BT *Bava Batra* 14b-15a brings a list of all the books in the Bible, attributing an author to each one. This list, and the ensuing discussion, deeply impacted upon the Jewish tradition and rabbinical biblical research. Sages who related to the question of the biblical authors considered themselves obligated toward this list, and few deviated from it and offered original proposals of their own. This list was the focus of several studies which systematically considered it, and some of its details were discussed over the generations by dozens, if not hundreds, of rabbinic scholars. Common to all these deliberations and discussions is the assumption that the list of authors was compiled as a Tannaitic *baraitha*. Given this chronological determination, some traditions regarding details in the list of authors were perceived to postdate it, and were generally presented as influenced by it. Details in the list of authors which raise questions were similarly clarified in context of its early composition. In the following discussion I wish to reexamine the list of authors, its sources, and its principles. As opposed to my predecessors, this examination will be unrestrained by the accepted basic premise that the list is a Tannaitic *baraitha*. As will be clarified below, not only was the list not composed during the Tannaitic period, but it should even be placed after the Amoraitic era. This new chronological understanding will allow me to fully expose its sources, closely examine its composers’ considerations, and solve several difficulties and details included in the list which were explained, over the generations, only partially and sometimes even erroneously.

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1. What is inner-biblical interpretation?

1. Immediately after the Bible was canonized, people started to explicate the biblical books
2. A verse or verses in the Bible which deliberately relate to another verse or verses in the Bible
3. Two parallel narratives which describe the same event
4. An early tradition which does not appear in the Bible, but can be reconstructed with a large degree of certainty

2. Read Gen 25:19-26, and Hosea 12:3-4. Mark the answer which is not correct:

1. The verses in Hosea correct the birth story given in Gen 25
2. The verses in Hosea attest to an alternative tradition regarding the birth of Jacob and Esau
3. The verses in Hosea, and Esau’s words in Gen 27:36, illustrate that Jacob acquired the primogeniture (*bekhorah*) by deceit
4. Presenting Jacob as a ‘mild man,’ and Rebekah’s words “Your curse, my son, be upon me” express a deliberate attempt to clear Jacob of guilt

3. Read Ex 12:8-9, Deut 16:7, and 2Chr 35:13

1. Chronicles wishes to emphasize the veracity of the description of the Paschal sacrifice as presented in Exodus
2. Chronicles discriminates between the historical description of the Paschal sacrifice in Exodus and the way in which the Paschal sacrifice is to be cooked in Deuteronomy
3. Chronicles tries to merge the Paschal sacrifice in Exodus and the Paschal sacrifice in Deuteronomy
4. Chronicles identifies Moses’ words with the Paschal sacrifice in Deuteronomy

4. A history of Manasseh’s reign is described in both 2Kgs 21 and 2Chr 33. How can we explain the significant discrepancies between the two descriptions?

1. Manasseh repented toward the end of his life, and the author of Kings did not know that
2. It is a retroactive historical update (compare 2Kgs 23:25-27)
3. The result of a priestly redaction
4. A different concept of reward and punishment

5. Read 1Kgs 9:10-13 and 2Chr 8:2. How can the differences between them be explained?

1. The Chronist wishes to elevate David’s prestige, as well as that of his ancestors and descendants
2. The Chronist does not recognize the Galilee as part of the Kingdom of Judah
3. It seems like a contradiction, but it is only an expression of the Chronist’s unique style
4. The Chronist had Babylonian sources which the editors of Kings could not have known

6. How can we explain the significant differences between the two descriptions of the death of King Josiah (2Kgs 23; 2Chr 35)?

1. The Chronist had Babylonian sources which the editors of Kings could not have known
2. Deuteronomistic editing as opposed to Chronistic editing
3. Retroactive historical redaction (2Chr 35:22: ‘He would not listen to what Necho had said at God’s command’)
4. A different concept of reward and punishment

7. Read Exodus 12:8-9, Deuteronomy 16:7, and 2Chr 35:13.

It seems that the author of the verse in Chronicles tried to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8. [000] What is the main function of the introduction to the narrative of the Binding of Isaac in the Book of Jubilees?

