For instance, the snake-worshiper Hugo Ariel in Mary Virginia Carey's *The Mystery of the Singing Serpent* (1971) is rendered Hugo Asmodi in the German translation of 1972 (*Die drei Fragezeichen und die singende Schlange*). Similarly, the giant adder in Brian Jacques' *Redwall* (1986) is called Asmodeus, a name further described as being that of the devil.

A statue, traditionally identified as depicting Asmodeus (see → plate 16.a) and dating from the end of the 19th century, supports the holy water stoup at the entrance to the church of Mary Magdalene in Rennes-le-Château, France. He is portrayed as humanoid with horns, red skin, bat-like wings and a pointed beard; somewhat different from the monstrous incarnation described by Weyer in 1577 and subsequently depicted in *Dictionnaire Infernal*.

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Matthew A. Collins

See also → Demons, Demonology; → Sarah (Daughter of Raguel); → Solomon, Testament of

Asnah

Asnah (also Asana; MT ʾAsnā; LXX Ασνα) is the name of the head of a family of temple servants (*nētīnim*). He is among those who returned to Judah with Zerubbabel following the Babylonian Exile (Ezra 2:50; 1 Esd 5:31). The name does not appear in the list of returning leaders as detailed in Neh 7:5–73. In later Jewish tradition, the *nētīnim* are regarded as low of status, even below that of illegitimate offspring. The name Asnah may be related to Asenath, the name of Joseph's Egyptian wife (Gen 41:45).

Nyasha Junior

Asp

There are 18 Hebrew terms for different types of "snake" in the Hebrew Bible that are frequently used interchangeably. Thus, NRSV uses the word "asp" 4 times for Hebrew *peten* (Deut 32:33; Isa 11:8; Job 20:14, 16), though the same Hebrew term is also translated as "adder" (Pss 58:4;

91:13). By contrast, NIV translates *peten* as "cobra" in 4 passages (Deut 32:33; Isa 11:8; Pss 58:4; 91:13) but "serpent" in Job 20:14, 16. The same Hebrew term is rendered as "viper" (Deut 32:33; Isa 11:8; Pss 58:5; 91:13) and "asp" in Job 20:14, 16. Similar sorts of confusion are discernible in other modern translations, but the ancient versions are no more helpful. Thus, LXX has ἀσπίς ("asp") for Hebrew *peten* (Deut 32:33; Isa 11:8; Pss 58:5; 91:13; Job 20:14), *šepar* (Isa 14:29), ʿepʿeh (Isa 30:6), *šipʾôn* (Isa 59:5), and ʾakšûb (Ps 140:4). In fact, no one knows for sure which type of snake each Hebrew noun designated. Different names were given to the same reptile in ancient Palestine, and the ancient biblical writers were clearly not interested classifying snakes.

James H. Charlesworth

See also → Fauna, Biblical

Aspatha

→ Haman, Sons of

Asphar

After assuming leadership of the Maccabees, Jonathan fled with his brother Simon to the "wilderness of Tekoa and camped by the water of the pool of (λάγκκου) Asphar" (1 Macc 9:33) in order to evade Bacchides, the Seleucid commander. By withdrawing to this region, Jonathan employed a stratagem previously used by David, whose adventures would have placed him on several occasions in the environs of Tekoa (e.g., Adullam, Hebron, Bethlehem, etc.). According to Josephus, Jonathan fortified the summit of Masada (J.W. vii.8.3), placing him on the western shore of the Dead Sea, where also David stayed on occasion (1 Sam 23:29). In the hill country of Judea, David and Jonathan each found refuge from powerful enemies. Elsewhere in the Bible, we see Jehoshaphat going to the "wilderness of Tekoa," not to seek refuge, but to meet the enemy encamped at En-Gedi (2 Chr 20:20).

Asphar has been identified with Bir ez-Zaʿfarān, 20 km south of Jerusalem (Abel: 196–97; Rainey/Notley: 317). Following the modern Arabic name, Goldstein (380) argues that λάγκκος denotes not any substantial body of water, but merely a cistern (*bôr*). Bartlett (120) suggested this may have been among the cisterns dug in the region by Uzziah (2 Chr 26:10). Bacchides' crossing of the Jordan in pursuit of Jonathan (1 Macc 9:34) must not by itself determine the location of Asphar, as it may be a "misplaced gloss" from the later incident in 1 Macc 9:43 (Goldstein: 380–81).

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