Geographia Rabbinica:
The Toponym Barbaria*

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Several Rabbinic sources of late antiquity refer to a place or places called barbaria or to people called barbarim. Generally, scholars have understood these terms as common nouns (‘barbarian country’, ‘barbarians’), and infrequently as toponyms or gentilics. When they are seen as toponyms or gentilics, they are usually understood in a uniform way as all referring to the same place and the same people, usually Barbary and the Berbers in North Africa. However, Greco-Roman sources indicate, in addition to the common noun and adjective, a number of different places called ‘Barbaria’. Other, much older, sources (Egyptian inscriptions and cuneiform texts) of the Ancient Near East refer to still other such place-names as well as mentioning some of those found in the Greco-Roman sources. It is the aim of this paper to re-examine the various Rabbinic references to Barbaria in light of the geographical background provided by these other sources.

I. Barbaria(n) as Common Noun and Adjective

In Greek and Latin sources of classical and late antiquity the common nouns and adjectives based on the root barbar (e.g. barbaria, barbaries, barbaricum, barbarus, etc.) are regularly found as designating foreign lands and their inhabitants, whether in general or in reference to a specific land (Phrygia, Persia, Scythia, etc.). Often, the word carries the connotation of barbarity, a lack of civilization.1

* My thanks are due to Glen Bowersock and Shaye Cohen, who read drafts of this paper and made valuable suggestions toward its improvement. I am also indebted to my colleagues Sol Cohen and Gary Rendsburg, respectively, for their help with some cuneiform and Egyptian texts dealt with below.

1 The Greek lexicographers, following Strabo (14.2.28), generally explain the etymology of barbar as a Greek onomatopoeic mimicking of the nonsense sound of foreigners’ unintelligible speech. See e.g. P. Chantraine, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: histoire des mots (Paris, 1968–80; nouveau tirage 1990), 1:165, s.v. However some think the Greek is derived from Near Eastern (Sumerian and Akkadian) languages. See G. Dossin, ‘Grèce et Orient’, Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire 49 (1971), pp. 5–7 with literature cited in n. 1, and P. Fronzaroli, ‘A Semitic Etymological Dictionary’, in his (ed.) Studies on Semitic Lexicography (Florence, 1973), p.18. So Jacob Levy, Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midrashim (2nd ed., Berlin and Vienna, 1924; originally published 1876–89), 1:260, s.v., who sees the origin in a reduplicated Semitic br, ‘external, foreign’ i.e. to the civilized hearer. See now the entry ‘bar A’ in The Sumerian Dictionary (Philadelphia, 1984—), ed. Åke W. Sjöberg et al., 2(B): 1066–07a. Indo-European specialists, on the other hand, see barbar and balbal as dissimilated forms of baba which is a widespread term for inarticulated ‘baby’ talk; see J. Pokorny, Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch (Bern, 1959), s.v. baba. Similarly—‘babbling, onomatopoeic’—for Sanskrit: M. Mayrhofer, Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoirischen, vol. 2 (Heidelberg, 1993), pp. 217–18, s.v. balbala, where reference is made to Barbarā— as the name of a river and barberā— as possibly the word for ‘water’
The same word and range of meaning is found commonly in Rabbinic literature of late antiquity, that is a designation (general or specific) for foreign lands, often with the connotation of barbarity:

(1) 'A parable of a king's son who was captured by the barbarians . . .' (ExodR 20.14), or ' . . . who went to brbr'y'h' (ExodR 18.6).


(3) 'Instead of conquering the barbarians, conquer the Jews' (y.Suk 1.5, 55b; LamR 1.16, 4.19, ed. Buber, pp. 83, 152; etc.).

(4) *Nqyth brbrwn* = transliterated Greek νικητά βαρβαρῶν (Jastrow), 'O

assuming that bar-bar- indicates the sound of babbling water; cf. p. 217, s.v. *halbūtha* and 230–31, s.v. *hbrū-."


G. Bowersock has suggested another possible etymology, at least for some of the Barbaria toponyms. He noted Androsthenes’ (fourth century B.C.E.) report that the natives of the Arabian Gulf refer to the pearl producing shellfish as *berberi*, and he conjectured that there might be a connection between this word and (a) the toponym Barbaria, a name given to ‘the coastal areas of the Arabian Sea and Gulf, precisely where the pearl-fishers flourished’; (b) the village of Bārbār in the north of Bahrain (see TAVO B v 13); and (c) Abarbarē, a waternymph of Tyre (‘Tylos and Tyre: Bahrain in the Greco–Roman World’, in *Bahrain through the Ages: The Archaeology*, ed. H. A. Al Khalifa and M. Rice (London, 1986), pp. 404–05; repr. in Bowersock, *Studies on the Eastern Roman Empire* (Goldbach, 1994), pp. 272–73). On the other hand, D. T. Potts is of the opinion that the Bahrain Barbar derives its name from the nearby ancient temple, which Potts thinks was one of the temples to Shamash, the sun god, that were known as é-babbar, ‘white house’ (‘Barbaria Miscellanies’, in his (ed.) *Dilmun: New Studies in the Archaeology and Early History of Bahrain* (Berlin, 1983), pp. 127–28; idem, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity* (Oxford, 1990), p. 172).


(5) A parable ‘like a king whose city (medinah) revolted. He sends legions (ligyonot) to surround the people, closing off the water supply. If that works, fine. If not, he sends in the mercenaries (ql’nym).3 If that works, fine. If not, he sends in the archers. If that works, fine. If not, he sends in the barbarians’ (Tanhuma, Bo’ 4 = Tanhuma ed. Buber, Bo’ 4, which has however ‘legions’ a second time for ‘barbarian’). Here ‘barbarian’ means ‘foreign troops’ (see Lieberman, ‘Palestine in the Third and Fourth Centuries’, JQR 36 (1946), p. 355, and J. Fürst, Glossarium, pp. 86–87 and ‘Zur Erklärung griechischer Lehnwörter in Talmud und Midrasch’, MGWJ 38 (1894), p. 308).