1. To explain why God commanded Abraham to bind Isaac
2. To explain why ‘the prince Mastêmâ was put to shame’ (v. 12)
3. To explain the unclear verse which opens the story: “Some time afterward [=*achar ha-debarim*; i.e., after the voices]”
4. To strengthen the connection between the binding of Isaac and the Paschal sacrifice: “In the first month in this jubilee, on the twelfth of this month”

9. The method of revising the Bible

1. Was common within end of Second Temple literature
2. Was already noticeable within the Bible itself
3. Answers 1+2 are correct
4. Answers 1+2 are incorrect

10. The story of the Rape of Dinah in the Book of Jubilees:

1. Is an expression of the Book of Jubilees’ complete objection to intermarriage
2. Is an expression of the position that intermarriage is not a sin (Ruth the Moabite!)
3. Is a Judaean polemic against the tribes of Levi and Simeon; compare Gen 49:5-7: “Simeon and Levi are a pair; their weapons are tools of lawlessness,” etc.
4. Is an expression of the distinction between the daughter of an Israelite and the daughter of a priest (*Kohen*); Lev 21:9: “When the daughter of a priest defiles herself through harlotry, it is her father whom she defiles; she shall be put to the fire;” Jubilees 30:7: “And they shall burn the woman with fire”

11. [000] Sifrei Devarim 48

1. The Torah does not provide a solution for every question
2. The Torah is complete and perfect, and if it seems flawed – the flaw is in the reader
3. The Torah is polysemic, and every verse in it has multiple meanings
4. God’s words are like a fire and a hammer which smashes boulders

12. [000]

1. Commentaries undermine God’s word, and are divided into different types of exegesis – *peshat* and *derash*
2. God’s word is like a hammer whose blows shower sparks, which are the different interpretations/commentaries
3. The Torah is polysemic, but in the end, the Sages must select the correct interpretation
4. There is nothing extraneous in the Torah, and each word has at least one meaning

13. [000]

14. [000]

15. Draw a line between the commentator and his country of origin

16. The consolidation of the Karaite movement

1. Contributed to the development of philological exegesis on the Bible
2. Bolstered the mystical approach to the Holy Writ
3. Fulfilled a central role in the Judeo-Christian controversy
4. Weakened the standing of the biblical exegetes

17. What is a super-commentary?

1. A commentary on the Torah
2. A particularly superb commentary
3. A commentary on the Sages
4. A commentary on a commentary

18. “Search Scripture well, and don’t rely on my opinion” (attributed to Anan Ben David)

1. One should defy the authority of the Rabbis – a person can reach the truth within the Torah on his own
2. One should try to reinterpret the Torah, and should not rely on my interpretations which may have become outdated
3. One can reach the truth directly from reading the Mishnah. There is no need for my mediation nor anyone else’s
4. Rabbinical commentary is no more correct than the commentaries of those of a different religion

19. [000] **Rashi on Gen 18:1**:

1. Why did God appear to Abraham?
2. Why did God appear to Abraham in the place that He did?
3. Why did God appear to Abraham specifically in the heat of the day?
4. Why did God appear to Abraham through the three angels?

20. [000] **Rashi on Gen 18:1**:

1. Why was Abraham sitting outside the tent?
2. Why was Abraham sitting when the three men appeared to him?
3. Why was Abraham sitting when God appeared to him?
4. Why does God stand in a court of justice?

21. [000] **Rashi on Gen 18:3**:

1. There is no correlation between the order of events and the order of their appearance in the text
2. One word (“Adonai”) can have more than one meaning (“lords,” and “Lord”)
3. One verse can have more than one legitimate interpretation (“Another explanation”)
4. One explanation is according to *peshuto*, while the second is an *aggadah meyashevet*

22. [000] **Rashi on Gen 18:7**:

1. CALF, TENDER AND GOOD, and no word is superfluous
2. Abraham served a whole calf to each guest
3. The number three repeats in the Bible within the context of generous hospitality
4. Three terms represent the three patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

23. [000] **Rashi on Gen 18:1**:

What is the point of the sentence which was added to Rashi’s commentary?

