

ANDREI A. ORLOV

# The Enoch-Metatron Tradition

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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Martin Hengel and Peter Schäfer

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Andrei A. Orlov

# The Enoch-Metatron Tradition

Mohr Siebeck

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*For my parents*



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Milwaukee, Synaxis of the Holy Archangels 2004

Andrei Orlov

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# Introduction

## Early Jewish Mysticism

Although this investigation will focus mainly on the roots of the Metatron lore, this Jewish tradition cannot be fully understood without addressing its broader theological and historical context, which includes a religious movement known as early Jewish mysticism. Research must therefore begin with clarifying some notions and positions pertaining to the investigation of this broader religious phenomenon.

The roots of the current scholarly discussion on the origin, aim, and content of early Jewish mysticism can be traced to the writings of Gershom Scholem. His studies marked in many ways a profound breach with the previous paradigm of 19th and early 20th century scholarship solidified in the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement which viewed Jewish mystical developments as based on ideas late and external to Judaism.<sup>1</sup> In his seminal research, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, as well as other publications,<sup>2</sup> Scholem saw his main task as clarifying the origins of early Jewish mysticism on the basis of new methodological premises, which, in contrast to the scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, approached early Jewish mysticism as a genuine Jewish movement with roots in biblical and pseudepigraphic traditions. Scholem's project was not an easy one, and in

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<sup>1</sup> One of the representatives of this movement, Heinrich Graetz, considered the Hekhalot writings as late compositions dated to the end of the Geonic period. He viewed the Hekhalot literature as "a compound of misunderstood Agadas, and of Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan fantastic notions, clothed in mystical obscurity, and pretended to be a revelation." H. Graetz, *History of the Jews* (6 vols.; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1894) 3.153.

<sup>2</sup> G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1941); idem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, [1960] 1965); idem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969); idem, *Kabbalah* (New York: Dorset Press, 1987); idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). For the complete bibliography of Scholem's writings, see: F. Scholem and B. Yaron, "Bibliography of the Published Writings of Gershom G. Scholem," in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to Gershom Scholem on his Seventieth Birthday* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967) 199–235; M. Catane, *Bibliography of the Writings of Gershom G. Scholem presented to Gershom G. Scholem on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1977).

many aspects it was a truly pioneering enterprise. In the speech delivered on the occasion of his acceptance of the Rothschild prize, Scholem shared the following lament about the predicament of his initial investigation: "All I found were scattered, shabby pages, and I transformed them into history."<sup>3</sup>

Scholem's writings exhibit an impressive attempt to connect the early Jewish mystical traditions attested in some apocalyptic texts of Second Temple Judaism, such as *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, with the later mystical developments hinted at in mishnaic and talmudic sources about מעשה מרכבה and developed in the Hekhalot writings.<sup>4</sup> It is significant that Scholem viewed all three stages of this evolution as integral parts of one larger movement designated by him as the Merkabah tradition. In his view, the mystical testimonies attested in Jewish apocalyptic writings represented the initial stage in the development of this larger religious phenomenon. He thought that it is

entirely correct and by itself sufficient to prove the essential continuity of thought concerning the Merkabah in all its three stages: the anonymous conventicles of the old apocalyptics; the Merkabah speculation of the Mishnaic teachers who are known to us by name; and the Merkabah mysticism of late and post-Talmudic times, as reflected in the literature which has come down to us. We are dealing here with a religious movement of distinctive character whose existence conclusively disproves the old prejudice according to which all the productive religious energies of early apocalyptic were absorbed by and into Christianity after the latter's rise.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, Scholem considered rabbinic and Hekhalot developments as the consequent stages of the long-lasting history of the Merkabah tradition, the roots of which can be traced to pre-rabbinic apocalyptic circles. In sharp contrast to the scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, he argued for the early date of the Hekhalot literature which in his opinion could have originated in Palestinian circles during the Talmudic or even Tannaitic periods.