(6) As a term of contempt depicting the uncivilized: ‘Do you think that Shimon ben Shetah is a barbarian?!’ (yBM 2.5, 8c; so the correct reading, see Lieberman in Yerushalmi Neziqin Edited from the Escorial Manuscript (Jerusalem, 1983), ed. E. S. Rosenthal with S. Lieberman, pp. 48 and 135). Similarly said of biblical Mordecai (EstR to 2:21).

(7) Targum to Ps. 114:1 translates ‘am lo’ez (a people of strange speech) as ‘ame barbera’e, ‘a foreign people’.

(8) A midrashic interpretation of Ps. 140:9 says that God muzzled, or restrained, Rome by means of ‘the barbarians and the Germans whom the Romans fear’ (GenR 75.9, ed. Theodor-Albeck 2:887, bMeg 6a–b; variants to ‘Germans’: grmnyh, grmwny’, grmwmy’). ‘Barbarians (brbrym) and Germans’ apparently reflects the historical situation of the fifth-century invasions of the northern Germanic peoples (the Vandals and Goths).4


3 So Levy, Wörterbuch über die Talmudim 4.313, based on Du Cange, Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae graecitatis (1688) 1:685, s.v. κολοφών = διεθνητός.

4 In Christian Europe of the fourth and fifth centuries the ‘barbarian’ usually referred to the Germanic and Goth invaders; see W. R. Jones, The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe, Comparative Studies in Society and History 13 (1971), pp. 381 ff. The various talmudic dictionaries may explain one or another of these eight cited sources as referring to a place-name. See under brbr and its derivatives in Levy, Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim; J. Fürst, Glossarium Graeco-Hebraicum oder der griechische Wörterbuch der jüdischen Midrashwerke (Strassburg, 1890), pp. 86–87; M. Jastrow, Dictionary, p. 190; Kolut, ‘Arukh ha-Shalem 2:183–84, where some no-longer extant sources are also quoted, q.v.
II. *Barbaria(n) as Toponym and Gentilic*\(^5\)

To be sure, some references to a Barbaria in Rabbinic sources, although clearly toponyms, evade identification. Such are the following cases.

(1) *Barburim* in 1 Kings 5:3 is interpreted as birds ('of') from Barbaria (QohR 2.7, possibly in the name of R. Judah b. Simon, a fourth-century Palestinian).*\(^6\) Clearly a toponym is intended and it is tempting to identify this Barbaria with the cuneiform place-name *Barbarransmu* (or *Barbarranamba*, or *Parparrahupa*) in Elamite territory mentioned in a text from the third dynasty of Ur (2111–2003 B.C.E.), *\(^7\) since the values *nam* or *hu* are both represented by bird logograms.*\(^8\) But this would require us to assume that the ultimate source for the Rabbinic statement read cuneiform, and, while a recent study suggests that cuneiform was still read by Babylonian priests in the third century C.E.*,\(^9\) our Rabbinic source derives, at least in its present form, from Palestine, and from a later period.*\(^10\)

(2) Possibly 'the *brbrym* and the Germans whom the Romans fear' (GenR 75.9; above, I.8) and 'a parable of a king whose son went to *brbryh* and the *brbrryzm* arose and ...' (ExodR 18.6, above I.1) also refer to gentilics and toponyms and not common nouns, although precise identification is not possible.

In other cases we are in a position to ascertain the identities or, at least, to come closer to an identification:

(3) 'Twice [in biblical times] the sea rose and inundated the world. How far did it rise the first time and how far the second? R. Yudan, R. Abbahu, and R. Elazar in the name of R. Hanina: the first time it rose until Acco and until Jaffa; the second time until the cliffs (kppy) of Barbaria. R. Huna and R. Aḥa in the name of R. Ḥanina: the first time until the cliffs of Barbaria; the second time until Acco and Jaffa ... R. Elazar: the first time until Calabria

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5 In the following citations I have generally used the sixth century as a cut-off date. Some references to *brbr* toponyms in sources after that date (e.g. Barbathe and Barbaros in the Fayūm in the seventh and eighth centuries) can be found in Calderini, *Dizionario* 2:32–33.

6 See Kohut, 'Arukh 2:184, nn. 1–2 for parallels.


9 M. J. Geller, 'The Last Wedge', *ZA* 87 (1997), pp. 43–95. I am grateful to Gary Beckman for bringing this article to my attention.

and the second until the cliffs of Barbaria' (GenR 23.7, pp. 228–29, ySheq 6.2, 50a). Most assume that this description is one of the Atlantic overflowing into, and creating, the Mediterranean in two stages, although Theodor notes that this interpretation would not hold for R. Hanina's east-to-west movement (Acco/Jaffa first, Barbaria second). He therefore advances another interpretation for this view whereby 'sea' is the Mediterranean, although it is not clear to me why this should help matters.

Whatever the case, almost all those who comment on this text identify Barbaria with the Berbers of North Africa. However, there is some debate about when the gentilic 'Berber' came into use. Most scholars see the term as a direct Arabic derivation from Latin barbarus, the generic term used by the Romans in pre-Arab times to describe the local population. The Arabs adopted the term to designate the area and inhabitants of North Africa west of Egypt. According to this generally accepted view, then, the term 'Berber' does not predate the Arab conquest of the seventh century. Gabriel Camps, however, feels that 'Berber' is derived from 'Barbares', the name of a North African people, by contamination with the Latin barbarus. Indeed, the name Barbares is found in texts from the fourth to fifth centuries as a variant form of the name Bavares, a people of Mauretania Tingitana and/or Caesarian-

11 On the spelling of the name Barbaria in ySheq (brbry'h or brbry'h), see Y. Sussman, 'Mesoret Limud ... Sheqalim', in Mehhariim be-Sifrut ha-Talmud: Yom 'Iyyun ... Lieberman (Jerusalem, 1983), p. 73 to 50a.


13 It may be that the passage is not based on an east–west or west–east flow but on height, with the coasts of Calabria, Barbaria and Acco/Jaffa representing different heights. Arguing against this possibility, however, is that Calabria (the Roman 'heel of Italy') is not particularly known for its great heights. In fact, Virgil refers to it as 'low-lying Italy' (Aen. 3.522).