1. To connect the verse in the Torah to the Talmud
2. To explain Rashi’s commentary Because Abraham was ill
3. To note that Rashi based himself on the Babylonian Talmud
4. None of the answers are correct

24. *Aggadah meyashevet*: “*aggadah* that settle the words of the verses, each word in its proper place”

1. An interpretation based on the *derash*
2. Any interpretation which is not *peshuto shel miqra*
3. Rashi’s basic selection criteria for *aggadot*
4. *Aggadot* which do not add information which cannot be explicitly culled from the text

25. *Aggadah meyashevet*

1. The *aggadah meyashevet* preserves the sequence of the narrative plot
2. The *aggadah meyashevet* does not add information which cannot explicitly be culled from the text
3. The *aggadah meyashevet* completes the interpretation through *peshat*
4. The *aggadah meyashevet* contradicts an interpretation based on *peshat*

26. *Peshuto shel miqra*

1. Is the correct interpretation of the text
2. Is the objective interpretation
3. Is the simplest interpretation
4. None of the answers are correct

27. [000] **Gen 3:8:**

[000] **Rashi on Gen 3:8:**

Wind (breezy) = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; day = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Up until the word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it seems that Rashi is explaining according to *peshuto*. From the word \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it seems that Rashi is relying on an *aggadah meyashevet*.

28. [000] **Rashi’s introduction to the Song of Songs:**

Rashi here combined two of the Sages’ sayings, and from his words we can understand that –

1. Each verse has many explanations, sometimes opposing ones
2. Each verse can be explained on different levels of meaning – *peshat* and *derash*
3. The Song of Songs is an allegorical scroll (*megillah*)
4. The Song of Songs relates the love of a young man and a young woman

29. [000] **Rashbam on Gen 18:1**

1. God did not appear to Abraham Himself
2. The explicit Name which repeats in the chapter – always refers to God Himself
3. This is an *aggadah meyashevet* (BT *Qiddushin* 41b)
4. None of the answers are correct

30. **Rashbam on Gen 18:13:** THE LORD: i.e. the chief angel.

1. Rashbam on Gen 18:1: “The messenger is equivalent to the sender”
2. This is an *aggadah meyashevet*, cf. Rashi on Gen 18:3: AND HE SAID, MY LORD, IF NOW etc. – He addressed himself to the Chief of them; calling them all lords, whilst to their Chief he said “Do not I pray thee pass away,” for he knew that if he would not pass by, his companions would certainly remain with him
3. God is the head of the pantheon
4. Every angel has his own mission

31. “All of our rabbis’ words and *midrashic* explanations are honest and true”

1. And even so, sometimes we should make sure that the *midrash* correctly interprets the text
2. And even so, my grandfather, Rashi, explicated according to *peshuto shel miqra*
3. And one should not derive otherwise from my commentary, which is according to the *peshat*, and does not include *midrashic* explanations
4. But sometimes, the *peshat* explanation may be the more correct one

32. “The essence of *halakhic* and *midrashic* exegesis is derived from superfluous language in Scripture or from linguistic anomalies”

1. The Torah was written in a unique manner: It can be explained according to *peshuto*, but sometimes it cannot, and then there is not choice but to explain it according to the *derash*
2. Unique phenomena in the text are an opportunity for learning new laws and *derashot*
3. There are no superfluous words in the Torah
4. Not every *halakhah* or *midrash* can be connected to what is written in the Torah

33. “Due to their piety, the earliest scholars tended to devote their time to *midrashic* explanations, which are the essence of Torah”

