially *Testament* 11.6 (52), which alludes to Jesus' exorcism of "Legion" from the Gerasene demoniac in the synoptic gospels (Mark 5:9–13; Matt 28:32; Luke 8:30–33), but in which the Christ-figure is adjured like a thwarting angel: "So I (Solomon) said to him [the lion-shaped demon]: 'I adjure you in the name of the God Sabaoth to tell me by what name you are frustrated along with your legion (λεγεῶνα).' And the spirit answered me, 'The "great among men," who is to suffer many things at the hands of men, whose name is the numerical figure 644, which is Emmanuel; it is he who has bound us, and who will then come and plunge us from the steep under water. He is noised abroad (περιηχούμενος) in the three characters which bring him down" (Conybeare 1998, 28, slightly modified).
52 See Busch 2005, 201–3: "Obwohl die testamentarische Notiz in TSal 15,14 in Rec B überliefert ist, ist dies als redaktionelle Eigenart dieser speziellen Rezension nicht vorstellbar, sondern es ist anzunehmen, dass diese Notiz auch in Rec A vorhanden war. Ein Hinweis ist der Titulus der Mss I und H (beide Rec A), die beide die vorliegende Schrift als 'Testament' bezeichnen. Ein narrativer, textinterner Hinweis auf den Testamentscharakter der Schrift ist demnach auch in Rec A zu erwarten, und dies dürfte ein deutliches Indiz dafür sein, dass Kap. 15 auch in Rec A vorlag und womöglich auch Teil der 'Grundschrift' war" (203).

tament literature to approach this passage on its own terms—and certainly not as a summation of the religious ideology of the *Testament* as a unified "work." Our approach is to inquire into the shifting location of the tradition regarding Solomon, the demons, and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in early Christian discourse.

Let us now turn to the Enēpsigos passage itself, as it appears in manuscript P of the *Testament:*

> And there came before my face another spirit, as it were a woman in the form she had. But on her shoulders she had two other heads with hands. And I asked her, and said: "Tell me, who are you (λέγε μοι σὺ τίς εἶ)?" And she said to me: "I am Enēpsigos, who also has a myriad of names." And I said to her: "By what angel are you frustrated" (ἐν ποίῳ ἀγγέλῳ καταργῇ σὺ)? ... "I, then, changing into these three forms, come down and become such as you see me; but I am frustrated by the angel Rathanael, who sits in the third heaven. This then is why I speak to you. That temple over there cannot contain me." Therefore, I, Solomon, prayed to my God, and I invoked the angel of whom Enēpsigos spoke to me, and used my seal (ἐποίησα τὴν σφραγῖδα). And I sealed her with a triple chain, and (placed) beneath her the fastening of the chain. I used the seal of God (ἐποίησα τὴν σφραγῖδα τοῦ θεοῦ), and the spirit prophesied to me, saying: "This is what you, King Solomon, do to us. But after a time your kingdom shall be broken, and again in season this temple shall be driven asunder; and all Jerusalem shall be undone by the King of the Persians and Medes and Chaldaeans. And the vessels of this temple, which you make, shall be put to the servile uses of the gods; and, along with them, all the jars, in which you shut us up, shall be broken by the hands of men. And then we shall go forth in great power hither and thither, and be disseminated all over the world. And we shall lead astray the inhabited world for a long season, until the Son of God is stretched upon the cross (ἕως τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ υἱὸς τανυσθῇ ἐπὶ ξύλου). For never before has arisen a king like him (τοιοῦτος βασιλεὺς ὅμοιος αὐτῷ), one frustrating us all, whose mother shall not have had contact with man. Who else can receive such authority over spirits, except he, whom the first devil will seek to tempt, but will not prevail over? The number of his name is 644, which is Emmanuel. Wherefore, O King Solomon, your time is evil, and your years short and evil, and to your servant shall your kingdom be given."[53]

After having been captured by Solomon, the female demon Enēpsigos offers him a detailed prophecy concerning the destruction of the First Temple by Israel's foreign conqueror, presented somewhat puzzlingly as "the King of the Persians and Medes and Chaldaeans." As a consequence of this destruction, the many demons which Solomon has sealed in vessels and deposited in the temple will once again be free to roam the world and wreak havoc.[54] This state of affairs will persist until the coming

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53 The translation is from Conybeare 1898, 32, which we have slightly modified; for Greek text, see McCown 1922b, 46*–47*. Compare also the version of this passage translated in Bonner 1937.
54 For the trapping of demons in vessels and other receptacles (usually using the Greek term ἀγγεῖον), see also *Testament* 16.6–7 (69), where Solomon imprisons a demon in a bowl that he then deposits in the Jerusalem Temple: "So I said to him, 'Tell me by what angel you are thwarted.' He replied, 'By Iameth.' Then I ordered him to be cast into a broad, flat bowl (φιάλην), and ten receptacles (δοχὰς δέκα) of seawater to be poured over (it). I fortified the top side all around with marble and I unfolded and spread asphalt, pitch, and hemp rope around over the mouth of the vessel (τὸ

of Christ, whom "the devil will seek to tempt, but will not prevail over." The frailty of the temple as a prison against the demons undermines Solomon's standing as ruler and ritual expert, while simultaneously exalting Christ as his ultimate successor in both of these capacities.

