The Legacy of Enoch from the Middle Ages

Annette Yoshiko Reed (New York University; ar5525@nyu.edu)
PAPER PREPARED FOR PRE-CIRCULATION FOR THE TENTH ENOCH SEMINAR, JUNE 2019 [DRAFT]

The discovery of Aramaic fragments of Enochic writings among the Dead Sea Scrolls revolutionized scholarly research on a number of key elements of Judaism in the Second Temple period (586 BCE-70 CE)—including the emergence of apocalyptic literature, the production of so-called “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,” the spread of Jewish sectarianism, and the articulation of new concerns for demonology and heavenly ascent.\(^1\) Perhaps no less revolutionary, however, has been the impetus for new approaches to the afterlives of early Enochic texts and traditions.

Earlier scholarly forays into their reception focused on collecting evidence related to the Ethiopic compendium \textit{1 Enoch} for “use as witnesses to the text of the book current in early times” as well as “its history in the Christian Church and the views which were held as to its authenticity and inspiration.”\(^2\) On the one hand, the Dead Sea Scrolls yielded direct data for dating and reconstructing the original Aramaic forms of four of the five main subdocuments of \textit{1 Enoch} (i.e., with Aramaic fragments of portions of the \textit{Book of the Watchers} [chs. 1-36; ca. 3\textsuperscript{rd} c. BCE], \textit{Astronomical Book} [chs. 72-82; ca. 3\textsuperscript{rd} c. BCE], \textit{Book of Dreams} [chs. 83-90; 2\textsuperscript{nd} c. BCE], and \textit{Epistle of Enoch} [chs. 91ff; 2\textsuperscript{nd} c. BCE]).\(^3\) On the other hand, the Aramaic Enoch fragments brought new scholarly attention to “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha” and inspired scholars to revisit the question of their reception, considering a much broader scope of relevant sources, thinking beyond canonical categories, and developing more sophisticated approaches to tracing their \textit{Nachleben} in and beyond Late Antiquity.\(^4\)

1 See further Gabriele Boccaccini & John J. Collins, eds., \textit{The Early Enoch Literature} (Leiden: Brill, 2007) as well as the proceedings of our previous Enoch Seminars, as listed online at http://enochseminar.org/review/category/publications.
Our present Enoch Seminar ("Enoch and Enochic Traditions in the Early Modern Period: Reception History from the 15th Century to the End of the 19th Century") breaks significant new ground in this regard, by virtue of its interdisciplinary focus on the early modern period—which, to my knowledge, is quite unprecedented. My aim in this brief essay is to help set the stage for our discussions by surveying what we know of Enoch and his books in the Middle Ages. Although what follows shall be largely synthetic, I would like to take this opportunity to experiment with reconsidering the relevant data, not with the usual eye backward towards ancient "origins," but rather in a trajectory looking forward as well. In the Middle Ages—just prior to the period of the much-lauded modern European "discovery" of 1 Enoch—what was known of Enochic literature, and where, how, and to whom? What do we know of their circulation but also of the circulation of excerpts from and references to Enoch’s books and writings? What was known and lost and forgotten—but also reimagined, revived, and rewritten—of the literary tradition surrounding Enoch from Second Temple times?

These centuries (ca. 800-1400) have been typically treated as an era marked by the progressive loss of early Enochic literature, often as part of a larger scholarly narrative concerning the late antique Christian rejection or suppression of “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha” and the resultant medieval forgetting of their unique witness to those ancient forms of Judaism that most shaped Jesus and the origins of Christianity. R. H. Charles’ 1893 translation, for instance, celebrates the recovery of 1 Enoch from having been “banned” by ecclesiarchs such as Augustine and thereafter progressively “lost to the knowledge of Western Christendom till over a century ago,” and George Nickelsburg’s 2001 translation similarly states that it was “lost to Judaism and Mediterranean Christianity for four hundred years” prior to Joseph Scaliger’s 1658 publication of portions of the chronography of George Syncellus that quote from it, James Bruce’s 1773 discovery of manuscripts of Maṣḥafa Henok Nabiy in Ethiopia, and Silvestre de Sacy’s 1800 publication of portions thereof in Latin translation.

This much-repeated narrative of medieval loss and modern rediscovery bears some truth, and it is certainly appealing, not least in its celebration of the pivotal role of modern scholars in recovering long-lost knowledge about antiquity. To tell the story of the afterlives of the early Enochic literature solely in terms of 1 Enoch’s status in Western Christendom, however, misses much. Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is clear that what we now call “1 Enoch” is not a single book per se as much as a late antique Christian collection of earlier Jewish texts that circulated separately as well—both originally in Aramaic and later in Greek translation. And even if the texts collected in 1 Enoch do not seem to have circulated in full in the Roman Empire for long after the 4th or 5th centuries CE, it remains that the period in which Augustine, Athanasius, et al., impugn their authenticity is also the period from which Greek


6 Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1, 109. His 400-hundred-year count is calculated from its quotation in the chronographical writings of Michael Syrus and George Cedrenus (see below).
manuscripts of some of them are extant and the period in which all of them were translated into Ge'ez and compiled into what we now call “1 Enoch” (i.e., Ḫanshafa Henok Nabiyy) as well the period that seizes the inauguration of their enduring place in the Christian chronographical traditions (i.e., with the 5th-century Alexandrian monks Panodorus and Annanius). Thereafter, excerpts of some of the texts therein (esp. Book of the Watchers) continued to circulate, not just in Greek, but also in Syriac and Armenian. Traditions about Enoch and the fallen angels from the Book of the Watchers and other early Enochic texts continued to develop and spread as well—not just among Christians but also among Jews, Manichees, and Muslims. And just as the texts collected within 1 Enoch represent only a portion of the literary production surrounding Enoch in Second Temple times (e.g., which also includes the Book of the Giants and 2 Enoch), so these Enochic books also circulated elsewhere, and still others continued to be created anew (e.g., Vision of Enoch the Just in 7th/8th c.; Sefer Hekhalot/3 Enoch from between 6th-9th c.).

Perhaps above all, the very notion of Enoch as scribe/author and the appeal to Enoch’s books continued to have a potent place in the literary imagination of Jews, Christians, Muslims, Manichees, and others. In the period prior to the much-lauded modern rediscovery of 1 Enoch, the contention of the survival of books authored and/or transcribed by Enoch was both widespread and creatively productive, evoked to assert an antediluvian literary heritage that spanned secret teachings, ethical precepts, eschatological predictions, and cosmic truths. To understand the reception of 1 Enoch in early modern Europe, then, it might prove useful to have some sense of this legacy from the Middle Ages, looking beyond our familiar narratives of textual loss.

Beyond Ancient Origins, Medieval Loss, and Modern Rediscovery

The authors of the first editions and translations of 1 Enoch in modern European languages framed their labors as the recovery of an ancient Jewish text popular in the age of Jesus but long lost to the West, stressing the value of these and other “Old

---

7 See Reed, Fallen Angels, ch. 6. I.e., from the 4th-century, we have Chester-Beatty/Michigan Biblical Papyrus XII, which attest the Epistle of Enoch in Greek, as well as P.Oxy. 2069, a tiny Greek papyrus fragment with portions of the Book of the Dreams in Greek (frg. 1-2; 1 En 85:10–86:2 + 87:1-3) copied together with some verses from the Astronomical Book in Greek (frg. 3; 1 En 77:7–78:1 + 78:8). From the 5th/6th century, we have Codex Panopolitanus, which contains the Greek of the Book of the Watchers. See further Reed, “Collection”; G. Nickelsburg, “Two Enochic manuscripts: Unstudied evidence for Egyptian Christianity,” in Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins Presented to John Strugnell on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday, ed. H. Attridge, J. Collins, & T. Tobin (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990), 251–60; R. Chesnutt, “Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 2069 and the compositional history of 1 Enoch,” JBL 129 (2010): 485-505; Elena Dugan, “Enochic Biography & the Manuscript History of 1 Enoch: The Codex Panopolitanus Book of the Watchers.”