1. The Sages did not know *peshat*, and therefore they thought that *midrashic* explanations are the essence of Torah
2. *Midrashic* explanations are the essence of Torah, and are more important than learning Torah according to *peshat*
3. Even though the Sages were pious, not all of their *midrashic* explanations are convincing
4. Understanding *midrashic* explanations of the Torah enables us to become righteous and pious ourselves, and therefore I will involve myself with *midrash*

34. “He admitted to me that, if only he had had the time, he would have written new [revised] commentaries, based on the insights into the plain meaning of Scripture that are newly thought of day by day”

1. Rashbam wished to legitimate his method and therefore quoted issues which Rashi had told him
2. Rashbam shows respect to Rashi, and therefore brings his words
3. Rashbam needs an accepted definition for *peshuto shel miqra*, and therefore brings Rashi’s words which are known and accepted
4. Rashbam is not sure that his method coheres with that of Rashi, but brings his words and asks the reader to judge which of the two of them is correct

35. **Rashbam on Exod 21:1**: I shall explain the rules and laws according to *derech eretz*

1. *derech eretz* – etiquette
2. *derech eretz* – the reality of life
3. *derech eretz* – parallels the phrase *peshuto shel miqra*
4. *derech eretz* – the opposite of *midrash*

36. “The Scriptural pattern of regularly anticipating and explaining some matter which, though unnecessary to the immediate context, serves the purpose of elucidating some matter to be mentioned further on, in another passage.”

1. Introductions are a literary device which repeat in different places in the Torah
2. Introductions may be very long – all of the creation narrative is an introduction to the commandment regarding the Sabbath
3. Introductions may lead to the conclusion that from a literary perspective, not all verses in the Torah have equal importance
4. All of the answers are correct

37. “For example, it is written [Gen 2:4], ‘Such is the story of heaven and earth *be-hibbare'am* [=as they were created]’. The rabbis interpreted [Gen Rabba 12:8] [that the last word] *midrashically* to mean, ‘*be-Abraham*—through [the merit of] Abraham [they were created]”.

1. This is an example of how to identify an introduction in the Torah
2. This is an example of how the *peshat* method works
3. This is an example of how the *derash* method works
4. This is an example of linguistic anomalies in the Torah

38. [000] **Gen 28:12:**

[000] **Rashi:**

[000] **Rashbam**:

1. The controversy is linguistic – according to the *peshat*, the word *olim* (‘ascending’) is not always stable/the same
2. The controversy is linguistic – biblical Hebrew is not always identical to later Hebrew
3. The controversy is methodological – the Torah is Divine but is written in a language that humans can understand, and, according to the *peshat*, there is nothing coincidental in the Torah
4. The controversy is methodological – the Torah is Divine but was written in a language that humans can understand

39. [000]

40. [000] **Ex 12:7:**

[000] **Rashi:**

[000] **Rashbam;**

1. According to the Rashbam, Hebrew and Aramaic are not cognates and therefore Rashi’s solution is incorrect
2. According to the Rashbam, Rashi’s solution is *midrashic*, even though he agrees with Rashi that Onkelos’ translation was given to Moses as Sinai
3. According to the Rashbam, Rashi’s solution follows the *peshat*, but is not convincing because Rashi did not bring any textual evidence from the Bible
4. According to the Rashbam, a root may have more than one meaning, and Rashi did not take this into account

41. [000] **Ex 13:9:**

[000] **Rashi:**

[000] **Rashbam:**

1. According to the Rashbam, there is no exegetical way (neither according to the *peshat* nor according to the *derash*) to learn the commandment regarding phylacteries (*tefillin*) from the Torah
2. According to the Rashbam, on the level of *peshat* there are no phylacteries in the Torah
3. According to Rashi, phylacteries are learned from the Torah only on the level of *derash*
4. According to Rashi, phylacteries are learned from the Torah only on the level of *peshat*, and therefore in this case we need an *aggadah meyashevet*