Scholars have long noted the striking narrative affinities between this passage from the *Testament* and a similarly bleak account of the temple's demonic construction and ultimate failure in the *Testimony of Truth*.[55] Most likely composed in Egypt prior to 300 CE, the *Testimony of Truth* is preserved in one fragmentary manuscript at Nag Hammadi.[56] Like several other texts from the Nag Hammadi library, it is a sharply polemical text that presents the biblical kings David and Solomon as negative exemplars.[57] Most important for our purposes, it is the earliest extant source, aside from the *Testament*, to combine Solomon and the demons with the construction of the temple.

In the pertinent section, the author of the *Testimony of Truth* draws a direct link between Solomon's essentially sinful nature and his ultimately unsuccessful attempt to defeat the demons despite having sealed them within the temple after he had employed them as a labor-force in the construction of Jerusalem:

στόμα τοῦ ἀγγείου). When I had sealed it with the ring, I ordered (it) to be stored away in the temple of God." See also *Testament* 15.9 (65): "all the vessels (ἀγγεῖα) in which you have entrapped us shall be broken in pieces by the hands of men"; *Testament* 22.9 (119): "take a leather flask (ἀσκὸν) and this seal"; *Testament* 25.7 (126 in MSS P & Q): "But when Ephippas came, sent by you shut up in the vessel of a flask (ἀγγείῳ ἀσκοῦ)."

55 See now Torijano 2002, 178 – 83, which gathers together and presents in English translation the parallels to this tradition in the fragmentary writings of the renowned alchemist Zosimus of Panopolis (ca. early fourth century). He also points to several later reflexes of this tradition: two late antique Christian exorcism texts found in MS Parisinus Graecus 2316 (cited from Reitzenstein, *Poimandres: Studien zur griechisch-ägyptischen und frühchristlichen Literatur* [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966 ⟨1904⟩], 295 – 96) as well as a unique passages found in an eighteenth-century manuscript of the *Testament of Solomon* (MS Sancti Saba 290 in Library of the Greek Patriarchate, Jerusalem = McCown's MS E XI.3 printed in McCown 1922b, 119). For our purposes, however, it must be stressed that neither the fragments of Zosimus nor the two exorcism texts make mention of the Jerusalem Temple, let alone the role of the demons in the construction of the shrine or their release from it following its destruction; these details are found only in the *Testimony of Truth* and the *Testament of Solomon* literature. In short, none of these particular texts contradicts our core contention that the specific associations between Solomon, the demons, and the Jerusalem Temple first emerged toward the end of the third century in a Christian context.

56 For discussion of this and the other Nag Hammadi materials relating to Solomon, see van der Vliet 2013; also Pearson 1980.

57 Compare *The Second Discourse of Great Seth*, 63.11 – 17, where both David and Solomon are listed among a number of biblical figures who are disgraced as laughingstocks; *Origin of the World* 106,19 – 107,17, which lists "forty-nine androgynous demons" whose "names and functions" can be found "in the *Book of Solomon*"; and also *Revelation of Peter* 82,3 – 83,15, which reports that "the one they crucified is the firstborn, the abode of demons, the stone vessel in which they live, the man of Elohim, the man of the cross, who is under the law."

[Others] have [demons] dwelling with them [as did] David the king. He is the one who laid the foundation of Jerusalem; and his son Solomon, whom he begat in [adultery],[58] is the one who built Jerusalem by means of the demons, because he received [power]. When he [had finished building, he imprisoned] the demons [in the temple].[59] He [placed them] into seven [waterpots. They remained] a long [time in] the [waterpots], abandoned [there]. When the Romans [went] up to [Jerusalem] they discovered [the] waterpots, [and immediately] the [demons] ran out of the waterpots as those who escape from prison. And the waterpots [remained] pure (thereafter). [And] since those days, [they dwell] with men who are [in] ignorance, and [they have remained upon] the earth.[60]

Appended to this account of the dire consequences of the sins committed by the kings of Israel is a series of brief questions concerning the typological meanings of the various narrative elements: "Who, then, is David? And who is Solomon? And what is the foundation? And what is the wall which surrounds Jerusalem? And who are the demons? And what are the waterpots? And who are the Romans? But these [are mysteries]..."[61] The passage stresses the transfer of demonic influence from David to his son Solomon. In turn, Solomon, having been born in adultery, spreads the demonic taint that clings to the Israelite monarchy to Jerusalem and its temple. His attempt to control the demons once they have assisted him with the construction of the cultic shrine ends in failure when the Romans enter the city and thereby trigger the release of the demons from the fragile edifice and vessels in which they are imprisoned.[62]