8 On which see further below. Note also the inclusion of 1 Enoch 106:1-18 in Latin translation in the 9th-century British Library Royal Ms. 5 E XII, ff. 79v-80r.

9 Reed, Fallen Angels; Angela Kim Harkins, Kelley Coblentz Bautch, & John C. Endres, eds., The Fallen Angels Traditions: Second Temple Developments and Reception History (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014).
Testament Pseudepigrapha” for illumining the New Testament and Christian Origins. In this, they departed from the denigration of such texts in the very first collection of these materials by Johann Albert Fabricius in 1713, but echoed one prominent popularizing trend in its wake, whereby thinkers such as William Whiston translated portions thereof from Fabricius’ Latin, promoting the possibility that such “pseudepigrapha” might preserve ancient truths and “Authentick Records” that had been suppressed by the Church in the age of Athanasius and thereafter lost to Christendom. What Whiston translated into English in 1728 as “the lost of Book of Enoch” was limited to Syncellus’ excerpts from the Book of the Watchers as reprinted by Fabricius via Scaliger. Yet efforts of this sort nevertheless contributed to curiosity about Enochic books and arguably also informed the framing of the significance of the Ge’ez manuscripts of Maṣḥafa Henok Nabiya/1 Enoch that were brought to Europe forty-five years later by Bruce as well as the scholarly narratives thereafter used to articulate their broader significance.

To be sure, the initial 1800 partial publication of these manuscripts, and even the 1821 translation and 1838 transcription by Richard Lawrence, did not meet with much attention. Even the reception of the latter, however, already resounds with the rhetoric of medieval loss and modern rediscovery. When Lawrence’s translation was reprinted in 1883, for instance, the preface bemoans that it was so overlooked that it “produced an impression in Germany that the work had been suppressed” even despite “giving mankind the theological fossils through which we, in the clearer light of our generation, may study the Evolution of Christianity.” This statement well reflects the significance granted to 1 Enoch when scholars of the New Testament and Christian Origins finally turned their attention to the text, concurrent with the development of new ideas about Apokalyptik and “Apocalyptic Judaism” in the second half of the 19th century. This was the era that saw the production of the major editions, translations, and commentaries commonly associated with the modern recovery of its significance (esp. August Dillman working in German in the early 1850s and Charles in English at the turn of the

century), as further popularized through its printing in anthologies of texts in translation. Not only was 1 Enoch granted a privileged place among “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha” as exemplary of the apocalyptic tradition of Judaism that informed Jesus and Christianity, but its reception-history is held up as exemplary of the medieval loss of that tradition.

Charles’ influential 1893/1912 English translation, for instance, heralds Bruce’s 1773 procurement of Ethiopian manuscripts of Maṣḥafa Henok Nabiy as a moment of discovery that—together with Richard Lawrence’s translation and edition—recovered knowledge of a text that was not just famously quoted in the NT Epistle of Jude but “almost alone represented the advance of the higher theology in Judaism, which culminated in Christianity.” For Charles and many of his contemporaries, this lost-and-found “Book of Enoch” emblematized what was seen as the primary value of “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha” as “practically the only historical memorials of the religious development of Judaism from 200 BC to 100 AD, and particularly the development of that side of Judaism to which historically Christendom in large measure owes its existence”—that is: the Jewish heritage of Christianity that had been abandoned (if not rejected) by Rabbinic Judaism and forgotten (if not suppressed) by the post-Constantinian Church, but newly recovered by modern scholarship.

Charles’ survey of its Nachleben in his 1893/1912 translation is representative in this regard. Considering its impact on Judaism, Patristic literature, and the New Testament (in that order), Charles focuses primarily on what he sees as its extensive influence during the era of Christian Origins. For Judaism, thus, he emphasizes its impact on other “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha” (e.g., Jubilees, Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs, Assumption of Moses, 2 Baruch, 4 Ezra), while positing that “from the 2nd century AD onwards all knowledge of 1 Enoch vanishes from Jewish literature.” In this, he presents the post-70 abandonment of Enochic literature as exemplary of Rabbinism’s rejection of Judaism’s “apocalyptic side,” which he claims to be authentically linked to Israel’s ancient prophets and fulfilled in the teachings of Jesus and the New Testament.

15 Charles, Book of Enoch, i.
16 Charles, Book of Enoch, x.
17 Charles, Book of Enoch, lxx-ciii.
18 Charles, Book of Enoch, lxxix. He adds “with the exception of a few references given by [Adolf] Jellinek,” although depicting these as quite marginal to what he presents as a broader defining pattern within Judaism wherein Second-Temple-era apocalypticism becomes suppressed or displaced by Rabbinic legalism. Charles knew 3 Enoch through Jellinek’s partial publication in Bet ha-Midrasch: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der jüdischen Literatur (6 vols.; Leipzig, 1853-1877), 5.170-90 [henceforth BHM]. Charles concluded, however, that it is dependent instead on 2 Enoch (Book of Enoch, lxxxi). For a review of relevant scholarly discussion and a reassessment see A. Y. Reed, “From Asael and Šemihazah to Uzzah, Azzah, and Azael: 3 Enoch 5 (§§7–8) and the Jewish Reception-History of 1 Enoch,” JSQ 8 (2001): 1–32.
Just as his treatment of Jewish references is framed in supersessionist terms, so his treatment of Patristic references resonates with a Protestant privileging of “origins” that casts the period after Constantine—and the Middle Ages in particular—as the age in which the Church lost, suppressed, or corrupted ancient truths. Charles claims, for instance, that after the 4th century, “the book fails to secure a single favorable notice,” and he interprets the discussions of Enochic writings by Augustine and in the Apostolic Constitutions as attesting “a ban” that caused the book to "gradually pass out of circulation and knowledge in the Western Church," such that with the exception of the excerpts preserved via George Syncellus "it was lost to the Western Christendom until the present century." For Charles, moreover, the history of loss and rediscovery of 1 Enoch is not just a tale about one text: it serves to point to the importance of the study of “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha,” Jewish apocalyptic literature, and Second Temple Judaism more broadly, as predicated on the potential to recover the ancient forms of Judaism from which Jesus and Christianity emerged from their purported loss to both Judaism and Christianity in the Middle Ages. Nor was he alone: as Jonas Greenfield and Michael Stone note, the publication of 1 Enoch was “a major factor in arousing interest in the Jewish background against which Christianity arose.”

This framing of the significance of 1 Enoch has remained influential, both within and beyond the specialist study of “pseudepigrapha.” When Lawlor collected further references in his 1897 article on “Early Citations from the Book of Enoch” and his 1904 follow-up focusing on Egypt, he fit them into the same narrative of medieval loss and modern rediscovery. And so too even in more recent surveys, such as those of Nickelsburg and James VanderKam, which adduce further Greek and Latin references that serve to undercut any notion of a formal “ban” and attenuate the implication of a total suppression of the text, but nevertheless continue to use this same framework, telling the story of the Nachleben of 1 Enoch as a story with three acts: [1] its popularity among pre-Rabbinic Jews and early Christians, [2] its loss to the Judaism and Christianity of the Middle Ages, and [3] its rediscovery in modern times.

This tripartite narrative is as familiar as it is tantalizing. But to what degree does it fit our data, and what might it hide or elide? For scholars of antiquity trained to treat medieval manuscript and other materials mainly as sites for the excavation of “origins,” it might seem natural to frame the Middle Ages in terms of what was not known then

---

19 Especially given the influential character of his work, it is important to note that Charles’ judgement of post-70/Rabbinic Judaism is far from tacit—and bears directly on his negative assessment of present-day Jews and Judaism. For instance, he ends his preface to his 1912 translation by expressing his “deep regret that Jewish scholars are still so backward in recognizing the value of this literature for their own history,” stressing his view that “Apocalyptic is the true child of prophecy and became its true representative to the Jews from the unhappy moment that the Law won an absolute autocracy in Judaism” and bemoaning that “Orthodox Judaism… still champions the one-sided Judaism, which came into being after the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, a Judaism lopped in the main of its spiritual and prophetic side and given over all but wholly to a legalistic conception of religion… a barren faith [which] lost its leadership in the spiritual things of the world” (Book of Enoch, vi).