Scholem contended that the Hekhalot writings are intimately connected with the early apocalypses by their distinctive common symbolism, namely the throne imagery, which in his view constituted one of the central themes of the conceptual world of the Merkabah tradition. In *Major Trends*, he wrote that

the earliest Jewish mysticism is throne-mysticism. Its essence is not absorbed contemplation of God's true nature, but perception of His appearance on the throne,

<sup>3</sup> J. Dan, *Gershom Scholem and the Mystical Dimension of Jewish History* (New York: New York University Press, 1987) 2–3.

<sup>4</sup> For the texts and translations of the Hekhalot writings, see P. Schäfer, with M. Schlüter and H. G. von Mutius, *Synopsis zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (TSAJ 2; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1981); P. Schäfer et al., *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur* (4 vols.; TSAJ 17, 22, 29, 46; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1987–95).

<sup>5</sup>Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 43.

as described by Ezekiel, and cognition of the mysteries of the celestial throne-world. The throne-world is to the Jewish mystic what the *pleroma*, the “fullness,” the bright sphere of divinity with its potencies, aeons, archons and dominions is to the Hellenistic and early Christian mystics of the period who appear in the history of religion under the names of Gnostics and Hermetics.<sup>6</sup>

Scholem believed that another link between the Hekhalot writings and the early apocalyptic traditions was that both of them represented reports of actual ecstatic experiences. He thought that the Hekhalot writings represented

not Midrashim, i.e., expositions of Biblical passages, but a literature *sui generis* with a purpose of its own. They are essentially descriptions of a genuine religious experience for which no sanction is sought in the Bible. In short, they belonged in one class with the apocrypha and the apocalyptic writings rather than with traditional Midrash.<sup>7</sup>

Scholem saw Hekhalot mysticism as a part of the visionary tradition of the heavenly ascent, the beginning of which he traced to the heavenly journeys of the exalted patriarchs and prophets attested in early Jewish apocalypses.

Despite the significant role which the early Jewish apocalypses and pseudepigrapha seem to have played in Scholem’s grand scheme of the history of early Jewish mysticism, his publications do not offer a thorough textual analysis of these Second Temple materials.<sup>8</sup> The investigation of these important texts, which in Scholem’s judgment played a formative role in emerging early Jewish mysticism, was confined in his publications to a few unsystematic remarks. Scholem’s inability to demonstrate textually the persistent presence of the matrix of early Jewish mysticism in the pseudepigraphic literature would later lead his critics to concentrate their studies mainly either on the rabbinic *מעשה מרמבם* accounts or on the Hekhalot writings and to regard these literary evidences as the first systematic presentations of early Jewish mysticism.<sup>9</sup> Scholem’s failure to give proper textual documentation for his argument for the roots of early Jewish mysticism in premishnaic literature is, in my judgment, one of the main reasons why his positions on the origin, aim, and content of early Jewish mysticism have undergone so much criticism in later scholarship.

<sup>6</sup> Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 43–44.

<sup>7</sup> Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 46.

<sup>8</sup> Scholem’s avoidance of systematic textual exploration of Jewish pseudepigraphic writings, such as *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and *4 Ezra*, which he often cites in his publications, is understandable since his main area of expertise laid not in the Second Temple Judaism but in later rabbinic developments.

<sup>9</sup> This shift was not solely the invention of Scholem’s opponents but was rather the reaffirmation of Scholem’s own methodological position in which the early pseudepigraphic mystical evidence was perceived and evaluated not on its own but from the perspective of the later rabbinic and Hekhalot mystical developments.