42. [000] **Ex 21:23-25**

[000] **Rashi:**

[000] **Rashbam:**

1. According to the Rashbam according to the *peshat*, an eye should be taken out
2. According to the Rashbam according to the *peshat*, money should be paid
3. The Rashbam differentiates between severe injuries and light injuries, and claims that only in certain cases one needs to pay
4. The Rashbam here argues with Rashi’s explanation without mentioning his name

43. [000] **Ex 23:19:**

[000] **Rashbam:**

According to the Rashbam:

1. The verse speaks of the laws pertaining to meat and milk and is in accordance with what appears in the Talmud
2. The verse speaks of a goat and a kid, but refers to other animals as well
3. We learn from the verse that eating meat and milk together is permissible
4. We learn from the verst that eating meat and milk together supports Christian exegesis

44. [000]

45. [000]

46. There is not a single commandment fully explained in the Torah itself

1. And therefore, it is imperative to take into consideration the information regarding the laws that is included in the Rabbinic literature
2. And therefore, it is imperative to explain the laws according to the *peshat*
3. And therefore, it is imperative to explain the laws according to the *derash*
4. And therefore, the Torah is defective

47. I would also add that one who correctly interprets the Torah does not need to assume any scribal emendations

The background for these words of the Ibn Ezra is:

1. The controversy with the Christians
2. The controversy with the Muslims
3. The controversy with the Karaites
4. The controversy with Rashi

48. According to the Ibn Ezra:

1. *Midreshei aggadah* are *derash* but *midreshei halakhah* are *peshat*, and therefore we should explain according to the *midreshei halakhah*
2. *Midreshei aggadah* are *derash* and *midreshei halakhah* are *derash*, and we are prohibited from learning anything from either of these
3. The purpose of *midreshei aggadah* was not to explain, but sometimes they preserve ancient information about the story and in this lies their importance
4. The purpose of *midreshei halakhah* was not to explain, but sometimes they preserve information that was handed down from generation to generation regarding the law and the *halakhah*, and in this lies their importance

49.

[000] **Ibn Ezra on Gen 22:**

We cannot accept Isaac’s age according to the Sages’ suggestions, because:

1. It is not compatible with the context
2. It is not compatible with the faith
3. It is not compatible with the *derash* methodology
4. It helps the Karaites’ stance

50. [000] **Zech 1:8:**

**Ibn Ezra**: This is what he saw. And there is no need to seek a meaning why it was red.

Why “and there is no need”?

1. It is an expression of Ibn Ezra’s opposition to the phenomenon of prophecy
2. There is nothing coincidental in the biblical books and there is nothing coincidental in prophecy
3. Exegetical economy
4. The prophet Zachariah precisely relates (word for word) the words that God had told him, even if the words are unclear

51. [000] **Deut 25:2-3:**

[000] **Ibn Ezra:**

1. Needs to explain, in this case, according to the *derash*
2. Needs to ignore the words of the Sages (*Ḥazal*), and in this case explain according to the *peshat*
3. Needs to distinguish between what is written in the verse and what is not written in it, and explain according to the accepted *halakhah*
4. Needs to distinguish between what is written in the verse and what is not written in it, and to not hesitate to explain differently from the accepted *halakhah*

52. [000] **Gen 14:14**

[000] **Ibn Ezra:**

The background for Ibn Ezra’s words is his belief that –

1. The Torah was written in language that humans can understand
2. The Torah was given to all, and not only for the wise man, and every word has a meaning which is suitable for each person
3. One can explain according to the *derash*, but *gematria* is not a legitimate method
4. It is important to be precise about every detail because there is nothing coincidental in the Torah

53. [000]

1. God gave the prophet content (*te’amim*) and the words are those of the prophet
2. God gave the prophet *te’amim* and words, but the prophet is free to formulate the message on his own
3. God does not differentiate between the firstborn of the female slave and the firstborn of the captive, and therefore the prophet does not differentiate between them
4. God differentiates between the firstborn of the female slave and the firstborn of the captive, and therefore the prophet differentiates between them as well

54. [000] **Ibn Ezra, Letter of the Shabbath:63**

What is the background to Ibn Ezra’s words?