20 Charles, Book of Enoch, xci.


that is now accessible to us—and hence to tell the medieval history of Enochic literature narrowly in terms of the lack of evidence for the circulation of the full forms of *1 Enoch* (i.e., which contains our oldest known Enochic writings). Among the benefits of focusing on early modernity, by contrast, is a different perspective and purview, which takes the Middle Ages seriously on its own terms. When we ask how medieval thinkers would have known, perceived, and imagined Enochic literature, we get a different picture, whereby—as Ariel Hessayon has shown—“far from being neglected, Enoch and the books under his name had preoccupied monks, chroniclers, rabbis, Kabbalists, Academicians, magicians, Catholic theologians, Protestant divines, Orientalists, sectarians, and poets alike” long prior to Bruce.23

Hessayon notes some key moments in the Middle Ages in his brilliant article on “Og King of Bashan, Enoch, and the Books of Enoch” in the 2006 volume on *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England*. In what follows, I would like to fill in this picture, drawing especially on new insights from specialist scholarship on “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.” In the decades since the publication of the Aramaic Enoch fragments found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, and especially recently, what has emerged is a new sense of the multiplicity in the Enochic literary tradition in all of its stages. Just as the Second Temple period sees the production of numerous Enochic writings and many references to Enoch’s books—both real and imagined!—so this multiplicity sets the stage for the multiple afterlives and trajectories of influence of Enochic texts and traditions, not limited to the telos of *1 Enoch* and the thin line that leads to Western Christendom.

A sense of this multiplicity emerges already in J. T. Milik’s 1978 editio princeps of the Aramaic Enoch fragments, which takes the title *Books of Enoch* in contrast to Charles’ *Book of Enoch*. The Aramaic Enoch fragments confirmed that what scholars now call “*1 Enoch*” is a collection of originally-distinct documents, evincing the original Aramaic of portions of four of them (i.e., the *Book of the Watchers*, *Astronomical Book*, *Book of Dreams*, *Epistle of Enoch*) and establishing the very early date of two (i.e., *Astronomical Book* and *Book of the Watchers*; ca. 3rd c. BCE).24 But especially by virtue of the discovery of fragments of another Enochic text there too—the *Book of the Giants*—this publication also opened up the question of the reception-history beyond the one trajectory traced by Charles et al: not only is the *Book of the Giants* absent from *1 Enoch*, but it is related to much later Manichaean sources and medieval Jewish midrashim.25 Accordingly, rather than focusing only on *1 Enoch* and its fate among Church Fathers in the Roman Empire, Milik’s edition contextualizes the

---


Aramaic Enoch fragments also in relation to other “books of Enoch” (e.g., 2 Enoch, 3 Enoch/Sefer Hekhalot) and points to their varied trajectories—including among Samaritans, Manichees, Bogomils, and medieval Jewish midrash, magic, and mysticism. In turn, his edition has served to inspire the collection of further references, shaped by a newly expansive sense of the Enochic literary tradition as likely spanning other premodern books still unknown to us.

In the wake of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Michael E. Stone and other scholars of “pseudepigrapha” were also turning their attention to the medieval cultures that shaped the translations in which such texts are commonly found—not just using Armenian, Slavonic, Ethiopic, etc., manuscripts to reconstruct ancient Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic Vorlagen, but also taking seriously their evidence for the transmission and transformation of Second Temple texts and traditions outside of Western Christendom. In the process, their research has served to expose the Eurocentrism of older scholarly narratives about “pseudepigrapha” such as that of Charles, wherein the only story of reception that matters is the one which leads from the Roman Empire to modern Europe. For this too, 1 Enoch has been cited as exemplary. Its late antique and medieval reception, after all, might look like a story of “loss” when seen from the perspective of Europe. But seen from the perspective of Ethiopia, Late Antiquity is actually the era in which 1 Enoch took form as an anthological and translational endeavor, to be copied, read, and studied with a sense of scriptural authority in the Middle Ages and beyond.

Other Enochic books, moreover, follow much the same pattern. For instance, 2 Enoch was likely composed in Greek in Egypt around the 1st century CE, but Late Antiquity is the era that sees its translation into Coptic, as attested in 8th- or 9th-century MSS, and possibly also its influence upon Hekhalot and other Jewish traditions. And its medieval afterlives become even richer in Slavonic, as Florentina Badalanova Gellar has shown with respect both to its transmission and the wealth of related folklore. Within Armenia, the reception of Enochic literature was shaped by 1 Enoch to a limited degree, by virtue of the excerpts of the Book of the Watchers circulating in

---


27 Greenfield & Stone, e.g., stress that “diverse Enochic corpora were current in 1st century CE Palestine, some containing the Similitudes and others containing the Book of the Giants and still others containing material known to us only from random quotations”; “The Enochic Pentateuch and the Date of the Similitudes,” HTR 70 (1977): 51–65 at 63. On imagined books see now Mroczek, Literary Imagination.


30 Esp. Orlov, Enoch-Metatron Tradition.

the Christian chronographical tradition and their influence there, especially from around the 13th century. In Armenia, however, the lived sense of an Enochic literary heritage was shaped no less by quotations to non-extant or non-existent writings of Enoch, such as in the Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs, and by the Vision of Enoch the Just, which may have originated as a Greek apocalypse from the 7th/8th century CE but which survives only in medieval Armenian forms. That other Enochic books might have also circulated there is suggested by inclusion of a reference to what seems to be yet another Enochic book in the canon list of Mxit’ar of Aryivank.

In what follows, I would like to fill in more of what we know of Enochic literature—both real and imagined—in the Middle Ages by drawing on my work with John C. Reeves collecting references to Enoch and his books in the first millennium CE. Further to experiment in relativizing the familiar narratives told by Charles and others, I focus in particular on Jewish references to Enoch and his books, as well as their resonances with related Islamic and Syriac Christian materials, before returning to the question of how best to understand the patterns in the much-discussed Greek and Latin data from the Roman Empire and Western Christendom.

Reimaging Enoch’s Books in Medieval Judaism and Islam

For Charles and others, as noted above, the lack of any evidence for post-70 Jewish transmission of 1 Enoch was deemed to be exemplary of the Rabbinic rejection of Enochic and other apocalyptic traditions. When one considers only pre-Talmudic traditions, the data might seem to bear out this hypothesis. Our literary evidence for Judaism in Late Antiquity is largely limited to the classical Rabbinic literature, and the treatment of Enoch therein is notable in undermining all of the features on which

---

33 Reed, “Enoch in Armenia.”
36 I.e., the first part of which has been published as Reeves & Reed, Enoch.
37 By “classical Rabbinic literature,” I here mean the Mishnah, Tosefta, Palestinian Talmud, Babylonian Talmud, and midrashic collections compiled between the Mishnah (ca. 200 CE) and the Babylonian Talmud (ca. 500/600 CE).
the authorizing of early Enochic literature pivots: Enoch’s righteousness is impugned, he is stressed to have actually died rather than ascended to heaven, and even the notion of fallen angels before the Flood, which is closely associated with the Enochic Book of the Watchers and common across pre-70 Jewish writings, is rejected in favor of euhemeristic interpretations of the “sons of God” of Genesis 6:1-4.38

When we look to the Middle Ages, however, a different picture emerges. In fact, the early medieval era that is typically treated as the loss of Enochic literature, on the basis of Christian data in Greek and Latin, is precisely the period in which we see a resurgence of interest in Enoch within Judaism—including the production of new Enochic writings and revival of older Enochic traditions well as a new proliferation of references to Enoch’s book(s).39 Already in the Babylonian Talmud (ca. 600 CE), one finds mention of the names of two Watchers described in the Book of the Watchers (esp. 1 Enoch 6-16), Shem hazai and Azael (b.Niddah 61a; b.Yoma 67b), and these names arise also within contemporaneous Aramaic magical bowls. In medieval midrashim, moreover, we find renewed interest in Enoch as well as the resurfacing of Second Temple motifs known from early Enochic literature but absent from the classical Rabbinic literature within medieval midrashim (e.g., fallen angels in Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer; parallels to the Qumran Book of the Giants in Aggadat Bereshit, Chronicle of Yerahmeel, Bereshit Rabbati, etc.).40