Detailed criticisms of Scholem's positions were offered in the publications of Peter Schäfer,<sup>10</sup> David J. Halperin,<sup>11</sup> and other scholars<sup>12</sup> whose critique stemmed from the earlier critical work of Johann Maier<sup>13</sup> and Ephraim E. Urbach.<sup>14</sup>

Scholem's critics found unpersuasive his contention that the pre-Christian apocalyptic writings and the later rabbinic Merkabah accounts represented the same type of mystical mold. They suggested that the rabbinic testimonies about מעשה מרכבה may not in fact refer to actual ecstatic experiences similar to the ascent stories of pre-Christian apocalypticists; rather they were exegetical expositions of Ezekiel's account of the Merkabah. One of the critics, David Halperin, stressed that "the merkabah expositions of Tannaitic times did not, as far as we can tell, accompany an ecstatic mystical practice, nor did they consist of a secret doctrine. They were the public exegeses of Ezekiel's vision, which I presume, accompanied the recitation of Ezekiel 1 in the synagogue on Shabu'ot."<sup>15</sup> Halperin viewed the rabbinic מעשה מרכבה accounts as being connected with the Shabu'ot exegetical traditions in which Ezekiel's

<sup>10</sup> P. Schäfer, "Prolegomena zu einer kritischen Edition und Analyse der Merkava Rabba," *FJB* 5 (1977) 65–99; idem, "Die Beschwörung des sar ha-panim, Kritische Edition und Übersetzung," *FJB* 6 (1978) 107–45; idem, "Aufbau und redaktionelle Identität der Hekhalot Zutarti," *JJS* 33 (1982) 569–82; idem, "Tradition and Redaction in Hekhalot Literature," *JSJ* 14 (1983) 172–81; idem, "Engel und Menschen in der Hekhalot-Literatur," in: P. Schäfer, *Hekhalot-Studien* (TSAJ 19; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1988) 250–76, esp. 258, 264–65; idem, "The Aim and Purpose of Early Jewish Mysticism. Gershom Scholem Reconsidered," in: *Hekhalot-Studien*, 277–95; idem, *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1992) 150–55.

<sup>11</sup> D. J. Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1980); idem, "A New Edition of the Hekhalot Literature," *JAOS* 104.3 (1984) 543–552; idem, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1988) 359–63.

<sup>12</sup> P. Alexander, "The Historical Setting of the Hebrew Book of Enoch," *JJS* 28 (1977) 173–80; M. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 106–14; idem, "The Experience of the Visionary and the Genre in the Ascension of Isaiah 6–11 and the Apocalypse of Paul," *Semeia* 36 (1986) 97–111; idem, "The Practice of Ascent in the Ancient Mediterranean World," in: *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys* (ed. J. J. Collins and M. Fishbane; Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1995) 123–37, esp. 126–28; M. D. Swartz, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) 29; 153–57; 170–72; 210–12.

<sup>13</sup> J. Maier, *Vom Kultus zur Gnosis* (Kairos 1; Salzburg: Müller, 1964) 128–146.

<sup>14</sup> E. E. Urbach, "The Traditions about Merkavah Mysticism in the Tannaitic Period," in: *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to Gershom G. Scholem on His Seventieth Birthday by Pupils, Colleagues and Friends* (ed. E. E. Urbach et al; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967) 1–28 [in Hebrew].

<sup>15</sup> Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature*, 182.

account interconnected with the Sinai narratives and depicted Moses ascending to heaven in order to receive the Torah despite the objections of the heavenly hosts. Halperin argued that the traditions attested in the Shabu'ot circle were formative for the Sar Torah imagery which plays a central role in Hekhalot literature.

Thus, critics of Scholem's position proposed that, similar to the talmudic discussions of מעשה מרכבה, the Hekhalot literature might also represent exegetical expositions rather than the accounts of actual experiences of the heavenly journey. Peter Schäfer argued that "the Hekhalot literature does not provide us any indication as to how the heavenly journey actually is carried out, or even if it is practiced at all as a 'truly' ecstatic experience."<sup>16</sup> Scholem's hypothesis that the throne and ascent imageries occupy a crucial place in the Merkavah and Hekhalot materials has also generated substantial critical response. Schäfer observed that anyone reading the Hekhalot texts in an unbiased way, "and without having the history of research inaugurated by Scholem in mind, will hardly conclude that it is precisely the ascent to the Merkavah which forms the center for the authors of this literature."<sup>17</sup> He further pointed out that in the majority of Hekhalot writings the tradition of the heavenly ascent clearly gave way to accounts of adjurations. In Schäfer's opinion, "the entire literature is permeated by such adjurations, and the means by which these adjurations are carried out are the same as those needed for a successful completion of the heavenly journey ... the objects of these adjurations are always angelic beings who assist visionaries in the comprehensive knowledge of the Torah."<sup>18</sup>