Many similarities exist between this passage from the *Testimony of Truth* and the Enēpsigos chapter from the *Testament*. In both cases, Solomon has trapped and sealed the demons in vessels, which are placed for safekeeping within the Jerusalem Temple; the shrine thus functions as a prison-house for the demons. Moreover, in both passages, the notion that the temple was, in the end, a fragile edifice that could be destroyed by Israel's enemies highlights the interconnections between Solomon's failures as a ruler, as a builder, and as a ritual specialist.[63]

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58 For the word "adultery," we follow the conjectural reconstruction of ογⲙⲛ-ⲧ[ⲛⲟⲉⲓⲕ] in Pearson 1981, 190. Insofar as Solomon was not the product of an adulterous union according to 2 Ḳgdms 12:24–25, this word remains uncertain. For our purposes, what is important is that Solomon's origins link him to the demons.

59 The word "temple" is reliably reconstructed from [ⲉⲡ]ⲡ̅[ⲡ]ⲉ̣.

60 *T. Truth*, 70,1–70,24, edited and translated by Giversen and Pearson in Pearson 1981, 190–95.

61 *T. Truth* 70,24–30. The following 11 lines are untranslatable, but see the plausible reconstruction in van der Vliet 2013, 204–9.

62 The historical referent for the entry of the Romans into Jerusalem is uncertain. Giversen and Pearson suggest that the text is here alluding to the entry of Pompey into Jerusalem in 63 BCE. But it is equally possible that the text is alluding to the events leading up to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE.

63 Needless to say, neither text appears to be interested in the niceties of historical accuracy. Compare *Testament* 6.4 (27), where the demon Beelzeboul tells Solomon that he allies himself with "foreign tyrants" in order to "destroy kings."

Despite the similarities, the two passages express strikingly different attitudes toward Solomon and his control of the demons. The *Testimony of Truth* advocates the rejection of Solomon precisely because of his close association with the demons. By contrast, the prophecy of Enēpsigos offers a much more qualified assessment of Solomon: the king's mastery over and imprisonment of the demons prefigure the very same function she anticipates Christ will perform—and, indeed, perfect. The triumphant death of the Son of Man on the cross will restore order to the world and keep the demons at bay, this time forever. When the author of the *Testimony of Truth* considered whether or not to recoup biblical figures and institutions as positive precedents in Christian discourse and practice, his answer was a definitive "no." But Christians like the author of the Enēpsigos passage arrived at a different answer.

Rather than overemphasize—and thus, mischaracterize—similarities between the authors' attitude towards Solomon, we are better off inquiring into the precise nature of the discourse in which Solomon's mastery over the demons is conjured from such varying positions. As it turns out, early Christian discourse about true baptism and the nature of water was one in which Solomon's mastery over the demons could serve as a reference point for the articulation of the power of baptism in Christ. Numerous early Christian writers drew a direct connection between the rituals of baptism and exorcism. Indeed, from as early as the second century, if not earlier, many Christians understood Christ's own baptism in water to have brought about the ultimate defeat of the demonic forces as well as to have purified the waters of baptism in preparation for the salvation of his followers.[64] But this view of baptism was not universally embraced by Christian writers and their communities. Local disputes erupted within and between various Christian groups concerning the nature of water and thus the proper form of the baptismal ritual: while some Christians worried that water that had not been properly purified of the demonic would forever "seal" unclean spirits into the baptizand, others viewed water as inherently demonic and, therefore, rejected baptism with water altogether.[65]

Already in the second century, Solomon and his demons figure together in this debate in the *Eclogae Propheticae*, a fragmentary collection of sayings compiled by Clement of Alexandria. Like some of his other contemporaries, the author of the *Eclogae* emphasizes the purifying properties of baptismal waters, which Jesus sanctified and rendered effective for purging unclean spirits by his own baptism.[66] The *Eclogae*

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[64] See esp. Ignatius, *Eph.* 18.2; also Tertullian, *Bapt.* 4.4, 9.2; *Adv. Jud.* 8.14; Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 1.6, 25.3; Theodotus, *Exc. ex Theod.* 82.2. For discussion of these and other sources, see Schoedel 1985, 84–86. Bobertz 2014 has recently proposed that the link between Christ's purification of baptismal water and the defeat of the demons is already present in Mark.

[65] See Kelly 1985, 57–77; Ferguson 2009, 280–83.