14 See the talmudic dictionaries, Neubauer, p. 412, and P. S. Alexander, The Toponymy of the Targumim with Special Reference to the Table of Nations and the Boundaries of the Land of Israel (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Oxford, 1974), p. 114. Jastrow is the exception taking Barbaria to refer to the east coast of Africa, a view which, given the Mediterranean context, is equally unacceptable. See also H. Z. Hirschberg, A History of the Jews in North Africa (2nd ed., Leiden, 1974), 1:33–34, dealing with texts in which we shall discuss below.


sis, who possibly appear also under the name Babari. Therefore, whether or not the term 'Berber' derives from Barbares / Bavares, there were people in North Africa of the fourth century known by the name Barbare or Bavares. Furthermore, if the Latin personal name Barbarus, found in North Africa from the first century B.C.E. to the second century C.E., derives from a geographic toponym(s), rather than from a common noun or adjective (the land of the barbarians, uncivilized), as Ingholt argues, it would provide even earlier proof for the place-name Barbaria (aut sim.). Thus the Rabbinic toponym Barbaria in the text under discussion could refer to the land of these people.

However, there is a strong argument against such identification, for the Rabbinic story parallels Barbaria with cities or towns (Acco, Jaffa, Calabria), which would seem to indicate a limited area, not the broad expanse of the northwest African coast. Perhaps the toponym Barbaricum mentioned in a late fourth-century document as being near Mauretania, refers to a more limited area, but we do not know if this site is on the coast, which is indicated by the Rabbinic text. A similar objection may be raised against the possibility that the Rabbinic reference is to the toponym Barbaria mentioned in an inscription from the first century C.E. as a place somewhere in Sardinia (civitates Barbariae), whose inhabitants are termed Barbaricini. A more likely candidate for identification with the Rabbinic text might be the place Barbariana in Hispania Baetica, on the southern Mediterranean coast of Spain.

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18 Desange, Catalogue des tribus africaines, pp. 46, 47-48, note also 63; Gsell, Histoire ancienne de l'Afrique du nord 5:114; G. Camps, 'Les Bavares, Peuples de Maurétanie Césarienne', Revue Africaine 99 (1955), pp. 245 and 263-64; J. A. Ilevbare, Carthage, Rome, and the Berbers (Ibadan, 1980), p. 10; C. Tissot, Géographie comparée de la province romaine d'Afrique (Paris, 1884) 1:460; Dessau, RE 3:149-50. Note also Camps's (Berbères, p. 189) reference to the Braber, a people of the Middle Atlas. Presumably these are the Brabara on the Atlantic coast of Morocco referred to by Schoff, Periplo, p. 56. In an appendix to his article 'Les Bavares' (pp. 285-88), Camps has reproduced the epigraphic and literary references to the Bavares. On the relationship of these names to the Babors mountain chain, see Camps, pp. 243, 270-71 (cf. also the river Vabar in Numidia mentioned by Mela 1.6). On the spelling of the toponym with and without r, see the discussion below at n. 47.


21 Procopius, Bell. Pers. 13.44, De aed. 6.7.13, and other sources; see Hülsen, RE 2:2857, s.v. Barbaricini; TLL 1731; Hammond 18b Bd; Grosser Historischer Weltatlas... , Map 40/41.

22 Itin. Ant. 406 = Bamaliana, Anon. Rav. 4.42.21 (PP 305.10) and 5.4.39 (PP 344.4). Cf. Barbosula (Hübner, RE 3:3), shown in H. Kiepert, Atlas Antiquus, X Ec, as being in the same location more or less. Cf. also Barba, Itin. Ant. 412, in southern Spain, now El Castillon near Anticaria
But the most likely possibilities are two other places. First is a Barbarion Promontory (ἀκρωπ) mentioned by Strabo 3.3.1, Ptolemy 2.5.3, and Marcian 2.13 (first, second and third century respectively), as being in Lusitania, south of the mouth of the Tagus River on the west coast of Spain. The second is a Barbari Promontory (promontorium) (var. Barbiti) mentioned in the Itinerarium Antoniniun 10 (third century) as a station on the route on the north coast of Mauretania, east of Tingis, i.e. close to the Straits of Gibraltar. In view of the fact that kypy nicely translates both ἀκρωπ and promontorium, it would appear that the Rabbinic ‘kypy (cliffs) Barbaria’ is either promontorium Barbari in North Africa at the western end of the Mediterranean (†in. Ant.) or Βαρβαρία ἀκρωπ on the southwest coast of Spain (Strabo, Ptolemy, Marcian). Either of these is possible, and either would accord well with the story. If we accept the interpretation that sees the Rabbinic story as speaking of the Atlantic flowing into the Mediterranean, then we are left with but one possibility: Barbari Promontory on the north coast of Mauretania.

(4) ‘R. Shimon b. Laqish was checking figs in Brbyrt’ (vMQ 3.1, 81d; cf. hMQ 17a). Scholarly consensus today identifies this site with an Arab village Barbara just southeast of Ashkelon. The Arab village is mentioned by V. Guérin in his historical geography of Palestine written a century ago. Although Guérin mentions the existence of ancient ruins at the site, I have not found in the secondary literature a reference to the village of that name before the publication of Guérin’s volume in 1869. However, S. Klein pointed out:

(TLL 1728; TAVO B vi 18). See Hübner, RE 2:2856; Miller, Itineraria Romana, p. 184; Smith 1:377; Jacobsohn, TLL 1731; Hammond, 28 Ef. Barbariana in Hispania Bética should not be confused with another site of the same name in Hispania Tarraconensis (northeast Spain) mentioned in Itin. Ant. 450, on which see Hübner, RE 2:2856; Jacobsohn, TLL 1731; K. Miller, Itineraria Romana, p. 174. (Incidentally TLL 1728 is in error when it cites Barbara Island (in the middle of the Saone, near Lyon; see A. Longnon, Géographie de la Gaule au Vle siècle (Paris, 1878), p. 199, as appearing in Gregory of Tours (sixth century), De gloria martyrum. It is rather in Gregory’s De gloria confessorum 22.)