Most famous is the case of 3 Enoch/Sefer Hekhalot, a Hebrew work that—as Klaus Hermann has shown—belongs “to the late phase of Hekhalot texts in Late Antiquity, reflecting the Byzantine cultural context of the 6th to 9th centuries.”41 This text is best known among scholars of “pseudepigrapha” for its depiction of Enoch’s heavenly ascent and his angelification into Metatron. Although its treatment of heavenly ascent is closer to other Hekhalot texts than to the model of 1 Enoch 14,42 the possibility of some connection is raised by its treatment of fallen angels, which seems to reflect knowledge of the excerpts of 1 Enoch circulating in the Byzantine Christian chronographical tradition.43

3 Enoch/Sefer Hekhalot clearly attests the medieval return of Jewish interest in Enoch and its possible connection to Jewish “back-borrowing” of Christian-transmitted Enochic and other “pseudepigrapha.” But was itself intended as an “Enochic book”? Despite the influence of Hugo Odeberg’s 1928 labeling of text as “3 Enoch,” his argument for interpreting the work as a “pseudepigrapha” like 1 Enoch and 2 Enoch

---

38 Himmelfarb, “Report on Enoch”; Reed, Fallen Angels, ch. 5.
39 This phenomenon has been largely missed by modern scholars, by virtue of the longstanding tendency to focus on the significance of 1 Enoch for Christian Origins and to limit the consideration of the Jewish afterlives of Enochic texts and traditions to pre-Christian and early Rabbinic materials.
40 See further Reed, Fallen Angels, ch. 7.
41 K. Herman, “Jewish Mysticism in Byzantium,” in Hekhalot Literature in Context, ed. R.S. Boustan, M. Himmelfarb, & P. Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 85–116. Notably, interest in 3 Enoch/Sefer Hekhalot—including redactional and anthological activity surrounding it—continues richly in the Middle Ages. It is attested in a 11th/12th-century Genizah fragment (T.-S. K 21.95.L), and it is among the works of pre-Kabbalistic Jewish mysticism collected by the Haside Ashkenaz in medieval Germany.
43 So Reed, “From Asael”; Herman, Jewish Mysticism.”
was highly problematic and misleading.\textsuperscript{44} In addition, it should be noted that Enoch-Metatron is there a scribe but not an author \textit{per se}, and our evidence for this work’s premodern reception suggests that it was perceived and received, not as a “book of Enoch,” but rather as part of the Hekhalot literature.\textsuperscript{45}

Nevertheless, just as the Middle Ages sees a return of Jewish interest in Enoch and the fallen angels, so it is also marked by the renewal of curiosity and claims about Enoch’s books within Jewish literature. References to books of Enoch appear in a number of post-Talmudic Jewish sources, beginning with early medieval Jewish magical writings closely aligned with Hekhalot literature (e.g., \textit{Havdala de-Rabbi Aqiva}; some MSS of \textit{Sefer Ha-Razim}) and extending later into the \textit{Zohar} and other works of Kabbalah as well as medieval midrashim (e.g., \textit{Chronicle of Yeramheel}).

Within the \textit{Havdala de-Rabbi Aqiva},\textsuperscript{46} for instance, one finds the following quotation:

\begin{quote}
I quote for you a secret [רז] which has been transmitted by the (authority of the) great God who kept him safe from every affliction: “This is the secret [ורז], this is the secret, the most awesome of secrets. Do not communicate this most awesome of secrets to the uninitiated, nor should it be recited publicly. A wise man may transmit it to another wise man [הсты הלמס תמר חדית]; cf. \textit{m. Hag.} 2.1]. I, Enoch b. Yared, wrote it down [בגא חט ערח ודמס in the seventieth year of my youth. Seventy-seven angels came against me. I bound them with their own implements and sealed them with their own weapons. I then turned and discerned the secret of the Name, etc.”\textsuperscript{47}
\end{quote}

Should we understand this quotation as having its source in an actual Enochic book that is now unknown to us? Or was the quotation a literary trope or invention? And might the emphasis on its secrecy, in particular, mark the book as not known, read, and circulating as much as adduced and imagined?

The latter seems to be the case in the \textit{Zohar} (1295 CE), wherein one finds a number of references to the “Book of Enoch” that seem to function primarily to appeal to the trope of primordial books imagined to have existed and/or once been known and now lost and/or still circulated in secret in a manner presumed to be inaccessible to the reader. To be sure, such tropes can coexist with knowledge of actual Enochic writings.

\textsuperscript{44} See esp. Gershom Scholem’s review of Odeberg’s \textit{3 Enoch} in \textit{Orientalistische Literaturzeitung} 33 (1930): col. 193-97, and further discussion in Reed, “Categorization.”

\textsuperscript{45} E.g., the various titles under which it circulates, prior to Hugo Odeberg’s 1928 translation, are not centered on Enoch, but rather all on Hekhalot. E.g., as in the comment in a 13\textsuperscript{th}-century anthological Ms. British Library Hebr. 746 fol. 108b-109a: “We have received a tradition that Metatron, the Prince of the Presence whose name is like the Name of his Lord, is Enoch b. Yared; thus do they say… in the Hekhalot”; G. Scholem, \textit{R’eshit ha-Qabbalah} (1150-1250) (Jerusalem, 1948), 252-53. See further Reed, “Categorization,” both for the contents of the MSS of this work and for an assessment of what thus proves misleading about Odeberg’s label.


\textsuperscript{47} Trans. Reeves from Scholem, ed., “Havdala de-Rabbi Aqiva,” 171-72:
In the case of *Jubilees* (2nd c. BCE), for instance, mention is made of Enoch’s books in a manner that both demonstrates familiarity with known books like the *Book of the Watchers*, while also appealing to these writings to construct a notion of the pre-Sinaitic past as a heritage of books from Enoch (there: the first man to write) in a line of authors and tradents linking Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Levi.\(^{48}\) The case of the *Zohar*, however, may be more akin to the quotations found in the *Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs* (ca. 2nd c. CE), wherein one finds much the same sense of a pre-Sinaitic literary heritage as informing the depiction of Jacob’s sons as reading and quoting from Enoch’s writings (*T.Dan* 5:6; *T.Simeon* 5:4; *T.Jehuda* 14:1, 16:1; *T.Naphtali* 4:1; *T.Benjamin* 9:1), albeit in a manner that seems to have been a literary invention aimed primarily at establishing how ideas from the Mosaic Torah could have been known in the pre-Sinaitic past.

In the *Zohar*, one finds quotations from the “Book of Enoch” with no counterparts in known Enochic literature, and these are framed in terms of establishing a particular vision of the pre-Sinaitic literary tradition that corresponds with the work’s own concerns. In one passage there, for instance, it is stated that “Jacob possessed the *Book of Adam*, the *Book of Enoch*, and the *Sefer Yetzirah* of Abraham our ancestor” (*Zohar* 2.275b, ed. Vilna).\(^{49}\) At first sight, the reference to *Sefer Yetzirah* (ca. 6th/7th c.) might seem to support the presumption that some “Book of Enoch” might have been known as well. As in the *Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs*, however, quotations therefrom seem mainly aimed at claiming an ancient precedent for known writings associated with later figures. Some quotations pertain to the same types of letter-mysticism best known from *Sefer Yetzirah*,\(^{50}\) for instance, while others use the appeal to the “Book of Enoch” to provide an ancient precedent for a biblical source (e.g., *Zohar* 3.307b: “I find in the *Book of Enoch* [אשכחנא בספרא דחנוך]: ‘Lift, O gates’ [Ps 24:7, 9]) or Rabbinic teaching (e.g., *Zohar* 3.307a: “R. Hamnuna the elder said: everyone who concentrates on this unification every day has rejoicing appointed for them in the upper world … and thus it is in the *Book of Enoch*”).\(^{51}\) That any such book was imagined to have been widely known in the past, but not known in the reader’s present, also seems presumed in the following statement attributed to R. Shimon ben Yohai:

---


\(^{49}\) For Enoch as receiving a book from angels upon his entry into Eden, e.g., see *Zohar* 2.277a-b, 3.10b (ed. Vilna), and for Enoch in relation to the line of transmission of an angelic book from Adam to Abraham see, e.g., *Zohar* 1.55b (ed. Vilna): “God signaled to Raphael, and he returned to him (i.e., Adam) that book, and Adam studied it. He bequeathed it to his son Seth, and thus it transpired for all those of his line until it reached Abraham, who gained knowledge from it so as to look upon the glory of his Lord, as has been said. So too Enoch was given a book, and he understood from it about the supernal glory.”