Despite the significant advance that the investigations of Schäfer, Halperin, and other opponents of Scholem's position brought to a better understanding of the conceptual world of the rabbinic and Hekhalot mystical developments, their works, in my judgment, affected negatively the study of the premishnaic Jewish mystical testimonies. Their writings shifted the whole notion of early Jewish mysticism towards the rabbinic and Hekhalot documents and separated it from the early mystical evidence of Second Temple Judaism. The criticisms of Scholem's hypothesis have led to the refocusing of priorities in the study of early Jewish mysticism. The main focus of research has been transferred from pseudepigraphic evidence to the rabbinic מעשה מרכבה and the Hekhalot writings in an attempt to show their conceptual independence from the early apocalyptic materials. The view that the Hekhalot tradition possesses its own set(s) of concepts and imagery, different from the conceptualities of the early apocalyptic mystical testimonies, should not however lead one to ignore the association of these

<sup>16</sup> Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 155.

<sup>17</sup> Schäfer, *Gershom Scholem Reconsidered*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Schäfer, *Gershom Scholem Reconsidered*, 6.

texts with early Jewish mysticism. It is apparent that, despite its importance, the body of Hekhalot literature cannot serve as the ultimate yardstick for measuring all early Jewish mystical traditions. After all, the Hekhalot literature in itself, as was demonstrated by several scholars who studied this tradition, does not represent a homogeneous theological continuum, but should rather be viewed as having several theological centers. In his criticism of Scholem's and Halperin's positions, Schäfer observed that "both approaches suffer from the desire to find one explanation for the entire Hekhalot literature, which then assigns all other parts to their places, thus ignoring the extremely complex relations of the texts and the various literary layers within the individual macroform. The Hekhalot literature is not a unity and, therefore, cannot be explained uniformly."<sup>19</sup>

One of the consequences that stemmed from the critique of Scholem's position was that a substantial gap emerged between the rabbinic and Hekhalot materials, on one hand, and the early apocalyptic traditions, on the other. Thus, the rabbinic testimonies to *מעשה מרכבה* and the Hekhalot writings were no longer considered directly connected with the visionary practices of the pre-Christian apocalypticists, but were viewed instead as a different phenomenon with its own peculiar conceptual world.

### Slavonic Pseudepigrapha

As has been already mentioned, Scholem argued that the Jewish pseudepigrapha were one of the important sources of the development of Merkabah and Hekhalot mysticism. He drew special attention to the pseudepigraphic texts associated with the Enochic tradition. Scholem considered the early Enochic materials, particularly such Enochic compositions as *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* and *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*, as the texts which contained the earliest formulations of Jewish mystical developments.<sup>20</sup> Scholem wrote that "one fact remains certain: the main subjects of the later Merkabah mysticism already occupy a central position in this oldest esoteric literature, best represented by the Book of Enoch."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 152.

<sup>20</sup> George Nickelsburg, supporting Scholem's idea, observes that "*1 Enoch* 14 stands at an important transitional point between prophetic and mystical tradition." He, however, cautiously observes that "although *1 Enoch* 14 reflects the reinterpretation of prophetic traditions in the direction of later mysticism, there are some marked differences between *1 Enoch* 14 and the later texts.... A definite historical link between our text and the later mystical texts must await careful exegesis of the latter and comparison with *1 Enoch*." G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Enoch, Levi, and Peter: Recipients of Revelation in Upper Galilee," *JBL* 100 (1981) 575–600, esp. 581–2.