24 See Dessau, RE 2:2858.
out that Benjamin of Tudela’s (twelfth-century) reference to New Ashkelon which 'was originally called Bnybrh' is a scribal error for Barbara. 27

Can we go back further than Benjamin of Tudela? An Egyptian inscription from the Temple of Karnak contains Seti I's (ca. 1300 B.C.E.) list of sites along the ancient military road from Sile (modern Kantarah) in the northeast corner of the Nile delta through the Sinai and into Canaan, the biblical derekh 'eres pelishtim (Ex. 13:17). Toward the Canaanite end of the route we find a toponym (for a fortress or watering station) the beginning of which is difficult to decipher. A. H. Gardiner read with caution ‘?-b(?)-r-b-t’, a reading that Ahituv seconds: ‘Birbit’. 28 If this reading is correct, perhaps it may be identified with the talmudic Brbryt. The list of sites in the inscription begins with Sile in the delta and ends at ‘the settlement of Pa-Canaan’ (literally 'that belonging to Canaan'), near which is B(?)-r-bt. Because of partial parallels between this list and an itinerary preserved in Papyrus Anastasi I, Pa-Canaan is customarily identified with Gaza where the Anastasi itinerary ends. If this is so, the inscription would put the Canaanite B(?)r-bt near Gaza where no such toponym is known. 29 However, aside from the papyrus, there is no reason to identify Pa-Canaan with Gaza and therefore such identification is only 'probable, but not certain'. 30 If the identification is not certain, Pa-Canaan may perhaps extend a bit further north along derekh 'eres pelishtim toward Ashkelon, in which case the inscription's B(?)-r-bt, which is near Pa-Canaan, would be in the neighbourhood of the talmudic Brbryt and may perhaps be identified with it. 31

(5) The Bible (Gen. 10:2–3, 1 Chr. 1:5–6) lists the descendants of Japhet, all of whom are situated in areas to the north of Israel, encompassing Asia Minor, Armenia, the Aegean, and beyond. 32 One of Japhet’s descendants, Tog-
armah, which the prophet Ezekiel (38:6 'Bet Togarmah') locates in 'the remotest parts of the north (yarkete šafon)', has been identified by biblical scholars as the cuneiform Tilgarimmu (Akkadian) or Tegarama (Hittite) situated in east Anatolia, near the valley of the upper Euphrates.\textsuperscript{33} Now in a paraphrase of Gen. 10:3 and 1 Chr. 1:6 some Palestinian Targums report that 'the province (hpypkyh) of Togarmah is Barbara'.\textsuperscript{34} Similarly, the Christian Syriac Cave of Treasures 24.17 lists 'Barbaria' among the descendants of Japhet.\textsuperscript{35}


\textsuperscript{34} Genesis: Targum Neofiti, Neofiti margin, the Vatican and Yemenite 'fragment targums'. The Palestinian targums to the Pentateuch have been conventionally published in a synoptic edition by A. Diez Macho (et al.): \textit{Targum Palaestinense in Pentateuch} (Biblia Polyglotta Matrienia) (Madrid, 1977). For Chronicles, there are three extant manuscripts and no independent printed edition. R. Le Déaut and J. Robert, \textit{Targum des Chroniques (cod. vat. urb. 11)} (Rome, 1971), provide an edition with critical apparatus. A. Sperber's earlier edition (\textit{The Bible in Aramaic} (Leiden, 1968), vol 4a) is based on one of the manuscripts. In the New English translation of targumic literature, with critical introductions (eds. K. Cathcart, M. Maher and M. McNamara, \textit{The Aramaic Bible: The Targums}), volume 1A (1992) contains Targum Neofiti (transl. M. McNamara) to Genesis, and vol. 19 the Targum to Chronicles (transl. S. McIvor). The dating of the targumic literature is much debated. There seems to be a growing consensus that the redaction of the Palestinian Targums occurred in the Islamic period, although some have argued for an earlier date (not later than the fourth or fifth century). More important for our study, however, is the date of the underlying tradition used (if such be the case) by the Targum. In this regard, the words of A. D. York are relevant: 'No effective method has as yet been devised to distinguish between the recension of a particular targumic text and the tradition that underlies that text' (The Dating of Targumic Literature, \textit{JSJ} 5 (1974), p. 49). York is talking of a general method applicable across the board. It is possible, however, at times to date individual traditions. M. Goshen-Gottstein thinks that the toponyms listed in the Palestinian targumim to these verses (Gen. 10:2–4) reflect the geo-political situation of the third to fourth century Roman Empire (\textit{Shiqi'm mi-Targum ha-Miqra ha-'Aramiyum} (Fragments of Lost Targumim) (Ramat-Gan, 1989) 2:102). According to McIvor, the basis of Targ. Chr. dates from the fourth century or earlier, and the final redaction from perhaps the eighth century; provenance is generally considered to be Palestine (pp. 16–18). The term used in the Targum (hpypkyh = òmaggia) has been found in a document recovered from the Judaean desert, see Ada Yardeni, 'Nahal Še'elim' Documents (Jerusalem, 1995), p. 67. The Rabbinic sources are at yMeg 1.11, 71b; bToma 10a; \textit{GenR} 37.1.

\textsuperscript{35} Ed. Su-Min Ri, \textit{La Caverne des trésors}, CSCO 486–87, Scriptores Syri 207–08 (Louvain, 1987), pp. 190–91 (text), 72–73 (translation). The Cave of Treasures is dated to the sixth century in its present form although it was originally composed in the fourth, or possibly the third, cen-
A. Knobel understood the targumic Barbarea to be a common noun ‘welchen indess auch zu den von mancherlei Barbaren bewohnten Ländern am schwarzen und kaspischen Meere passt’. Goshen-Gottstein, realizing that a proper noun better fits the context, identified Barbarea with Barbary in North Africa but was forced to admit the equivocal nature of such identification. After all, Barbary is not generally considered to be one of the northern territories of Japhet. On the other hand, J. Schwarz conjectured 150 years ago that the Targums’ Barbarea might be related to a Mesopotamian place of similar name, near biblical Resen, although he did not know of any such place.