[66] *Eclogae* VII states: "Now, regeneration is through water and spirit, just as it was also with all creation. *For the spirit of God moved over the abyss* (Gen 1:2). And because of this the savior was baptized, without needing to be so himself, in order that for those being regenerated he might sanctify all water. Therefore, we cleanse not only the body, but also the soul. Thus, a sign also of our invisible

draw an explicit analogy between Solomon and Christ in a brief exegetical treatment of the imagery of day and night in Psalm 19:2. Addressing the second half of the verse, [*Day to day pours forth speech,*] *and night to night declares knowledge*, the text explains,

> The devil knew that the Lord would come, but, that He was [the Lord], he did not believe it. Therefore, he tempted Him, so that he might know whether He were powerful, as it is said, *he departed from him until an opportune time* (Luke 4:13), that is, he delayed the discovery until the resurrection. For he knew that the one who was to rise is the Lord. So, too, the demons [tempted], since they suspected that Solomon was the Lord, but they came to know that he was not, once he sinned. *Night to night:* All the demons came to know that the Lord was He who rose after the passion.[67]

In this elaborate analogy, Christ succeeds in subduing the Devil, just as Solomon had managed to do with the demons; however, unlike Solomon, whose sinfulness deprives him of power, Christ's resurrection demonstrates his eternal "lordship." The text draws a typological parallel between Solomon and Christ based on their confrontation with evil powers; Christ stands as the primary focus of the passage, while Solomon is evoked merely as his less-than-perfect model. The author utilizes the shortcomings of the Israelite king to enhance the superiority of Christ.

Solomon and the demons also appear in a similar context in the second-century *Apocalypse of Adam*, a Gnostic text that explores the origins of the heavenly "illuminator" (ⲡⲓⲫⲱⲥⲧⲏⲣ) who is a purveyor of knowledge, signs, and wonders, upon whom "the holy Spirit has come," and who will suffer in his human flesh.[68] The text presents what it calls "the thirteen kingdoms" as perpetuators of false accounts of the origins of this illuminator-Christ figure. This section, though possibly at one point an independent unit,[69] is fully integrated in the text's polemic against certain forms of water baptism that serve the false creator god and his powers. The account of each kingdom culminates with the phrase, "thus he came to the water," a baptism in mere water that defiles "the water of life," here identified with gnosis.[70] In contrast to these false accounts, the fourteenth and correct explanation is attributed to the "kingless generation" that has recognized the illuminator-Christ's true descent into the world; the offspring of this generation "receive his name in the water" and are

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parts being sanctified is the straining off from the new and spiritual creation the unclean spirits entwined with the soul." The Greek text is in Stählin 1909, 138; the translations from the *Eclogae* are our own. For discussion, see Kelly 1985, 68–70.

67 *Eclogae* LIII (Stählin 1909, 151–52).

68 *Apoc. Adam* 77.1–17. See the translation by Marvin Meyer in Meyer 2008, 347–56.

69 So Hedrick 1972; for a survey of research on the origins and significance of the "13 Kingdoms," see Parrot 1989.

70 *Apoc. Adam* 84.3–26; for discussion see Turner 2001, 155–66. See also the more general discussion of Sethian Baptism in Turner 2006. For further discussion and sources, see Pearson 2011, 129–31.

liberated from the cosmic powers into a holy dwelling through true baptism.[71] According to the *Apocalypse of Adam*, it was during the false prophecy of the "fourth kingdom" that King Solomon sent his "army of demons" in search of the virgin mother of the illuminator-Christ figure. But the demons bring him a false virgin, whom he impregnates. His offspring develops into the very being said to "(come) to the water."[72]

In advancing its arguments regarding true baptism, the *Apocalypse of Adam* contrasts sharply Solomon's activities to those of the illuminator-Christ. Solomon's employment of the demons proves futile and largely detrimental to him and his descendants, who, caught in a web of deception, participate in false baptism to their peril. By contrast, the illuminator-Christ offers true "gnosis" and freedom from the celestial authorities and worldly corruptions, including the demons. Moreover, Solomon's kingship is a deliberate foil to the kingless-ness of the elect generation who preserve the true story of the exalted illuminator-Christ; thus, the monarchy of the Israelite king is construed as a mere extension of the worldly authorities that the illuminator-Christ upsets. Solomon's mastery over the demons thus enhances the text's negative position toward false testimonies regarding the true divine genesis of the illuminator-Christ figure as well as toward the form of baptism practiced by adherents of these fictions.

These second-century baptismal traditions do not yet attest the notion that Solomon employed his mastery of demons to build the Jerusalem Temple. They do, however, demonstrate that questions concerning the nature of Solomon's mastery over the demons found fertile ground within Christian baptismal discourse at a relatively early date. Moreover, they suggest that Christians of various kinds had already begun to use Solomon's ritual powers to advocate for their own ritual strategies for controlling or even vanquishing the demonic.