<sup>21</sup> Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 43.

He also pointed to other pseudepigraphic materials, such as the *Fourth Book of Ezra* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, which along with the Enochic writings contained concepts and imagery crucial for later Jewish mystical developments. He stressed that the influence of these pseudepigraphic writings “on the subsequent development of Jewish mysticism cannot be overlooked” since they “undoubtedly contain elements of Jewish mystical religion.”<sup>22</sup>

The significant evidence that has never been systematically explored in the recent discussions about the origin of early Jewish mysticism is the testimony of several Jewish pseudepigraphic materials which have survived solely in their Slavonic translations. These texts include 2 (*Slavonic*) *Enoch*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and the *Ladder of Jacob* where the traces of early Jewish mystical developments can be detected.<sup>23</sup> This group of Jewish

<sup>22</sup> Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 40.

<sup>23</sup> On Jewish mystical traditions in these texts, see P. Alexander, “3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch,” *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1985 [1983]) 1.247–248; idem, “From Son of Adam to a Second God: Transformation of the Biblical Enoch,” *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible* (ed. M. E. Stone and T. A. Bergen; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998) esp. 102–111; C. Böttrich, *Weltweisheit, Menschheitsethik, Urkult: Studien zum slavischen Henochbuch* (WUNT 2/50; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1992) 109–114; idem, “Beobachtungen zum Midrash vom ‘Leben Henochs,’” *Mitteilungen und Beiträge der Forschungsstelle Judentum an der Theologischen Fakultät Leipzig* 10 (1996) 44–83; A. De Conick, *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas* (SVC 33; Leiden: Brill, 1996); M. Himmelfarb, “Revelation and Rapture: The Transformation of the Visionary in the Ascent Apocalypses,” *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium* (eds. J. J. Collins and J. H. Charlesworth; JSPSup., 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 79–90; L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955) esp. 5.161–64; I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (AGJU 14; Leiden: Brill, 1980) 50–51; J. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism* (WUNT 36; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1985); idem, “Colossians 1,15–18a in the Light of Jewish Mysticism and Gnosticism,” *NTS* 35 (1989) 183–201; idem, *The Image of the Invisible God. Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (NTOA 30; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995); M. Idel, “Enoch is Metatron,” *Immanuel* 24/25 (1990) 220–240; J. Kugel, “The Ladder of Jacob,” *HTR* 88 (1995) 209–27; H. Odeberg, *3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch* (New York: KTAV, 1973) esp. 52–63; W. O. E. Oesterley and G. H. Box, *A Short Survey of the Literature of Rabbinic and Mediaeval Judaism* (New York: Macmillan, 1920) esp. 236; A. A. Orlov, “Titles of Enoch-Metatron in 2 Enoch,” *JSP* 18 (1998) 71–86; idem, “Secrets of Creation in 2 (Slavonic) Enoch,” *Henoch* 22.1 (2000) 45–62; idem, “Ex 33 on God’s Face: A Lesson from the Enochic Tradition,” *SBLSP* 39 (2000) 130–47; idem, “Melchizedek Legend of 2 (Slavonic) Enoch,” *JSJ* 31 (2000) 23–38; idem, “The Origin of the Name ‘Metatron’ and the Text of 2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch,” *JSP* 21 (2000) 19–26; idem, “The Face as the Heavenly Counterpart of the Visionary in the Slavonic Ladder of Jacob,” in: *Of Scribes and Sages* (2 vols; ed. C.A. Evans; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 2.59–76; A. Orlov and A.