On the face of it, an attractive identification with the targumic Barbarea would be the cuneiform Bit Barbari (or Pit Parpari) mentioned in an Assyrian text from the reign of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.E.) and in an Elamite text from the reign of Šīšak-Inšušinak (ca. 1150–1120 B.C.E.). However, Parpola locates the Assyrian Bit Barbari in Media, and the Elamite text indicates a location outside Mesopotamia, in the modern Holwan region, east of the Tigris and west of the Zagros Mountains. Thus despite the close linguistic parallel (Bet Tograham, Bit Barbari), the location of the cuneiform placename in or near Media would rule out an identification with the descendants of Japhet to the north of Israel, and it would certainly rule out an identification with Togarmah / Tilgarimmu / Tegarama in the upper Euphrates area.

Another possibility is the Barbarian Plain (πέδιον) mentioned by Procopius (sixth century), Bell. Pers. 2.5.29, as being south of Sura and west of the Euphrates, in which the city of Sergiopolis was situated. M. A. Kugener has...
noted that Severus, monophysite patriarch of Antioch, in a homily dated in the year 514, refers to the \textit{barberāye} of that area, and he thus concludes that the inhabitants of the Barbarian Plain were called \textit{barberāye} after the name of the plain. He finds support for this conclusion in another sixth-century text, the \textit{Life of Ahoudemneh}, which often refers to the nomadic Arabs of Mesopotamia as ‘Barbares’.\(^{43}\)

The Barbarian Plain is certainly a possible candidate for identification with the targumic Barbaria. But, in truth, Barbary toponyms are found all over Mesopotamia of antiquity and late antiquity. A fourteenth-century B.C.E. cuneiform text mentions a Hittite city \textit{Barbarra} (or \textit{Parparra}) near Almina at the border of Kaskaean territory, i.e. in Eastern Anatolia.\(^{44}\) The \textit{Tabula Peutinger} X.4 (fourth–fifth century) lists a \textit{Barbare} located east of Edessa on the Edessa–Nisibis route.\(^{45}\) Also in Northern Mesopotamia are \textit{Babarura} and \textit{Babburi}, place-names known from the Assyrian period, \textit{ca.} ninth century B.C.E., located in Assyria or in Niar territory, in the upper Tigris area.\(^{46}\) Although there is no extant variant of these latter names with \textit{r} between the two \textit{b}s, they should not be ruled out as possible representatives of Barbary toponyms, for we commonly find variants of such names elsewhere with and without \textit{r}, e.g. \textit{Bbr} / \textit{Brbr} (in the Demotic text mentioned in note 1 above), and \textit{Barbares} / \textit{Bavres} / Babari and \textit{Barbari} / Barbiti in Mauretania (discussed above, II.3).\(^{47}\) Also in Japhetic territory, in Dacia Mediterranea—north of Macedonia, west of Thrace—near Bugaraka, is a fort by the name of \textit{Barbariae} mentioned by Procopius, \textit{De aedificiis} 4.4.3.\(^{48}\)

Finally, we ought to consider \textit{Barbara} (var. \textit{Parpara}, \textit{Barpara}) in Assyria near the border with Arraphe (modern Kirkuk).\(^{49}\) To be sure, Ezekiel locates Togarmah in ‘the remotest parts of the north (\textit{yarkete safon})’, and Barbara / Parpara is in Middle Mesopotamia not as far north as Togarmah, but we cannot assume that the targumic tradition, or its source, had detailed geographic knowledge of the Mesopotamian area. For the same reason we should not rule out toponyms in Syria such as \textit{Barrabau}, mentioned in an Eblaite text from the third millenium B.C.E., and identified as being north of Ebla,\(^{50}\)

\(^{43}\) \textit{Oriens Christianus} 1907, pp. 408–12.
\(^{45}\) According to K. Miller, \textit{Itin. Rom.} 777, the \textit{Tabula}’s \textit{Barbare} is to be identified with \textit{Bara Beta} (i.e. \textit{Barabeta}), mentioned in the \textit{Ravenna Cosmography} 2.13.46 (PP 79,10–11), ed. J. Schnetz, \textit{Itineraria Romana}, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1940), p. 24. See Baumgartner, \textit{RE} 2:2851, s.v. \textit{Bara} 1.
\(^{47}\) Cf. also \textit{Barbare}/\textit{Barabeta} mentioned above in n. 45 and possibly \textit{B(?)}\textit{rbl} / \textit{Brbrt} in \textit{Canaan} (above, II.4).
\(^{49}\) \textit{RGTC} 10:218–19 (ca. 1500 or 1400 B.C.E.); A. Fadhl, \textit{Studien zur Topographie und Prosopographie der Provinzstädte des Königreichs Arraphe} (Mainz, 1983), pp. 97a, 198a–b (on the right bank of the Lower Zab and east of the Tigris). Possibly to be identified with the Middle Assyrian \textit{Parparra} found in the \textit{nisbe} Parparraju. K. Deller and J. N. Postgate in \textit{Archiv für Orientforschung} 32 (1985), pp. 73b–74a; \textit{RGTC} 5:216. Is this location(s) to be identified with the Elamite and/or Median Bit-Barbari?
i.e. near modern Aleppo, or the very well known city of Barbarissos (modern Balis) on the left bank of the Euphrates in the area of Chalybonitis on the Aleppo–Sura route. It should lastly be noted that the Targums may have had more than one of the northern ‘Barbaria’ toponyms in mind, which they may or may not have distinguished. In sum, then, we are not in a position to identify the Targums’ Barbaria in northern Japhetic territory because we do not know the parameters of the Targums’ geographic knowledge and because there are too many toponyms answering to the name. We can say with certainty, however, that a specific place in the north was intended; the Targums were not using the term as a common noun. Nor was the reference to Barbary in North Africa.

(6) As with the Targum, so too a text found in a medieval compilation, Pirg Mashiah, points to a northern location: ‘I will gather all the nations to war against Jerusalem, and they are Gomer, its branches Togarmah, Phrygia, Garamit, Garmanimah, Cappadocia, Barbari, Italy. ’ ‘Barbari’ is grouped with the descendants of Gomer son of Japhet, and can thus be situated in the north.

