

# Hekhalot Literature in Context

Between Byzantium and Babylonia

Edited by Peter Schäfer, Ra'anan Boustan and Martha Himmelfarb

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Over the past 30 years, scholars of early Jewish mysticism have, with increasing confidence, located the initial formation of Hekhalot literature in Byzantine Palestine and Sasanian or early Islamic Babylonia (ca. 500-900 C.E.), rather than at the time of the Mishnah, Tosefta, early Midrashim, or Palestinian Talmud (ca. 100-400 C.E.). This advance has primarily been achieved through major gains in our understanding of the dynamic and highly flexible processes of composition, redaction, and transmission that produced the Hekhalot texts as we know them today. These gains have been coupled with greater appreciation of the complex relationships between Hekhalot writings and the variegated Jewish literary culture of late antiquity, both within and beyond the boundaries of the rabbinic movement. Yet important questions remain regarding the specific cultural contexts and institutional settings out of which the various strands of Hekhalot literature emerged as well as the multiple trajectories of use and appropriation they subsequently travelled. In the present volume, an international team of experts explores—from a variety of disciplinary perspectives (e.g. linguistics, ritual and gender studies, intellectual history)—the literary formation, cultural meanings, religious functions, and textual transmission of Hekhalot literature.

## Survey of contents

Ra'anan Boustan: Introduction

### I. The Formation of Hekhalot Literature: Linguistic, Literary, and Cultural Contexts

Noam Mizrahi: The Language of Hekhalot Literature: Preliminary Observations - Peter Schäfer: Metatron in Babylonia - Michael D. Swartz: Hekhalot and Piyyut: From Byzantium to Babylonia and Back - Alexei Sivertsev: The Emperor's Many Bodies: The Demise of Emperor Lupinus Revisited - Klaus Herrmann: Jewish Mysticism in Byzantium: The Transformation of Merkavah Mysticism in 3 Enoch - David M. Grossberg: Between 3 Enoch and Bavli Hagigah: Heresiology and Orthopraxy in the Ascent of Elisha ben Abuyah - Moulie Vidas: Hekhalot Literature, the Babylonian Academies and the tanna'im

### II. The Transmission and Reception of Hekhalot Literature: Toward the Middle Ages

Peter Schäfer: The Hekhalot Genizah - *Gideon Bohak*: Observations on the Transmission of Hekhalot Literature in the Cairo Genizah - *Ophir Münz-Manor*: A Prolegomenon to the Study of Hekhalot Traditions in European Piyyut

### III. Early Jewish Mysticism in Comparative Perspective: Themes and Patterns

*Reimund Leicht*: Major Trends in Rabbinic Cosmology - *Rebecca Lesses*: Women and Gender in the Hekhalot Literature - *Andrei A. Orlov*: »What is Below?« Mysteries of Leviathan in the Early Jewish Accounts and Mishnah Hagigah 2:1 - *Michael Meerson*: Rites of Passage in Magic and Mysticism - *Annette Yoshiko Reed*: Rethinking (Jewish-)Christian Evidence for Jewish Mysticism

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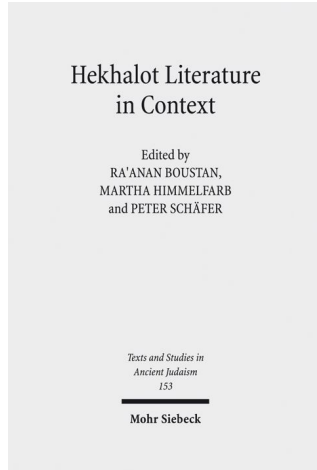
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