\(^{50}\) E.g., *Zohar* 2.180b, 2.217a, 3.236b (ed. Vilna).

\(^{51}\) Note also the appeal to it to offer alternate readings of biblical sources, e.g., *Zohar*, Haqadmah, 1.13a: “And this is the meaning of (the verse) ‘let the waters swarm’ (Gen 1:20) in the *Book of Enoch*: Let the water of the holy seed be imprinted with the mark of the ‘living soul,’ and this mark is the letter yod’; *Zohar* 2.103b-104a: “And in the *Book of Enoch* (the verse) ‘and she ceased bearing’ (Gen 29:35) is not said of Leah, but instead it is said of Rachel”; cf. *Zohar* 2.192b in relation to Ezek 23:20). See Reeves & Reed, *Enoch*, 321-25, for relevant texts with discussion.
R. Shim'on said: If I had been in the world when the Holy One, blessed be He, placed the Book of Enoch and the Book of Adam in the world [אילו הוינא שכיח בעלמא כד יהיב קב''ה ספרא דחנוך בעלמא וספרא דאדם אתקיפנא], I would have tried to prevent their dissemination among humankind because all the wise ones were not careful in studying them, and they went astray by strange words so as to depart from the authority of the Most High to another power [דלא ישתכחון ביני אנשא בגין דלא חיישו כל חכמאן לא따スタッא בהו Acresבוט מהלך ולבא אפקא מרשו עלאה לרשו אחרא]. Now, however, the wise of the world understand these things and keep them secret [והשתא הא חכימי עלמא ידעין מלין וסתמין]… (Zohar 1.72b, ed. Vilna; trans. Reeves)

There may be reason, however, to resist any simple contrast between references to real and imagined Enochic writings. At times, for instance, second-hand or invented traditions about Enoch’s writings may have themselves been productive, inspiring the association of known books with Enoch so as to grant them the luster of antiquity and esoteric authority. In some Yemenite manuscripts of Sefer Ha-Razim,⁵² for instance, this Hebrew magical compendium is framed as the record of revelations to Enoch:⁵³

This is the Book of Secrets which was revealed to Enoch b. Yared b. Mahalalel b. Qaynan b. Enosh b. Seth b. Adam [זה ספר ההז'ים שנגלה לחנוך בן ירד בן מהללאל בן קינן בן אנוש בן שת בן אדם] in the three hundredth year of the life of Yared [שלש מאות שנה לחיי ירד]. (He was told): “And you will write it very clearly on a sapphire stone! [ותכתבהו באבן ספיר באר היטיב]”⁵⁴

Although most of the witnesses to Sefer ha-Razim identify its human recipient as Noah (cf. Asaf ha-Rofe), it is notable that a 10th-century Genizah fragment may presume an Enochic association as well, inasmuch as it also places the revelation in Yared’s three-hundredth year (i.e., prior to the birth of Noah).⁵⁵

Whether or not the association has early roots, the appeal to Enoch in these two manuscripts reflects an anthological impulse extending from Enoch’s longstanding association with scribalism and instantiating the close connection between Hekhalot and “magical” traditions in particular, but also perhaps reflecting a notion of a primordial literary tradition akin to what is articulated in the Zohar. Not only is Sefer ha-Razim typically found in manuscripts that anthropologize “magical” as well as Hekhalot materials (in some cases including 3 Enoch), but these particular manuscripts both

---

⁵² I.e., MS New York Public Library, Jewish Items 40 fol. 5a, line 14 (18th c.) and MS Tel Aviv Gross 42 fol. 153a lines 20-23 (19th c.). On these MSS (designated as NP 40 and TA 42 respectively) see further Bill Rebiger & Peter Schäfer, eds., Sefer ha-Razim I und II: Das Buch der Geheimnisse I und II (TSAJ 125, 132; 2 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 1:25, 27. These are among the 23 MSS there consulted, the earliest of which date from the 14th century. There are ample Genizah fragments dating to the 10th-12th centuries as well (e.g., 47 of which are printed in Rebiger & Schäfer, 1:121-201*).

⁵³ Yuval Harari places its provenance “probably in Egypt or Palestine, during the second third of the first millennium” (i.e., between 4th and 7th centuries CE); “Sefer Ha-Razim,” in Encyclopedia of Ancient History, 6112-13.

⁵⁴ Reeves & Reed, Enoch, 84, translating MS TA 42 (fol. 153a lines 20-23) as printed in the synoptic edition of Rebiger & Schäfer, eds., Sefer ha-Razim, 1:4* (§§2-3).

⁵⁵ I.e., MS Cambridge University Library T.-S. A45.28 fol. 1a lines 1-3; see G3 in Rebiger & Schäfer, eds., Sefer ha-Razim, 1:124*. 

---
feature two versions of *Sefer ha-Razim* copied consecutively, the first of which is attributed to Adam and the second of which to Enoch.56

Also intriguing in this regard is Enoch’s association with a book about Eden by Moses de León (ca. 1240–1305; fl. Spain), who claims that “I saw… esoteric books of wisdom (containing) the supernal wisdom of the ancients which recount what they said was in the *Book of Enoch,*” describing cosmological, ouranological, and angelological knowledge therein, especially pertaining to the firmament and the Garden of Eden.57 Similarly, Menahem ben Benjamin Recanati (1223–1290; fl. Italy) associates a “Book of Enoch” with knowledge about Eden, albeit without any claim to have seen it.58

Just as this association with Eden proves intriguing in light of Second Temple traditions linking Enoch and Eden (e.g., *Book of the Watchers; Jubilees*),59 so other medieval Jewish scribes and authors echo his ancient association with astronomy (e.g., *Astronomical Book; Pseudo-Eupolemus*).60 For instance, a medieval Hebrew manuscript published by Moses Gaster, which he dates no later than the 14th century, claims that

56 See, e.g., Zohar 1.37b (ed. Vilna) on the parallel of Adam and Enoch as recipients of books: “R. Abba said: They brought down to Adam the protoplast (from heaven) an actual book, and using it he became knowledgeable about supernal wisdom. That book later reached the ‘sons of God’ (Gen 6:1?)—the wise of their generation—and whoever gained the privilege to peruse it learned from it supernal wisdom… At the time when Adam was expelled from the Garden of Eden, he clutched this book, but when he exited from the Garden, it flew away from him…. We are thus taught that Enoch also had a book, and that book was from the (same) place as the ‘book of the generations of Adam’ (Gen 5:1). Truly this is a secret of wisdom, for he was removed from the earth… From this (man) was transmitted the book that is called the *Book of Enoch.*”

57 R. Moses de León, *Sefer Mishkan ha-'Edut* in Jellinek, *BHM* 2:xxxi. After information about the firmament and its cosmological and angelological functions he goes on to state that “…they have said in the *Book of Enoch,* the one known to the ancient sages because it recounts all the features of the Garden… that there are three walls in the Garden, arranged concentrically… Enoch stated that he saw them, but did not learn who they were or what they signified… ….And this esoteric mystery was revealed in his book for the sages: before Adam the protoplast had been introduced there, the Garden was not empty…. Watch and wait for the truth of the matter, for it is all to be found in the *Book (of Enoch)*, and therein are marvelous things” (*BHM* 2:xxxi). For additional relevant texts, translation, and discussion see Reeves & Reed, *Enoch, 317-21.