It is not surprising, then, that the earliest text—other than the *Testament* itself—to draw an explicit association between Solomon's mastery over the demons and the construction of the temple makes use of this thematic complex to advance its own view of baptism. In doing so, the *Testimony of Truth* picks up where the *Eclogae* and the *Apocalypse of Adam* had left off, although now the emphasis is specifically on the substance of water as a defiling and indeed essentially demonic medium. The author of the *Testimony of Truth* is especially vexed by those Christians in his environment who cling to an improper understanding of baptism and thus practice the ritual erroneously. As Jacques van der Vliet has argued, for the author of this text, "baptism with water symbolizes the reign of sexual reproduction and carnal defilement that is also represented by the Law, the religion of the Old Testament."[73] Real baptism, by contrast, consists in renunciation of the world. Here, too, as we have

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71 *Apoc. Adam* 83.4–85.3.

72 *Apoc. Adam* 78.27–79.19.

73 See van der Vliet 2013, 204.

seen, Solomon's mastery over the demons functions as a means to advance the author's particularly negative view of baptism and water, in this case, basing himself on the temple's failure to control the demons.

To be clear: we do not wish to imply that the *Testament* literature as a whole grew out of a Christian baptismal context, although it would certainly be worthwhile to consider its uses of and attitudes toward water in light of this background.[74] Nor are we claiming that the author of the *Testimony of Truth* was himself responsible for inventing the linkage between Solomon, the demons, and the temple (although there is no indication that he specifically used the Enēpsigos passage, which in the form we now know it is itself shot through with Christian elements). Instead, we hope to have shown that there is nothing in either the *Testament* literature or in thematically related materials to suggest that this particular branch of the Solomon tradition was originally Jewish, while there are considerable traces of the generative role it played in Christian discursive contexts from the third century on. As we shall see in the next section, the association between the signet-ring of Solomon and the temple would continue to exert an impact on Christian ritual in the post-Constantinian period, this time in the context of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

IV The Cross and the Ring in Christian Jerusalem

This process of appropriation is especially visible in the highly fraught symbolic arena of Jerusalem. Particularly striking evidence for the positive embrace of Solomon and his ring is found in Christian pilgrimage accounts produced from the fourth to sixth century. These texts juxtapose the ring and the cross in a manner that is reminiscent of the Christianizing redactional layers of the *Testament of Solomon*, where the ring is not rejected but perfected by the power of the cross. The cross co-exists—both in textual tradition and in actual pilgrimage practice—with tokens of Israelite cult and kingship and draws part of its power from them.

In our analysis below, we argue that the juxtaposition of the cross with the ring in the *Testament* reflects the general effort among various Christians in this period to use Solomon as a figure through which to effect the integration of imperial and ecclesiastical structures of authority. At the same time, we suggest that Christian sym-

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74 For the use of water as a ritual means for confining demons, see *Testament* 11.6 (52), where the lion-shaped demon tells Solomon that a figure named Emmanuel will cast him and the other demons down into water from a cliff, a clear allusion to Jesus' exorcism of "Legion" from the Gerasene demoniac in the synoptic gospels (Mark 5:9–13; Matt 28:32; Luke 8:30–33); *Testament* 5.5–12 (25), where Asmodeus begs Solomon not to condemn him to water, whereupon the king cruelly forces the demon to carrying ten "water-jars" (ὑδρίας); *Testament* 16.4–7 (69), where a demon of the sea, known on land as Kunopēgon (Κυνόπηγον), tells Solomon that he cannot sustain himself without water, whereupon Solomon commands that the demon be sealed in a phial with ten jugs of sea-water; *Testament* 25–26 (125–126), where the demon of the Red Sea reveals to Solomon that he has been trapped in the Red Sea with the armies of Pharaoh since the Exodus from Egypt.

bols within the *Testament* did not in any direct way advance the interests of the ecclesiastical leaders who oversaw the rise of the holy places in Jerusalem and especially the creation of the church complex built over the sites of the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Passages such as Enēpsigos' prophecy do not reject exorcistic practices associated with the figure of Solomon in favor of Christian liturgy and pilgrimage, but rather configured Christian salvation history as the fulfillment of an Israelite past that very much included the powerful, if flawed, institution of kingship.

Already in 333 CE, a pilgrim from Bordeaux penned an account of the holy places in Jerusalem that links Solomon's mastery over the demons directly to Christ's temptation by the devil. The text localizes both of these events at the site of the Jerusalem Temple:

> There is also a vault there [in the temple ruins] where Solomon used to torture demons and the corner of the lofty tower, which was where the Lord climbed and said to the Tempter, *Do not put the Lord your God to the test, but worship the Lord your God and serve only him* (Matt 4:7, 10; cf. Deut 6:13). And there also is the great cornerstone of which it was said, *The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone* (Ps 118:22; cf. Matt 21:42).[75]

The Bordeaux pilgrim may be reflecting a local Jerusalem tradition or one that has been hermeneutically derived from the juxtaposition of biblical passages and *Testament* materials (or a combination of the two). What is certain, however, is that this tradition reported by the Bordeaux Pilgrim regarding the "torture" of the demons comes very close to Solomon's mistreatment of various demons in the *Testament*.[76] More significantly, as Oded Irshai has rightly suggested, Solomon's mastery over the demons in the Jerusalem itinerary of the Bordeaux Pilgrim prefigures Christ's triumph over the devil at the temple.[77]