(7) A tannaitic commentary to Deut. 32:21, in which God says of Israel: ‘I will rouse them to jealousy with a people of no account [lit. ‘a no-people’, be-lo’ ‘am], I will vex them with a nation of fools [nabal]’, states:

‘And I will rouse them to jealousy with a be-lo’ ‘am.’ Do not read bl’ ‘m, but bhwy ‘m, this refers to those who come from among the nations and kingdoms and expel them [the Jews] from their homes. Another interpretation: This refers to those who come from barbaria and mriyn’ (= Mauretania), who go about

50 *RGTC* 12/1:76. On the lack of the first r, see above at n. 47. In another Eblaite text we find Birbirriatu (*RGTC* 12/1:79). Cf. Birrara and Buburu (ibid.).


52 The text was first published in a collection of midrashim in Salonioka, 1743, from which Jellinek reproduced it in his *Bet ha-Midrash* (Leipzig, 1855), 3:72. From Jellinek it appeared in J. D. Eisenstein, ‘Oṣar ha-Midrashim’ (New York, 1915), 2:393a. Years later Yehuda Even-Shemuel in *Midrash Ge’ulah* (2nd ed., Jerusalem, 1954), p. 337, reproduced the same text adding variants from a Jerusalem manuscript. (Even-Shemuel has the date of 1813 for the Salonioka imprint but Y. Vinograd, *Oṣar ha-Sefer ha-Yigri* (Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book) (Jerusalem, 1993), 2:671, indicates Jellinek’s date to be the correct one.) For my translation ‘Phrygia’ for the text’s fryqy, see Hayward, *Saint Jerome’s Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, pp. 138–39 with cited literature in n. 2, the MS variant ‘frugy’ listed by Even-Shemuel (p. 443), and Rapoport, *Erekh Millim*, 1:361–62. Jellinek thinks that the source for this passage was Josippon. However, the manuscripts of Josippon in listing the descendants of Japhet do not have Barbari, nor do they otherwise correspond to the text of Pirg Mashiah; see D. Flusser’s edition, *The Josippon* (Josephus Gorionides) (Jerusalem 1980), 1:3 ff. In discussing the sources of the text, Even-Shemuel (p. 301) does not mention Josippon.
naked in the market place.33

The parallel with Mauretania would seem to indicate a location for Barbaria in Africa, but where? There is an abundance of evidence—Egyptian, classical, Jewish, Christian, Arabic and even Chinese—attesting to the toponym Barbaria in what is today Sudan and Somalia.

Egyptian inscriptions going back to the fifteenth century B.C.E. refer to a brbrt, which is located either in the area of Sudan (along the Atbara River or where the Atbara meets the Nile) or Somalia.54 The Periplus Maris Erythraei (first century C.E.) and Ptolemy (second century C.E.) call areas in Sudan and Somalia ‘Barbaria’ and ‘the country of the Barbarians’. Cosmas Indicopleustes (sixth century C.E.) several times identifies Barbaria with the area of Somalia, putting it at the borders of Ethiopia, i.e. the same location reported in the Periplus. Stephanus Byzantinus’ (sixth century) reference to Barbaria being near the Arabian Gulf probably indicates the same place and is similar to Cosmas’ description of ‘Barbaria beyond the Arabian Gulf’, since ‘Arabian Gulf’ commonly refers to all the sea between and including the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The Christian Syriac writer Isho’dad of Merv (ninth century) puts Ethiopia, Egypt and Barbaria (brbr) in the same general vicinity.55 So does Eutychius (= Sa’id ibn Bitriq), Alexandrian Melkite patriarch


54 Karola Zibelius, Afrikanische Orts- und Völkernamen in hieroglyphischen und hieratischen Texten (Wiesbaden, 1972), p. 107, s.v. H. Gauthier, Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques (Cairo, 1925–31), 2: 23–24, s.vv. brbr and brbta. The texts are now found in Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak, vol. 4 (above, n. 28), p. 53, pl. 15, no. 9, and p. 62, p. 17, no. 8.

(d. 940), who lists among the descendants of Ham, 'the Egyptians, the Sūdān, the Abyssinians (Habash), the Nūbi ans, and (it is said) the Barbari'. The personal name Barbari bar Dargi found in an Aramaic papyrus from Elephantine, dated 447 B.C.E., may indicate the geographic name of the area in Sudan referred to by these sources. The East African locations persist in Christian sources into the sixteenth century and beyond as indicated by Portuguese reports of East Africa. Tomé Pires in 1512–15 and Francisco Rodrigues before 1515 refer to the Somali port of Berbera (Barbora) as a major trading center on the coast, and Marmol Carvajal's (sixteenth century) 'city of Barbara' was situated in lower Ethiopia. The name is similarly found in

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Note Casson's remark on p. 244 where he now translates Pliny's (21.29; following Desange) *baccar ... barbaricum* and Galen's (De antidoto 2.13; ed. C. G. Kühn (Leipzig, 1827; repr. Hildesheim, 1965), 14:64) reference to cinnamon ἀκρύβανδον as indicating geographic areas (i.e. Barbaria or the the land of the Barbari) rather than 'barbarian' or 'exotic'. Similarly, Desange thinks that *negotiss barbaricis* in the fourth-century *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 35 (ed. Riese, p. 113; ed. Rougé, pp. 170–71) does not mean 'barbarian' but has a precise geographic meaning. In her *Africa'.

May we say the same now for *barbaricum* which is apparently a type of cloth mentioned in P. Oxyrhynchos 1684, lines 5 and 9 (B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, The Oxyrhynchos Papyri (London, 1898), 14:146; dated to the late fourth century C.E.)? These 'Barbarian' clothing references receive support from the Coptic textile term *barbarGreek* 'manufacturer of brocade' (Ewa Wipszycka in The Coptic Encyclopedia 7:2221). On the possibility that Origen meant the toponym in Hom. in Num. 1.3 'aegyptios gerimus et barbaros mores' (GCS 30 (Origen 7); 4; SC 415, pp. 34–35), see my 'Scythian-Barbarian: The Permutations of a Classical Topos in Jewish and Christian Texts of Late Antiquity', Appendix I, Journal of Jewish Studies 49 (1998), pp. 98–99.