58 Menahem b. Benjamin Recanati, *Perush Bereshit* in Jellinek, *BHM* 3:197-98; Jellinek, “Hebräische Quellen für das Buch Henoch,” *ZDMG* 7 (1853): 249: “I have seen where some of the recent kabbalistic sages have written that they have found this esoteric topic [i.e., Garden of Eden] written about together with a number of other marvelous mysteries in the *Book of Enoch,* the son of Yared, the one whom God took (to heaven). Our Sages of blessed memory have previously mentioned that book in the Zohar.”


60 See references and citations in A. Y. Reed, “Writing Jewish Astronomy in the Early Hellenistic Age: The Enochic Astronomical Book as Aramaic Wisdom and Archival Impulse,” *DSO* 24 (2017): 1–37; Reed, “2 Enoch and the trajectories of Jewish cosmology: From Mesopotamian astronomy to Greco-Egyptian philosophy,” *JJTP* 2 (2014): 1–24. Notably, this trope was also known to late antique Christians. Eusebius, e.g., quotes Pseudo-Eupolemus in this regard (*Praep. Ev.* 9.17.8-9) and also preserves a tradition from Anatolius that “the first month according to the Jews occurs around the (vernal) equinox is also proven by the teachings in what is ascribed to Enoch” (*Hist.ecl.* 7.32.19). Syncellus’ Enochic quotations, moreover, include references to “the archangel Uriel, who controls the stars, revealed to Enoch what a month is, and a season, and a year, as it is recorded in the book of this same Enoch.”
This is the book which the Chaldeans used in their investigations and speculations about divine gnosis [זָה הַחַדְלִי תְּכֵנָּהוּ וְעָנִיָּהוּ וְעָנִיָּהוּ] … they wrote down these books and produced many writings, but those who arose afterwards did not know how to learn (from) these books until (the angel) Raziel came and revealed the secrets, and after him the first Enoch (revealed them) [ותנו חכמה叟 הפסיר מזראיאו].

Since his time this science has spread throughout the entire world [ומאותה שעה נתפזרה].

The notion of Enoch as an author of books of astrology is also accepted by Abraham ibn Ezra (1089–c.1167; fl. Spain), who makes the following comment on Gen 5:29 (i.e., Lamech’s naming of Noah):

Perhaps Enoch discerned via prophecy that Noah would revitalize the world and that it would be through his agency that the curse would be removed from the ground [אולי חנוך ראה בדרך נבואה כי נח החיה העולם ועל ידו סרה הקללה מהאדמה] … or he saw this in his constellation/horoscope, for he [i.e., Enoch] authored many books on many types of learning [או ראה זה במזלו כי ספרים רבים בחכמות רבות], and they remain extant today [והם היום נמצאים].

By the 12th century, the existence of Enochic books was imagined broadly enough—even outside of mystical circles—that the Chronicle of Yerahmeel glosses Genesis 5:22 (“And Enoch walked with God”) with the statement that “Many books were written by him.”

To consider what might have known of Enoch’s books in medieval Judaism, then, is not just to ask whether earlier “pseudepigrapha” were transmitted; it is rather also to ask what Jews may have read, heard, and wrote about books associated with Enoch, what they imagined Enoch could have known and written, and what some scribes thus attributed to him. For our purposes, it suffices to note that medieval Jewish readers would have had many reasons to accept the existence of Enochic book(s)—much like their pre-70/Second-Temple-era counterparts but unlike their Rabbinic predecessors in Late Antiquity. They differ from their Second-Temple-era counterparts in the assumption that such books were secret and thus not widely known or accessible. Nevertheless, in a striking departure from the denial of Enoch’s exemplarity in Rabbinic literature of Late Antiquity, medieval Jewish materials mark a return to an earlier Jewish interest in the figure of Enoch, his escape from death, his association with angels, his knowledge of heavenly secrets, and the story of the fallen angels in early works attributed to him (e.g., Book of the Watchers; Book of Giants). As in Second Temple writings like Jubilees and early Christian writings extending their concerns (e.g., Testaments of the 12 Patriarchs), such interest is coupled with an interest in Enoch’s books, as expressed in part through explicit claims to quote them. And, as at the dawn of the Enochic literary tradition, the scribal exemplarity of Enoch is tied to

63 Chronicles of Yerahmeel §26 (Bodleian Ms. 2797 Heb. d. 11 fol. 22b), which is preserved in Eleazar ben Asher Ha-Levi’s collection Sefer ha-Zikronot (ca. 1325); Eli Yassif, ed., Sefer ha-Zikronot hu’ Divrey ha-Yamim le-Yeraḥme’el (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2001), 119.
the use of this figure to frame received materials as antediluvian wisdom and to provide
an ancient precedent for Jewish scientific interest in astronomy/astrology.

As noted above, this renewed interest in Enoch and his books forms part of a
broader pattern within Jewish literature, whereby Second Temple texts and traditions
rejected or otherwise not attested in the Rabbinic literature of Late Antiquity reemerge
 anew in post-Talmudic sources.64 This phenomenon remains much noted but still
understudied. Nevertheless, it certainly undermines the common scholarly narrative,
popularized in part by Charles and other early scholars of 1 Enoch, whereby the
apocalyptic and related creativity of Second Temple Judaism is purported to have been
totally abandoned in post-70 Judaism and bears fruit only within Christianity.65 In some
cases, what we see in these medieval Jewish materials may be Second Temple traditions
that developed in the interim outside of Rabbinic circles and/or within the Jewish
magical tradition. Other cases may reflect instances of “back-borrowing” whereby
learned Jews in the Middle Ages reencountered pre-Christian Jewish texts and
traditions that had been transmitted by Christians or others (e.g., as most famously with
Josephus and the medieval Hebrew Yosippon). It is certainly intriguing that the same
sources in which other evidence of such “back-borrowing” clusters, such as the
Chronicle of Yerahmeel (which knew Yosippon and perhaps Pseudo-Philo LAB) and the
writings of R. Moshe ha-Darshan (which include intriguing parallels with Jubilees and
other “pseudopigrapha”),66 traditions about Enoch are prominent as well. It is in this
Hebrew Chronicle and in R. Moshe ha-Darshan’s Bereshit Rabbati (11th c.), for
instance, that we find not just motifs that echo earlier Enochic texts and traditions but
also extensive material paralleling the Enochic Book of the Giants (ca. 2nd c. BCE) now
known in Aramaic from the Dead Sea Scrolls.67

Whatever the precise causes for this striking reversal of late antique Rabbinic
disinterest in Enoch, it is notable that medieval Jewish references to his books also
resonate within the broader Byzantine and Islamicate cultural settings in which Jews

---

64 Reed, “From Shemihazah”; Reed, Fallen Angels, ch. 7; Martha Himmelfarb, “R. Moses the Preacher
of Jubilees in Medieval Hebrew Literature,” in Tracing the Threads, ed. Reeves, 115-41; David J.
Halperin and Gordon D. Newby, “Two Castrated Bulls: A Study in the Haggadah of Ka'b al-
Ajhrâr,” JAOS 102 (1982): 631-38; J. C. Reeves, "Exploring the Afterlife of Jewish Pseudepigrapha in
Adelman, The Return of the Repressed: Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha (JSJSupp 140;
Leiden: Brill, 2009); Yishai Kiel, “Reimagining Enoch in Sasanian Babylonia in Light of Zoroastrian

65 This problem was stressed already by Gershom G. Scholem; see e.g. Major Trends in Jewish
Mysticism (2d ed.; New York: Schocken, 1961 [1941]), 43, there bemoaning “the old prejudice according
to which all the productive energies of early apocalyptic were absorbed only into Christianity.”