In the decades following the visit of the Bordeaux pilgrim to Jerusalem, the Constantinian sites associated with the passion, death, and burial of Christ increasingly absorbed the symbolism previously associated with the sacred topography and architecture of the Jerusalem Temple.[78] Perhaps most striking are the palpable echoes of temple themes in the celebratory dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre held on 13 September 335—and thereafter associated with the annual *Encaenia* and Exaltation of the Cross festivals.[79] In particular, Golgotha and the basilica built atop it were gradually transformed, through ritual performance as well as literary representation, into the true Mount Moriah, where God created Adam, Abraham offered his son Isaac, and where the people of Jerusalem shed the blood of the prophet Zechariah. This process took on added urgency during the second half of the fourth century,

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75 *Bordeaux Pilgrim* 589–590; we have slightly modified the translation in Wilkinson 1999, 29.
76 See especially the torture of Asmodeus by water at *Testament* 5.11–12.
77 Irshai 2009, 476–80.
78 See Eusebius, *VConst* 3.28–167.
79 On the impact of Jewish tradition and practice, both local and liturgical, on the development of the *Encaenia*, see Schwartz 1987.

in the wake of Emperor Julian's threat to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple (probably starting already in 362 CE). Faced with what he perceived to be a fundamental reversal of Christ's prophecy regarding the temple, Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, redoubled his already forceful efforts to place the cross and Jerusalem at the center of Christian theology and practice.[80]

Typical of this tendency to relocate events associated with the temple to Golgotha is the so-called *Breviarius*, a short topography of Jerusalem. Known from two sixth century recensions (forms A and B), the *Breviarius* seems to have existed in an early version already in the fourth century.[81] This multilayered "guidebook" provides a precious glimpse into the evolution of central features of the city's built environment (the Basilica of Constantine, Golgotha, and the Anastasis) as well as several other sites associated with Jesus' time in Jerusalem. The text presents the "mount" of Golgotha as if it were an archaeological tel preserving layer after layer of sacred history:

> *And going from there* [i.e., the Basilica of Constantine] *into Golgotha there is a great court where the Lord was crucified. There is a silver screen round this Mount,* and a hard kind of rock has been left on the mount. It has silver doors *where the cross of the Lord* has been displayed, all *adorned with gold and gems and a dome* open *above.* Much gold and silver adorn *the screen. And the plate is there on which was carried the head of St. John. There is the horn with which David was anointed*, and Solomon. And there too is the ring with which Solomon sealed the demons. It is made of electrum. *There Adam was formed. There* Abraham offered Isaac his son as a sacrifice in the very place where *the Lord was crucified.*[82]

The text moves backwards in time from the architecture of the present site that marks out the space of the crucifixion to items associated with personages from the Old and New Testaments that prefigure the death of Christ. By the sixth century, one of the recensions of the *Breviarius* located both the horn used to anoint the kings of Israel and Solomon's ring at Golgotha alongside such objects as the plate that had carried the head of John the Baptist.

The association between Golgotha and the "relics" of the kings of Israel, including the ring of Solomon, already appears in the Latin travel account penned by the pilgrim Egeria in 381 CE. In a well-known passage detailing the protocols for Friday of Holy Week, the day of the Crucifixion, Egeria reports how, as the pilgrims file through the courtyard of the basilica and past the Bishop of Jerusalem keeping careful watch over the cross:

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80 On Cyril's response to Julian's plans to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple and the bishop's work of promoting Jerusalem and the True Cross more generally, see Drijvers 2004, 127–76. On Cyril's earlier use of the symbol of the cross to promote Jerusalem and its holy places empire-wide, see Kalleres 2005; Irshai 1996.

81 Wilkinson 2002, 3–4. Wilkinson's translation presents the text in two parallel columns. The Italicized portions represent the reconstructed fourth-century *Vorlage*, defined as those materials found in both recensions A and B. The bold material is unique to one recension or the other.

82 *Breviarius* A 2, in Wilkinson 2002, 118.

[t]hey stoop down, touch the holy wood first with their forehead and then with their eyes, and then kiss it, but no one puts out his hand to touch it. Then they go on to a deacon who stands holding the ring of Solomon and the horn with which the kings were anointed. These they venerate by kissing them, and till noon everybody goes by, entering by one door and going out through the other, till midday.[83]

The public, ritual juxtaposition of the cross and the ring during Holy Week encapsulates the project of constructing an imperial Christianity rooted in the new sacred topography of the Holy Land. The pilgrims venerate both "relics" with remarkably similar gestures of veneration. The cross so carefully guarded by the Bishop is perhaps accorded somewhat greater status than the tokens of Israelite kingship, which are held by the deacon. Yet, together, they make visible the deep complementarity of royal and ecclesiastical power.