pseudepigrapha with an enigmatic history of transmission, that does not leave any traces of these writings in Greek or other languages, except in Slavonic, seems to share a highly developed mystical imagery that make them stand out in the corpus of the early pseudepigraphic texts.<sup>24</sup> These writings have never been studied as a group for their possible connections with early Jewish mysticism. Although Hugo Odeberg, Gershom Scholem, and Ithamar Gruenwald referred occasionally to these texts in their research, pointing to certain provocative allusions that seem to connect these pseudepigrapha with the imagery and conceptual world of the later Merkabah and Hekhalot materials, critics of Scholem's approach often ignored this important evidence.<sup>25</sup> Even in the previous research of Odeberg, Scholem, and Gruenwald, despite their formal recognition of the importance of these pseudepigraphic texts for the history of early Jewish mysticism, the presence of Jewish mystical traditions in the Slavonic pseudepigrapha was never systematically explored. This situation has most likely arisen, in my judgment, because those scholars who have been seriously engaged in the study of early Jewish mysticism have historically lacked motivation to work with the Slavonic translations of the early Jewish texts. A primary obstacle was, of course, the Slavonic language, which itself was categorized by most scholars as "esoteric."

It appears that one of the important tasks in clarifying the origins of early Jewish mysticism lies in the systematic investigation of such writings as *2 Enoch*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and the *Ladder of Jacob* and in understanding their role in shaping the imagery and the concepts of the subsequent Jewish mystical developments.

It should be noted that *2 Enoch*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and the *Ladder of Jacob* represent a unique group of texts that share the theophanic and mediatorial language which, in my view, is as different from mainstream of early apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic writings as from later Hekhalot materials. One can see in this group of materials a witness to the lost *practical* and *literary* development which could well represent an important transitional stage in early Jewish mystical testimonies, serving as

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Golitzin, "Many Lamps Are Lightened from the One': Paradigms of the Transformational Vision in the Macarian Homilies," *VC* 55 (2001) 281–298; M. Philonenko, "La cosmogonie du 'Livre des secrets d'Hénoch,'" *Religions en Egypte: Hellénistique et romaine* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969) 109–16; Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*; idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*; idem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*; idem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah* (New York: Schocken, 1991).

<sup>24</sup> On the similarities between the theophanic language of *2 Enoch* and the *Ladder of Jacob*, see Orlov, "The Face as the Heavenly Counterpart of the Visionary in the Slavonic Ladder of Jacob," 2.59–76.

<sup>25</sup> For example, in Halperin's investigation of the pseudepigraphic materials in *The Faces of the Chariot*, references to *2 Enoch* are limited to half a page.

a kind of bridge from the matrix of early Jewish apocalypticism, as it was manifested in the early Enochic circle, to the matrix of early Jewish mysticism as it became manifest in rabbinic Merkabah and Hekhalot materials. In my study I will illustrate this transitional character of the Slavonic pseudepigraphic evidence by using the example of the Metatron tradition found in *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*. The concepts and imagery of this tradition in the Slavonic apocalypse show that *2 Enoch* occupies an intermediary stage between Second Temple apocalypticism and Hekhalot mysticism, thus manifesting its own, one might say, “proto-Hekhalot” mystical mold. Similar to some of the Hekhalot writings, the Slavonic Enoch already operates with the concept of Metatron and his later titles, such as the Youth, which are absent from early Enochic writings but prominent in such Hekhalot macroforms as *Sefer Hekhalot*, *Hekhalot Rabbati*, and other materials.<sup>26</sup> In contrast to the Hekhalot writings, however, *2 Enoch* is not preoccupied with adjuration, has no magical content, and places the ascent imagery in the center of its narrative.

## *2 Enoch* and Early Jewish Mysticism

The investigation has already noted that Scholem located the formative core of the earliest Jewish mystical developments in the body of literature associated with Enochic traditions.<sup>27</sup> He also repeatedly drew his readers’ attention to one of the Enochic texts, an enigmatic writing preserved exclusively in its Slavonic translation and therefore known to us as *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*.

*2 Enoch* is a Jewish pseudepigraphon traditionally dated to the first century C.E. The central theme of the text is the celestial ascent of the seventh antediluvian patriarch Enoch through the seven heavens and his luminous metamorphosis near the Throne of Glory.