66 When discussing parallels between Jubilees and Midrash Aggada, a collection drawn from R. Moshe
ha-Darshan’s commentaries, Himmelfarb has argued that the former may have become accessible to
learned Jews like R. Moshe by virtue of their preservation in Christian chronographical source-
collections, akin to those used by Syncellus. Citing the case of Yosippon, Himmelfarb further suggests
that Jews in Byzantine Italy may have played a mediatory role, translating traditions of interest into

67 With precedents in Aggadat Bereshit and parallels in Simeon ha-Darshan’s Yalqut Shimoni (13th c.);
see further Reed, Fallen Angels, ch. 7. Another version, with slight variations, is among Raymundi
Martini’s quotations of Bereshit Rabbati in his Pugio Fidei (ca. 1280).
lived, forming part of a shared sense of the antediluvian past as an era of primordial scribes, ancient wisdom, and now-secret scrolls. In the case of those medieval Jewish writings created and/or circulating in Christian settings, claims about Enoch and his books may have also dovetailed and drawn upon the continued knowledge of pre-Christian Enochic literature within the chronographical tradition in particular; between the 9th and 13th centuries, excerpts of the Book of the Watchers (i.e., 1 Enoch 1-36) were being circulated and discussed in Greek within Byzantium (i.e., by George Syncllus in the 9th c. and Cedrenus in the 11th) but also transmitted eastwards through their translation into other languages (e.g., in Syriac, Michael Syrus in the 12th c. and Bar Hebraeus in the 13th c., as well as in the 13th-century Armenian adaptation of the former).68 In the case of those Jewish magical and mystical writings created and/or circulating under Islamic rule, claims about Enochic books could have further grounded their plausibility in Muslim traditions equating Enoch with both Idrīs (Qur’an 19:56-57; 21:85)69 and Hermes70—both of whom had their own reputations as ancient scribes and authors. In some cases, in fact, what medieval Jews and Muslims may have encountered and cited as writings of Enoch may well be Hermetica.71 It seems likely, in any case, that the traditions about the three figures interpenetrated within Islamic traditions of the Middle Ages in a manner that shaped medieval Jewish ideas about Enoch and his books as well, especially but not only in their astrological/astronomical

---

68 Syncllus 11.19–13.19, 24.10–27.7; Cedrenus 1.19.2–20.2. Syncllus preserves the following excerpts from the Book of the Watchers: 1 Enoch 6.1–9.5, 9.1–10.15, 15.8–16.2, 26.9–25, 26.26–27.7; see further W.A. Adler, Time Immemorial: Archaic History and its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncllus (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1989), 151–57. A brief quotation and paraphrase of material from the Book of the Watchers also came into the Syriac chronographical tradition via the Alexandrian chronographer Annanius (Chronicle of Michael Syrus 1.1, 3–4; Chronicle of Bar Hebraeus §3), from which it traveled into Armenia (on which see above).

69 This equation seems to achieve wide acceptance by the 9th century and may have some root in the interpenetration of Jewish and Muslim traditions about the antediluvian past. In his Ikil, for instance, Hamdani (893-945) credits the 7th-century Yemenite Jewish convert Ka’b al-Ahbar for the tradition that Idris’s “name in the Torah is Enoch” whom God taught “computation and writing/scripture (al-kitāb).” Elsewhere the tradition is tied to Wahb b. Munabbih (d. c. 730?), another Yemenite (possibly also a Jewish convert) associated with the early transmission of biblical/Jewish teachings into Islam. On these figures see Michael Pregill, “İsrā’îliyyāt, Myth, and Pseudepigraphy: Wahb b. Munabbih and the Early Islamic Versions of the Fall of Adam and Eve,” Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam 34 (2008): 215–84. For further examples of medieval Muslim sources equating Enoch with Idrīs see Reeves & Reed, Enoch, 284-96; Philip S. Alexander, “Jewish Tradition in Early Islam: The Case of Enoch/Idrīs,” in G. R. Hawting, et al., eds., Studies in Islamic and Middle Eastern Texts and Traditions in Memory of Norman Calder (JSSSup 12; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 11-29—and for sources that equate the two with a specific emphasis on books and bookishness, see Reeves & Reed, Enoch, 93-104.

70 For some of the relevant sources see Reeves & Reed, Enoch, 270-84, and on the broader context and implications, Kevin van Bladel, The Arabic Hermes: From Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

71 Some sense of interchangeability is suggested, e.g., by the case of Abraham Ibn Ezra’s citations from the otherwise unknown Balances of Enoch (מ扭ו צילוח), which in the early Latin translations of his Sefer ha-Moladot become credited instead to Hermes; see Shlomo Sela, ed., Abraham Ibn Ezra on Nativities and Continuous Horoscopy (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 92-95, 228.
associations (e.g., Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer §8; Midrash Aggadah [ed. Buber], 1:14.29-15.1).

It is striking, moreover, that the medieval Jewish articulation of the esotericism of the book(s) of Enoch—as “secret,” reserved for the wise, and potentially dangerous to others—finds some parallel in the discussion of Enochic literature as exemplary of “apocrypha” within Syriac Christian literature from precisely the era in which Jewish interest in Enoch began to reemerge. Writing in the 4th century, Athanasius famously made the case for the cordoning off some scriptures as “canonical” in part through constructing a contrasting concept of “apocrypha” (lit. hidden things) as spurious and “heretical,” and he cited the case of books attributed Enoch to do so. Writing in Syriac in the 7th/8th-century, however, Jacob of Edessa (d. 708 CE) argues the following:

Now many acted foolishly and spoke nonsensically during the time of that holy saint (i.e., Athanasius), each (doing) as he pleased. They were displaying a large number of different secret books and bringing arguments from them which provided support for the deviance of (their) thought. Among all those secret books which they exhibited was also the secret Book of Enoch…. Due to their attraction toward and attachment to the secret books, some of which were spurious but others of which were authentic, he (Athanasius) forbade and passed sentence on all of them collectively. Among all these (interdicted) books was the Book of Enoch, which is authentic. Athanasius says in one of his epistles, “How can they have a book of Enoch? Literature and writings did not exist prior to the Flood!”…. But recognize well and accept as true, O man, that humanity had developed the technology of wine-making then, and they also used letters and produced a book. The Book of Enoch is quoted during the time of the apostles, for Jude the apostle cited it as a proof-text in his catholic epistle (i.e., Jude 4-5). The Book was in existence before the time of Moses: written narratives quoted by

---

72 E.g., a tradition credited to Abū Ma’shar Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad al-Balkhī (d. 886) in Ibn Abī Ūṣaybiʿa, Kitāb ’Uyūn al-Anbā’ fi tabaqāt al-atībbā’, e.g., holds that Enoch “was the first person to speak about supernal things such as the movements of the stars, and it was from his grandfather Kayōmart, who is (the same figure as) Adam, upon whom be peace, whom he learned the hours of the night and the day,” while in Kitāb al-munāẓarāt, Ibn al-Haytham (d. 1040) similarly notes that “it is said that Idrīs—peace be upon him—is the one who revealed knowledge about the stars and about computation.” In Yaʿqūbī’s Taʾrīkh (9th c.), one finds the claim that the Roman rulers who followed the Ṣābian religion “assert that they have a prophet, such as ’Uránī and ’Abīdīmōn and Hermes, and he is three-times blessed; it is said that he is the prophet Idrīs, and he was the first to write with a pen and to teach the science of the stars (ʿilm al-nujūm).” All three are triangulated by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 935 CE); see Aʾlām al-nubuwwah (ed. Šalāh Šāwī; Teheran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1977), 278.7-14; 280.2-4. Notably, the association of Enoch with astrology occurs also in the Christian chronographical tradition, including in Syriac sources; the Chronicle of Bar Hebraeus (13th c.), e.g., claims that Enoch “discovered knowledge about the zodiac and the courses of the planets…. He also instituted festival-days for the entrance of the sun into each zodiacal sign, for the new moon, and for when each planet entered into its house or its ascension”; Chronicon (ed. Bedjan), 5.10-21.

the Jews declare this clearly, and there are no deceptions in it! (Jacob of Edessa, Epistle 13.15)\textsuperscript{74}