In the course of the next century or so, the ring of Solomon preserved with the cross at Golgotha came into its own, attracting to its basilica further aspects of the Solomon legend. Unlike both the Bordeaux pilgrim and Egeria, the later stratum of recension A of the *Breviarius* reports that the very bowls in which Solomon had imprisoned the demons can be found adjacent to where the cross and the ring are kept safeguarded:

> As one goes into the Basilica itself, there is a chamber *on the left in which has been placed the cross of the Lord. From there you go into* the Church of St. Constantine. The great apse to the west *is the place where the three crosses were found and* above it is *an altar of silver and pure gold. It is supported by nine columns.* Around this apse stand twelve quite marvelous columns of marble, and on these columns are twelve silver bowls in which Solomon sealed the demons.[84]

If the *Breviarius* is to be trusted, the ecclesiastical leaders tasked with managing and cultivating the ritual life of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre continued to produce objects associated with the *Testament* literature in addition to the ring. By the sixth century, the very bowls in which Solomon had sealed the demons had been wrought in precious silver and installed atop the twelve columns ringing the western apse of the fourth-century basilica, precisely on the site "where the three crosses were found."

The juxtaposition of relics from the Old and New Testaments helped to concretize the integration of the imperial and the ecclesiastical within Constantinian and post-Constantinian Jerusalem. Here, in this rapidly evolving site of ritual creativity as well as in the literary and material culture radiating from it, the Temple of Solomon functioned as an ideological (if not actual architectural) model for the church built to mark the site of Christ's victory over death and the demons.

It is worth noting that the ritual power that the ring of Solomon carried in the context of an imperial Christian Jerusalem established a durable and replicable

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83 *Egeria* 37.3, translated in Wilkinson 1999, 155–56.
84 *Breviarius* A 1, translated in Wilkinson 2002, 117.

model for the authorization of space and architecture elsewhere as well. The precedent established by the fusion of imperial authority and the prestige of the "biblical" past could be deployed in a wide range of local Christian contexts.

An early example of the use of this tradition for the sanctification of an ecclesiastical building is found in the apocryphal *Acts of Philip*, a late-fourth or early fifth-century composition most likely from western Asia Minor.[85] The eleventh act of the text narrates a dramatic encounter between Philip and his companions and a group of fifty demons.[86] The rich allusions in this passage to the *Testament of Solomon* have, to our knowledge, gone previously unnoticed.[87] Most telling is the explicit parallel drawn in the *Acts of Philip* between the demons' promise to build a church and Solomon's construction of the Jerusalem Temple.

> "Philip, son of thunder, what is this great authority that you possess so as to pass through this place against us? Why have you worked so hard to destroy me also, like the dragon in the wilderness? I implore you by the one who has granted you this authority, do not destroy us or obliterate us in the thunder of your anger. Send us into the mountains of the Labyrinth that we might lurk there and transform ourselves. And by our demonic power, in the same way as we served our lord Solomon the just in Jerusalem—for it was with our assistance that he built the sanctuary of God—so now also let us serve you. And in six days let us prepare for you in this place a building, and it shall be called the church of the living God. And I will even permit seven immortal springs because of the name of the crucified one, only do not destroy us."[88]

The same demons that Philip subdues and puts to work in the hinterland of Asia Minor turn out to have served as King Solomon's construction crew at the time of the building of the Jerusalem Temple.

But the *Acts of Philip* does far more than merely draw on the general narrative framework found in the *Testament* tradition. Philip interrogates the demons using an idiom that strongly resembles the distinctive forms of questions that Solomon employs throughout the *Testament* when he adjures each demon to reveal his or her name and function as well as the name of the angel by which he or she is thwarted.[89]

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85 The late François Bovon and his collaborators reconstructed this work from a group of medieval *Menologia* manuscripts that preserve versions that predate the liturgical reforms of Symeon Metaphrastes in the tenth century. For the Greek text and French translation, see Bovon, Bouvier, and Amsler 1999. We cite here the English translation in Bovon and Matthews 2012. On the manuscript evidence for this "pre-metaphrastic" version of the text, see Bovon, Bouvier, and Amsler 1999, xi–xxx; Bovon and Matthews 2012, 1–9.

86 Bovon and Matthews 2012, 82–83; Bovon, Bouvier, and Amsler 1999, 288–89.

87 The detailed commentary on the text by Frédéric Amsler fails to make any mention of the relationship of this portion of the text to the *Testament of Solomon* literature; see Amsler 1999, 339–55. See also Bremmer 2002, which puzzlingly and mistakenly concludes that "later [post-Constantinian] Christian literature does not demonstrate the same interest in magic as the [second- and third-century] *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles*" (70).

