For instance, the snake-worshipper 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 16.4) and dating from the end of the 19th century, supports the holy water stoup at the entrance to the church of Mary Magdalen 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*.


Matthew A. Collins

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

**Asnath**

Asnath (also Asana; MT 'Asnâ; LXX *Asnâ*) is the name of the head of a family of temple servants (*nêhtarîm*). He is among those who returned to Judah with Zerubbabel following the Babylonian Exile (Ezra 2:50; 1Esdras 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 *nêhtarîm* are regarded as of low status, even below that of illegiti-mate offspring. The name Asnath may be related to Asnath, 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 ὄνος ("asp") for Hebrew *peten* (Deut 32:33; Isa 11:8; Pss 58:5; 91:13; Job 20:14), ἱσπάρ (Isa 14:29), ἵππος (Isa 59:5), and ἀκλίθ (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 (λόξος) 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 envi-rons 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 coun-try 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-Za'farân, 20 km south of Jerusalem (Abel: 196–97; Rainey/ Notley: 317). Following the modern Arabic name, Goldstein (380) argues that λόξος; denotes not any substantial body of water, but merely a cistern (λῆκτος). Bartlett (110) 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 deter-mine the location of Asphar, as it may be a "mis-placed gloss" from the later incident in 1 Macc 9:43 (Goldstein: 380–81).