Not only does Jacob of Edessa give a different reading of the meaning of its status as “hidden” (i.e., the literal meaning of \textit{ἀπόκρυφα}), but he argues for the authenticity of the “Book of Enoch” on the basis of “written narratives quoted by the Jews.”\textsuperscript{75}

\textit{Conclusion: Rethinking the Enochic Legacy of the Middle Ages}

What might seem like a period marked by the loss of Enochic and other Second Temple traditions—when seen from the perspective of Western Christendom—is a period of rediscovery of sorts within Judaism as well as a period marked by the emergence of new visions of a shared antediluvian past, spurred especially by the spread of Islam and the Muslim reception and reconceptualization of biblical, Jewish, Hermetic, and other earlier traditions. But what, if anything, might this tell us about the above-noted scholarly narrative about the medieval loss and modern recovery of early Enoch literature? Above, I noted the degree to which this narrative can be misleading in what it suggests about Judaism, both by virtue of importing older supersessionist notions of ancient Jewish religious history and by virtue of fostering neglect or marginalization of the medieval Jewish sources in which we find renewed Jewish interest in Enoch and his books. To this, we might add three points of attenuation in relation to Christianity:

\begin{enumerate}
\item a caution against telling the story of the reception of Enochic and other “pseudepigrapha” mainly as part of a tale about the closing of the biblical canon in Late Antiquity,
\item a push to look beyond the Eurocentrism of early research on “pseudepigrapha” to take seriously Syriac, Armenian, and Ethiopic trajectories as just as important for telling the history of Christianity as Athanasius and Augustine,
\item a reminder that even excerpts and references to Enoch’s books could be culturally generative, especially prior to the wide diffusion of texts enabled by the advent of printing.
\end{enumerate}

Most surveys of the Christian reception of Enochic texts and traditions tend to stop with the negative statements about them by Athanasius and Augustine in the 4th and 5th centuries and/or take for granted that the opinions of a small set of Church Fathers sealed their fate to be lost and forgotten thereafter. This pattern follows a long-standing tendency within Biblical Studies and the study of Second Temple Judaism, whereby the reception-history of “pseudepigrapha” is framed primarily in terms of the making of


\textsuperscript{75} It is unclear what sort of Jewish traditions might be meant by this—i.e., whether ancient Christian-transmitted Jewish materials or those contemporary to Jacob. To the former, it is interesting to note the Syriac Christian preservation of traditions about Enoch via \textit{Jubilees} is attested by \textit{Chronicon ad annum Christi} 1234: “This Enoch was the first to learn letters and (to receive) instruction and (obtain) wisdom. He recorded the signs of the heavens in a book in order to inform humanity about the variations of the seasons and of the years in accordance with the courses (of the heavenly bodies) and in accordance with (the progression of) their months. He announced the days that (completed) the year and established the number of the months. And everything which has happened and (everything) which will come to be he beheld in his dream-vision—indeed, (he beheld) everything that will come upon humanity and their (successive) generations until the Day of Judgment. And he was with the angels of God.” Whatever the source of Jacob’s assessment, however, it is notable that he frames it in terms of what he imagines as the literary heritage by Jews of his own time.
what we now know as “the Bible” in the West. Just as Jude’s quotation of 1 Enoch and Tertullian’s defense of its authenticity are often cited as exemplary of the scriptural fluidity among early Christians (i.e., 1st-3rd c. CE), so the questioning of its authenticity by Athanasius, Augustine, et al. (i.e., 4th-5th c. CE), is often cited to mark the purported end of that fluidity and the closing of the biblical canon at the dawn of the Christianization of the Roman Empire. Accordingly, it might seem natural to presume that the categorization of “Book of Enoch” as “apocrypha,” beginning with Athanasius, would mark the end of the story of its influence in Western Christendom, to which any later references can thus be treated as mere exceptions.

For its Christian afterlife, however, Jacob of Edessa’s position may be no less representative than that of Athanasius. William Adler, for instance, has shown how anxieties about “apocrypha” clustered in the period of canon-formation, after which Christians were often more open to the use of even literature labeled as such.76 Furthermore, even the late antique evidence does not support any notion of a “ban” or suppression per se.77 The warning in the Apostolic Constitutions that “among the ancients too, some have written apocryphal books [βιβλία ἀπόκρυφα] of Moses, Enoch, Adam, Isaiah, David, Elijah, and of the three patriarchs, pernicious and repugnant to the truth,” for instance, functions there to support the work’s own pseudepigraphical claim to apostolic status, as made through an argument against “those books which obtain in our [i.e., apostles’] name but are written by the ungodly” (6.16). And in the case of Augustine, his oft-cited suspicions about Enochic books in the City of God (15.23; 18.38) are explicitly predicated on his acceptance that Enoch did indeed write books known to Jude.78 Even as Augustine’s comments clearly place Enochic “pseudepigrapha” outside the bounds of the biblical canon, they also leave open the space for renewed curiosity or claims about these books even in the Latin West.

Elsewhere, discussion of Enoch and his books remained vital into and beyond the Middle Ages. Indeed, among what emerged from my project with Reeves is the recognition that the data resist reduction to simply tracing the transmission of texts or even their interpretation and extension. Later innovations often take on lives of their own, which continue to resound in surprising ways and to travel across religious boundaries, often shaped by a shared sense of the antediluvian past. We may see something similar in the Middle Ages with respect to Enochic books. The idea of Enoch as author may be shaped by Second Temple Jewish texts like the Enochic Book of the Watchers and other documents that we know from 1 Enoch, but centuries upon centuries of quotations and references to books of Enoch—from Jubilees in the 2nd century BCE to Jude in the 1st century CE to Tertullian in the 3rd century CE to Augustine in the 5th century CE—seem to have had an accruing effect on the perception

77 On the scholarly trope of “apocrypha” and “pseudepigrapha” as suppressed by Athanasius, et al., and its modern genealogy in relation to anxieties about censorship distinctive to modern print culture, see Reed, “Afterlives.”
78 In De civitate Dei 15.23, e.g., Augustine calls upon his reader to "leave unmentioned the fables in those writings which are called apocrypha, because their origin was obscure and uncertain to the fathers from whom the authority of the true Scriptures has come down to us by a certain and known line of transmission," but he also explains that "there is some truth to be found in these apocryphal writings" and that "we cannot deny that Enoch, the seventh after Adam, left some divine writings, since this is said by the apostle Jude in his canonical epistle."
and imagination of his literary heritage, as these texts also circulated and traveled, including in eras and locales where Enochic writings did not circulate in full. Even outside of Ethiopia, moreover, the literary practice of quoting and commenting upon excerpts from the Book of the Watchers is surprisingly continuous, traveling with the chronographical tradition from late antique Egypt into Byzantine, Syriac, and Armenian settings in the Middle Ages—and influencing the imagination of the antediluvian past even beyond chronographers.

Joseph Scaliger’s 1606 Thesaurus Temporum marks the first appearance of these famous Enochic excerpts in print. But we might wish to be wary in over-dramatizing its significance as a moment of sheer “rediscovery,” given the diffusion of manuscripts of Syncellus, Cedrenus, Michael Syrus, Bar Hebraeus, et al. Furthermore, even in Fabricius’ reprinting of the Enochic excerpts therefrom in his 1713 pseudepigraphical anthology, it is clear that these excerpts were perceived as part of a broader mosaic of traditions circulating about Enoch, which he there presents alongside even quotations from the Zohar—in a striking embodiment of what we have seen above of the kaleidoscopic curiosity and creativity surrounding real and imagined books of Enoch in the Middle Ages. It might be tempting as it may be to try to fit our medieval evidence for Enoch and his books into familiar modern narratives, casting the Middle Ages as the era of loss and forgetting that enables the drama of their modern recovery. When we consider this period on its own terms, however, what emerges is a sense of a richly transregional and interreligious legacy, which may prove even more useful as background to understanding the early modern interest in Enoch and the significance of the European discovery of 1 Enoch.