88 Bovon and Matthews 2012, 83; Bovon, Bouvier, and Amsler 1999, 291–92.

89 *Acts of Philip* 11: "And as he was praying in this manner he cried out loudly and said: 'I adjure you by the glorified name of the Father, of the only-begotten Son, of the Most High, show yourselves,

Moreover, as the demons commence construction, they cause fifty columns to hover in mid-air over the foundation of the church.[90] This motif strongly resembles the account in the *Testament* of how a column was brought up to the temple from the depths of the Red Sea and erected on the site of Golgotha, thereby marking the place where Christ would ascend from the cross.[91] When coupled with the explicit mention in the *Acts of Philip* of Solomon's use of the demons to construct the temple, this pattern of formal and thematic similarities between the two texts suggests sustained engagement on the part of the author with the *Testament* literature.

There is much room for further work on the impact that the *Testament* exerted on the *Acts of Philip* in particular and on late antique Christian literary culture more broadly. What is clear, however, is that late antique Christians, very much like their Jewish contemporaries, invested enormous power in the signet-ring of Solomon, which came to stand as a material sign of the complementarity of the Christian Church and the Roman Empire. The rich tradition of criticizing the Israelite king for his moral and religious failures did little to diminish his authority either as an exorcist or as a master-builder. If anything, the intimate link between the king's mastery of the demons and his construction of the Jerusalem Temple only gained in importance, as the function of Solomon's ring within the toolkit of small-scale ritual specialists was supplemented with a vital new purpose within the Christian discourse of sacred space.

Conclusion

As the royal patron of the sacrificial cult of the God of Israel *par excellence*, Solomon proved particularly generative for resignifying and thus revitalizing the offices and objects that belonged to the institutions of the Israelite kingship and the Jerusalem Temple. Artifacts like the ring of Solomon circulated across ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities that made up late antique society, whether as an actual object or as a graphic or verbal representation. Despite important differences, these various groups constituted a broad semiotic community with common textual traditions and mutually intelligible idioms of political and religious power.

Our findings show that, while Solomon and his signet-ring were well known as sources of anti-demonic power among Jews in the Hellenistic and early Roman peri-

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you demons, *of what sort you are, both your number and your form.*' Immediately a very great screaming and disturbance came forth: 'Take flight now, you descendants of darkness and bitterness, quickly on account of our inevitable and imminent destruction'" (Italics ours; translated in Bovon and Matthews 2012, 82–83). On the linkage of this interrogative formula with the figure of Solomon in Jewish sources from the first century and its use as an exorcistic device in the *Testament* as well as in the *Questions of Bartholomew*, see Torijano 2013, 111–14; Torijano 2002, 41–87.

90 Bovon and Matthews 2012, 84; Bovon, Bouvier, and Amsler 1999, 288–89.

91 *Testament* 12.3–4 (54–55). A considerably different version of the narrative of the column from the Red Sea also appears at *Testament* 24–25 (124–127).

ods, the tradition linking them to mastery of demons for the purposes of building the temple is first attested in Christian sources from the third century. The extant sources suggest that this thematic complex was deployed in debates concerning whether the waters of Christian baptism served an apotropaic function or, alternatively, whether they threatened to seal the demons into the would-be initiate. Of course, we cannot rule out the possibility that the tradition regarding the connection between the signet-ring and the construction of the temple pre-existed this debate. Still, it would appear that this tradition was formulated—or at least found its first literary expression —in the context of intra-Christian invective regarding baptism.

In the second half of the fourth century, however, the ring of Solomon was drawn into a new domain of Christian ritual creativity: Holy Land pilgrimage. In the post-Constantinian period, the perspective found in texts like the *Testimony of Truth*, which had stressed the tension and perhaps fundamental contradiction between Christian salvation and the legacy of Israelite kingship, was displaced in favor of sustained efforts to knit the biblical past into the narrative *and* architectural fabric of the Christian present. The ecclesiastical leaders who were in the process of developing the architectural space and liturgy of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre not only cultivated traditions regarding the anti-demonic powers of Solomon's ring, but also produced concrete objects (the ring itself as well as the vessels in which the demons had been sealed) that would serve to materialize for the faithful the historical path that led from the Israelite kings and the sacrificial cult they had promoted to the imperially-sponsored veneration of Christ and his cross. The *Testament of Solomon* literature, which is marked by both textual instability and ideological heterogeneity, does not have the form or markings of ecclesiastical propaganda. But parts of this literature do reflect this expansive project of repurposing elements from the "biblical past" for establishing novel Christian ritual forms. In this regard, the producers of key parts of the *Testament of Solomon* literature shared a great deal with the writers behind texts like the *Acts of Philip*, the free-lance ritual specialists who juxtaposed the ring and the cross on amulets and other apotropaic devices, and the ecclesiastical leadership of Jerusalem: *all* participated, each in their own way, in the far-reaching project of integrating sacred objects associated with the ancient Israelite monarchy within the ritual landscape of late ancient Christianity.

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