1. Rashi’s commentary on the Ten Commandments
2. Rashbam’s commentary on the Creation narrative
3. A Karaite commentary on phylacteries (*tefillin*)
4. The Christian claim that the Sabbath is in fact Sunday

55. [000] **Ibn Ezra, Defense of Sa’adia Gaon, 84:**

Which answer is not correct?

1. According to Rabbi Saadia Gaon, every prophet has his own style
2. According to Rabbi Adonim, the prophet’s words are God’ words, and therefore the prophet does not have a style of his own
3. According to the Ibn Ezra, every prophet formulates the message he received in a vision from God according to his own personal style
4. According to the Ibn Ezra, Rabbi Adonim is basically correct, but is mistaken in this case which deals with the language/words of the prophet Isaiah

56. [000]

57. [000] **Rashi on Ps 2:1-2:**

What is “*teshuvat ha-minim*”?

1. A refutation of the Christians
2. The correct *peshat* interpretation (=*mashma’o*)
3. The Messiah is a descendent of David
4. A covert objection to the Sages’ interpretation (our Rabbis interpreted…, however…)

58. **Rashbam on Gen 49:10**: “Shiloh” that is written here is just the name of a city. For there are no vernacular words in the Bible [*Salut*?]. Nor is *shello* [=his] written here, as some Jews claim, nor *shaliah* [=a messenger; *qui mittendus est*] as the Christians say.

1. Identifying the prophecy with a historical event recorded in the Bible serves as a response to those who identify the prophecy with the Messiah
2. Identifying the prophecy with a future event, which is not mentioned in the Bible, serves as a response to Christian interpretations
3. Identifying the prophecy with Judah himself and with the city of Shiloh allows an explanation of the details according to the *peshat*
4. Identifying the prophecy with the city of Shiloh allows a correct reading of the verse without distortions (‘Shiloh,’ and not ‘*shello*’ or ‘*salut*’)

59. [000] **Rashbam on Lev 11:3-4:**

1. Is an example of looking for the reasons behind the commandments (*ta’amei ha-mitzvot*)
2. Is an example of explaining the *mitzvot* according to *derekh eretz*
3. Is an example of explaining the *mitzvot* according to the *derash*
4. All of the answers are correct

60. What is the ‘secret of the twelve’? (*sod ha-sheneim ‘asar*)

1. The 12 stones of the altar
2. The 12 sons of Jacob
3. The 12 blessings
4. The 12 verses at the end of the Torah

61. What is the secret of the word *‘Azazel*?

1. It is an Aramaic word, and Moses could not have written it
2. It is a later *halakhic* praxis and Moses could not have known it
3. Use of a non-kosher animal, and as part of the controversy with the Christians it is better to not mention
4. It necessitates relying on the oral Torah, and as part of the controversy with the Kara’ites it is better to not mention

62. [000] **R. Joseph Hayyun’s answer to Abarbanel**:

1. Hayyun differentiates between the stage when the events took place and Moses’ speech and the stage of writing the Torah by Divine dictation
2. Hayyun contrasts the ‘eighth principle’ (*ha-yesod ha-shemini*) as determined by the Rambam with what can be understood from the Rabbinic sources regarding the formation of the Torah
3. God dictated the Torah to Moses and Moses added minutiae under Divine inspiration
4. According to the ‘eighth principle’ (*ha-yesod ha-shemini*) as determined by the Rambam, the Torah is an expression of Divine-human cooperation

63. [000] **Maimonides on Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10:1 (Eight principles of faith)**:

1. From here on, Jews assumed that God spoke to Moses
2. From here on, Jews assumed that God dictated the Torah to Moses
3. From here on, Jews assumed that the Torah was in Heaven
4. Jews differentiate between the Rambam’s stance and his words in the eighth principle, which are called metaphorically