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56 L. Cheikh (ed.), Euthychii patriarchae Alexandrini: Annales (Beirut, 1906), CSCO 50, Scriptores Arabici 6 (= MS Beirut ar. 1), p. 14, lines 19–21. Pococke's Latin translation (1658–59) of the Annales published in PG 111.917B (sec. 41–43) has: 'the Egyptians, the Nigritae, the Ethiopians and (it is said) the Barbari'. Pococke's translation was based on three seventeenth-century Arabic MSS. The readings of the various manuscripts is found in M. Brevdy, Études sur Sa'id ibn Baytīq et ses sources. CSCO 450, Subsida 69 (Louvain, 1983), p. 118, lines 14–17.

57 So H. Ingholt, 'Varia Tadmorea', in Palmyre: bilan et perspectives, pp. 111–12. P. Grelot, on the other hand, believes that the name derives from the Iranian geographic area, as indicated by the father's name (whether one reads dagry or ddgy) and title (kapy = Caspian). He notes that the personal name Barbiri is found in an Assyrian text and it would therefore not be surprising to find someone from the Iranian area with the name ('Notes d'onomastique sur les textes arameens d'egypte', Semittica 21 (1971), p. 107). For the Assyrian text, see above, n. 40. The Aramaic text was first published by A. Cowley, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifteenth Century B.C. (Oxford, 1923), pp. 37–38, line 19, and is now found also in B. Porten and A. Yardeni, Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt (Jerusalem, 1989) 2:34–35.

Ethiopic sources from the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries.⁵⁹

Barbaria as a place in East Africa is well known to Arabic sources. ‘The older Arab geographers write of the land of Berberâ, the Gulf of ‘Aden being Bahr Berberâ or al-Khallîj al-Berberî. The inhabitants are known as bar¬baroi, Berbera, or Berâbir. They are Somali and the people whom Yâqît (4.602) describes as barbarous negroes.’⁶⁰ Similarly, among Arab writers one finds a connection between zanj (East Africa, south of Ethiopia), barbarâ, ahâbish (Abbyssinia) and, sometimes, other black African peoples. Ibn Sa’îd (d. 1286/87) says that ‘near the Zanj is a village of the Barbarâ, which Imru’ al-Qais [a pre-Islamic Arabic poet] mentioned in his poetry’.⁶¹ Ibn Qutayba (d. 889), in the name of Wabh ibn Munabbih (d. ca. 730), also includes the Bar¬bara with the Zanj and other East African people: ‘The descendants of Kush and Canaan are the races of the blacks (sûdân): the Nubians, the Zanj, the Quran (or Qazan), the Zaghawa, the Habasha, the Copts (qiṭû) and the Bar¬bara.’⁶² In this regard, note al-Kîrmânî’s (d. 1021) grouping of the Zanj and


Brbr.\textsuperscript{63} Discussing several Arabic writers, before and including Masūdī (d. 956), J. Wansbrough concludes that 'there appears to be a connection between \textit{zanj}, \textit{barbara}, \ldots \text{ and } \textit{ahābīsh}, which could be set out as follows: \textit{barbara} are a subdivision of \textit{zanj}, who in turn belong to \textit{ahābīsh}'.\textsuperscript{64} Ibn Batṭūta (d. 1377) refers to an area on the east coast of Africa by the name of Berbera, of which Zeila is the capital.\textsuperscript{65} Al-Muqaddasī's (d. 988) categorization of slaves (\textit{khadam}) includes the Barbār, who are brought to Aden. As Couq notes, the reference is to the inhabitants of Somalia.\textsuperscript{66} The Persian Firdawṣī (b. 940/41) in his epic, the \textit{Shāhnāma}, refers to 'Barbaristan', which J. Darmesteter shows is the Somali location.\textsuperscript{67} Even in modern times 'Barbare' is found in Egyptian Arabic as a synonym for Nubian.\textsuperscript{68} Note too that the two areas of Barbaria in East Africa persist in the names of the modern Barbar (Berber) in Sudan above the confluence of the Atbara and the Nile and the modern Berbera on the north coast of Somalia.\textsuperscript{69}

Medieval Jewish sources provide the same information. Two Judeo-Arabic documents found in the Cairo genizah refer to a Barbārā that is, apparently, on the east coast of Africa. The first, a letter dated 1153 and sent from Aden to Egypt, speaks of ships arriving from India, the land of Zanj, the desert of Barbārā, and Abyssinia. As noted by Eli Strauss, Barbārā refers to a region in Somalia.\textsuperscript{70} The second document is a record of a court case from 'Aidhāb, an African port on the Red Sea, opposite Jiddah in Saudi Arabia, equivalent to modern-day Aidip in northern Sudan. In this twelfth-century record a certain Abu Saïd is accused of sending away his female slave to Barbārā after

\textsuperscript{66} From Muqaddasī's \textit{Asaṣān al-Taqāṣīm} \textit{fi Ma'rīfāt al-Aqālīm} as quoted and translated by David Ayalon, 'On the Enamuchs in Islam', \textit{Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam} 1 (1979), p. 75. The passage is excerpted in Couq, \textit{Recueil}, p. 68, who remarks that this is the earliest mention of the Barbārā in Arabic sources.
\textsuperscript{69} Sites are indicated in \textit{TAVO} A ix 5 (cf. A viii 18), B x 1, B ix 22, B ix 24, and in Grosvenor-Darley, pp. 132 E4 and 133 F7.
she bore his child. According to S. D. Goitein, who published the document, because Barbara was the name of a desert region in Somalia, it is used in our document in the sense of 'a desolate land'.

Finally, two Chinese reports, one of the ninth century (the 'Yu-yang-tsatsu') and one written in 1226 by Chao Ju-kua, also refer to an East African country of Pi-pa-li or Pi-p'a-lo, i.e. Par-pa-ra = Barbara.

Assuming the certain and well-attested identification of Barbara in East Africa, I have shown elsewhere that the midrash on Deut. 32:21 is based on a wordplay of be-lo' 'am as Blemmye, and possibly also of nabal as Nobae (Nubae, Nobatae, Nobadae), the two well-known East African peoples of antiquity, who are described as inhabiting the breadth of Africa, that is from Barbara in the east to Mauretania in the west. In this text, then, Barbara refers to the location in East Africa.