The figure of Enoch portrayed in the various sections of *2 Enoch* appears to be more elaborate than in the early Second Temple Enochic tractates of *1 Enoch*. For the first time, the Enochic tradition seeks to depict Enoch, not simply as a human taken to heaven and transformed into an angel, but as a

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<sup>26</sup> The Metatron tradition can be seen as one of the several “conceptual centers” of Hekhalot literature.

<sup>27</sup> He did not, however, confine the roots of early Jewish mystical developments solely to the social setting associated with the Enochic tradition. He believed that “in the period of the Second Temple an esoteric doctrine was already taught in Pharisaic circles. The first chapter of Genesis, the story of Creation, and the first chapter of Ezekiel, the vision of God’s throne-chariot, were the favorite subjects of discussion and interpretation which it was apparently considered inadvisable to make public.” Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 42.

celestial being exalted above the angelic world.<sup>28</sup> In this attempt, one may find the origins of another image of Enoch (very different from the early Enochic literature) that was developed much later in rabbinic Merkabah and Hekhalot mysticism – the image of the supreme angel Metatron, “the Prince of the Presence.” The image of the exalted Enoch found in *2 Enoch* makes it reasonable to suggest an earlier date for the development of the Metatron tradition and to place the beginning of this tradition, not in the rabbinic era, but in the Second Temple period. This study will focus on establishing such early roots for the Metatron tradition in *2 Enoch*.

Despite extensive important textual evidence pointing to possible connections between *2 Enoch* and the Metatron tradition, most scholars have avoided further study in this direction. They seem to have been doing so primarily because they are more interested in the traditional perspective on *2 Enoch* as the pseudepigraphic text of early premishnaic Enoch literature, similar to *1 Enoch* and the Enochic Qumran materials. They have been slow to discuss the apparent Merkabah features of *2 Enoch*, including the Metatron imagery. In the twentieth century, very few studies have sought to establish connections between *2 Enoch* and the Metatron tradition. Research has usually been conducted as part of broader investigations into possible parallels between *2 Enoch* and later Jewish mysticism. Although the traditional view held the Metatron tradition to be quite late and belonging to the Merkabah mysticism associated with the rabbinic era, certain features of Enoch’s image found in *2 Enoch* have led several

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<sup>28</sup> One can argue that the beginning of this process can be seen already in the *Book of the Similitudes*, where Enoch seems to be identified with the Son of Man. It is possible that the *Similitudes*, written close to the time of *2 Enoch*, also reflect this process of transition to the new image of Enoch. The *Similitudes*, however, do not elaborate this process to the same degree as the Slavonic apocalypse does. Enoch’s transformation into the Son of Man in *Similitudes* 71 is rather instantaneous and ambiguous. In contrast, in *2 Enoch* this process of Enoch’s transition to a new super-angelic identity is described in detail through the expositions of Enoch’s celestial titles which unfold the patriarch’s new roles in numerous celestial offices. Another important detail is that the titles of Enoch attested in the *Similitudes* (such as the Son of Man and others) do not play any significant role in the later Jewish mystical developments and in the Metatron tradition. On Enoch’s transformation in the *Similitudes*, see J. R. Davila, “Of Methodology, Monotheism and Metatron,” *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism. Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (eds. C. C. Newman, J. R. Davila, G. S. Lewis; JSJSup 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 9–15; C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology* (WUNT 2/94; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1997) 151; M. Knibb, “Messianism in the Pseudepigrapha in the Light of the Scrolls,” *DSD* 2 (1995) 177–80; D. W. Suter, *Tradition and Composition in the Parables of Enoch* (SBLDS 47; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979) 14–23; J. VanderKam, “Righteous One, Messiah, Chosen One, and Son of Man in 1 Enoch 37–71,” *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity. The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins* (eds. J. H. Charlesworth et al.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 182–3.

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