(8) A group of Rabbinic statements in different midrashic contexts pair the terms barbaria/barbari, understood as toponyms or gentilics, with a second toponym or gentilic. In an article dealing with these texts I demonstrated that the pairing of these terms corresponds to a topos commonly found in Greco-Roman sources. These sources use the toponyms/gentilics Scythia(n) and Ethiopia(n), the peoples at the northern and southern ends of the inhabited world, as a figure of speech to denote geographic extremes (often used as a merism) and uncivilized behaviour. The Rabbinic texts use the same topos with the same connotations, only substituting for Ethiopia(n) the other southern toponym/gentilic in East Africa, which is even further south, that is, Barbara(n). The same figure of speech appears in Colossians 3:11 with the same sense of geographic extremes and with, it appears, the attendant connotation of racial extremes.

(9) Eliezer, the servant of Abraham (Gen. 15:2), is considered to be a descendant of Canaan according to Rabbinic tradition. In an exegesis of Prov. 17:2 ('A servant who deals wisely ...'), Eliezer is said to have preferred serving Abraham, since as a descendant of Canaan he was doomed to a life of slavery (Gen. 9:25) and should he leave Abraham his chances for a better master would not improve. In fact, they might considerably worsen. In the words put


72 F. Hirth and W. W. Rockhill, Chao Ju-kua (St Petersburg, 1911; repr. 1966), p. 128. The later report is quoted in Freeman and Grenville, East African Coast, p. 21.

73 'Rabbinic Knowledge of Black Africa (Sifre Deut. 320)', forthcoming in Jewish Studies Quarterly (Berlin).

74 Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana 5.7 (ed. Mandlebaum, 1:89–90) and parallels; Midrash Psalms 25.14, ed. S. Buber; Midrash Tehillim (Vilna, 1891), p. 108a; MidPs 109.3 in the printed editions and some MSS, see ed. Buber, p. 233a, n. 2; non-extant 'Yelammednu' to Num. 8:6 (or 3:45) quoted in Nathan b. Yehiel's 'Arukh, s.v. smrtyen, ed. Alexander Kohut, 'Arukh ha-Shalem 6:78a.

in Eliezer's mouth,

'A kushi [= Ethiopian] or a barbari might enslave me! It is better for me to be a slave in this household and not in some other household.'\(^{76}\)

The connotation of 'kushi or barbari' in this context would seem to be clear. The expression, set in antithesis to Abraham, the model of piety and proper behavior, is meant to convey uncouth and uncivilized barbarism. Here too barbari would seem to refer to the southern toponym Barbaria.\(^{77}\) As with the group of texts in II.8, Ethiopia and Barbary represent the uncivilized far distant peoples. In this text, however, instead of the peoples being at the opposite ends of the world, they are found together at one end.\(^{78}\)

In conclusion, a comparison of 'Barbaria(n)' references in Rabbinic literature with those in other texts of antiquity and late antiquity has enabled us to apply a degree of specificity and differentiation to the references in the Rabbinic corpus, even if we cannot always locate the toponym with precision. The Ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman sources know of various Barbarias located in Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Elam / Media, Syria, Lebanon, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Mauretania, and East Africa. The Rabbinic sources know of a Barbaria in the north (in Anatolia, Mesopotamia, or Syria); they

\(^{76}\) GenR 60.2 (ed. Theodor-Albeck 2:640). GenR's final redaction is put in the fifth century (probably the first half). A. Neubauer (La Géographie du Talmud, pp. 411–12, n. 7) is of the opinion that 'Barbaria' here is the Roman Marmarica, in North Africa, with a labial m/b interchange. Another reference to 'kushi or barbari' occurs in some variant readings of GenR 60.3, as listed in ed. Theodor-Albeck (2:642) and in M. Sokoloff, The Genizah Fragments of Bereshit Rabba (Jerusalem, 1982), p. 147. However, the fact that 'kushi or barbari' appears only in some variants to GenR and does not appear in any manuscript or edition of LevR or bTa'an, the parallels to GenR 60.3, strongly indicates that the reading is not original but was copied from the immediately preceding section, GenR 60.2. Internal transfer of material in GenR is characterized by M. Kister as 'a very common phenomenon' ('Observations on Aspects of Exegesis, Tradition, and Theology in Midrash, Pseudepigrapha, and Other Jewish Writings', in Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha, ed. John C. Reeves (Atlanta, 1994), p. 33. n. 85 and see n. 83). Kister is talking about transfer made at the redactional stage, while in our case it is equally possible that the transfer was made later by scribes, since the passage is missing partially or completely in different GenR manuscripts and citations, as well as in the parallel sources.

\(^{77}\) As indeed recognized by S. Krauss, 'Die biblische Völkertafel im Talmud. Midrasch und Targum', MGWJ 39 (1895), p. 3, n. 1, except that he misunderstood the toponym as referring to Barbary in North Africa. Krauss realized that by 'kushi or barbari' the midrashic text means to connote the most distant peoples of the known world, but the inhabitants of North Africa are not among them. I have dealt with this midrashic passage in greater detail in 'Sceythian-Barbarian', Appendix I.

\(^{78}\) It is possible, but not likely, that barbari refers to one of the northern toponyms discussed above (II.5), thus giving us the same topos found in the group of texts in II.8. However, evidence for a usage similar to GenR is not lacking. Origen also uses two far distant locations near to one another, Mauretania and Britain, to indicate the extreme ends of the world, in this case to the west: 'Behold the Lord's greatness. "The sound of his teaching has gone out into every land, and his words to the ends of the earth" (cf. Ps 19:4[5]). Our Lord Jesus has been spread out to the whole world .... The power of the Lord and Savior is with those who are in Britain, separated from our world, and with those who are in Mauretania (qui ab orbe nostro in Britannia dividuntur et .... qui in Mauritania), and with everyone under the sun who has believed in his name. Behold the Savior's greatness. It extends to all the world.' Hom. in Lucan 6, GCS 35 (=Origen 9): 41–42. Similarly in Origen's Hom. in Ezch. 4.1, GCS 33 (Origen 8): 362, SC 352: 162–63.
know of a Barbarian Promontory either in Lusitania or in Mauretania; they
certainly know the well-documented Barbaria in East Africa; and they know
of a Barbaria in western North Africa although it was probably not Barbary.

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