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## **"Merkabah Stratum" of the Short Recension of 2 Enoch**

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"MERKABAH STRATUM" OF THE SHORT  
RECENSION OF 2 ENOCH



by  
Andrei Orlov

"Merkabah Stratum" of the Short Recension of 2 Enoch

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An Abstract of a Thesis  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Graduate School  
Abilene Christian University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
Andrei Orlov  
November 1995

## ABSTRACT

The understanding of the Jewish literary environment of Early Christianity is important for Biblical research. One of the major textual sources of that environment is the so-called Enochic literature - a number of documents which were composed from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D. in Jewish and Christian communities. These texts are mainly dedicated to apocalyptic descriptions of the heavenly journeys of Enoch ben Jared, a well known Biblical character. The language and ideas of the Enochic literature had a great influence on the New Testament and on early Christology.

One of the important books of Enochic tradition is the Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch, also known as 2 (Slavonic) Enoch - a Jewish apocalyptic text which survives only in its Slavonic translation. However, despite a consensus on its importance, scholars have historically lacked the motivation to work with the Slavonic translation. A primary obstacle to widescale research of the document was the Slavonic language, itself categorized as "esoteric" for most Biblical scholars.

This study focuses on specific exegetical issues of the short recension of the Slavonic text in an attempt to understand its possible connections with Jewish mystical tradition known as "Merkabah mysticism". The research shows a number of evident

parallels between the narrative of 2 Enoch and early texts of the Merkabah tradition - "Sefer ha-Hekhaloth" and "Shiur Qomah." The most impressive similarities between the book and Jewish mystical tradition are situated in the textual narrative in the person of Enoch himself, through the description of his position, his transformation and his new roles and functions in the celestial realm. It gives new evidence that the Merkabah tradition has a deep connection with early, possibly preMishnaic, mystical literature. In this context Slavonic Enoch is something of a "bridge" which may fill an evident gap between prerabbinic apocalyptic mysticism and Merkabah tradition.

"Merkabah Stratum" of the Short Recension of 2 Enoch

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
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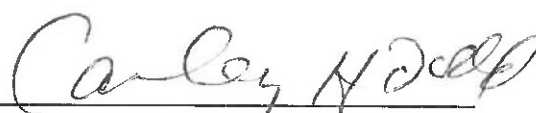
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This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Council of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

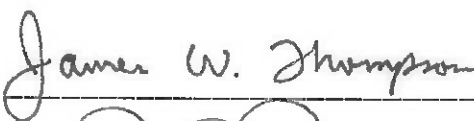

Master of Arts

  
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## CHAPTER I HISTORY OF THE TEXT

### Earliest Editions of the Text

Primarily because the Book of the Secrets of Enoch is known only through Old Slavonic versions, the earliest attempts at any scholarship on the book are connected with the names of Russian scholars.<sup>1</sup>

The first information about the existence of materials of the Book of the Secrets of Enoch (2 Enoch) in Slavonic was published by Russian scholar A. V. Gorsky in his description of the Slavonic manuscripts of the Moscow Synod Library.<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that A. V. Gorsky was the first scholar who showed the difference between the newly discovered Enoch material and 1 Enoch. Shortly after that, A. N. Pypin published a small section of the text of 2 Enoch from a collection of writings dating from the 17th century.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> N. A. Meschchersky in his article "Следы памятников Кумрана в старославянской и древнерусской литературе (К изучению славянских версий книги Еноха)." Труды отдела древнерусской литературы (ТОДРЛ) 19 (1963): 130-147 (in Russian) provides rich material about Russian scholarship on the text of 2 Enoch.

<sup>2</sup> Описание славянских рукописей Московской синодальной библиотеки. т. 2, вып. 2, М., 1859, стр. 626-627, вып. 3. М., 1862, стр. 739.

<sup>3</sup> Памятники старинной русской литературы, издаваемые Кушелевым-Безбородко вып. 3 (СПб., 1862), стр. 15-16.

At the same time N. S. Tichonravov published the same piece of material<sup>4</sup> from a more ancient manuscript, the so-called "Мерила Праведного" ("The Just Balance"), a 14th century collection<sup>5</sup> of ethical writings of East Slavic provenance.<sup>6</sup> In the same edition, Tichonravov added a short summary of the Slavonic Book of Enoch from the manuscript of the library of Trinity-Sergius Monastery.

In 1880 A. N. Popov published Codex Chludovianus<sup>7</sup> (discovered by Popov and named after the collection of Chludov). This was a full text of one of the recensions of 2 Enoch which was written in Southern Russia in 1679.<sup>8</sup> In his edition he wrongly identified this text with 1 Enoch. This was, in the opinion of F. I. Andersen, one of the reasons why the text of 2 Enoch completely escaped the attention of Western scholars for decades.<sup>9</sup> Against this, N. A. Meschchersky stated that Popov's edition was unknown to

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<sup>4</sup> Н. С. Тихонравов, Памятники отречённой русской литературы (СПб., 1863), т. 1, стр. 20-23.

<sup>5</sup> It was probably compiled in the 13th century.

<sup>6</sup> F. I. Andersen stresses the importance of "The Just Balance" in 2 Enoch scholarship. Because of this collection the existence of a Slavonic Enoch was first made public (A. V. Gorsky and A. N. Pypin used the same collection) and it was also the earliest part of the text ever printed. See F. I. Andersen, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (New York: Doubleday, 1983), vol. 1, 215.

<sup>7</sup> The names of the manuscripts are listed according Nathaniel Schmidt's classification. See Nathaniel Schmidt, "The Two Recensions of Slavonic Enoch," JAOS 41 (1921): 307-12.

<sup>8</sup> А. Н. Попов, Библиографические материалы. ч. 2-7. ЧОИДР, 1880, вып. 3, стр. 66-139.

<sup>9</sup> Andersen, 215.

Russian and European scholars for years.<sup>10</sup>

In 1884, the Croatian scholar Stoyan Novakovich published the text of the short recension of 2 Enoch, the Codex Belgradensis Serbius, which was written in the 16th century.<sup>11</sup> His research shows that he did not know of Popov's edition, although he cites other early Russian authors such as Pypin and Tichonravov. He was convinced that he was the first scholar to publish the whole text of 2 Enoch. Even Smirnov's Russian translation of 2 Enoch, published in Kazan in 1883, does not mention Popov's publication.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, the accepted introduction of the text of 2 Enoch to European Biblical scholarship is connected with the name of the famous Russian expert of Slavonic studies, M. I. Sokolov. In 1880, he discovered in the Belgrad library the Codex Belgradensis, written in Bulgaria in the 16th century. This manuscript seemed to him both more reliable and complete<sup>13</sup> than the manuscript used by Popov. Sokolov's text was also more than a century older than Popov's manuscript. Sokolov based his new publication of the text of 2 Enoch on this Codex.<sup>14</sup> Another detail of publication significant for the

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<sup>10</sup> Meschchersky, 136.

<sup>11</sup> St. Novakovic, "Апокриф о Еночу," Starine XVI (Zagreb, 1884): 65-81.

<sup>12</sup> А. Смирнов, Книга Еноха. Историко-критическое исследование, русский перевод и объяснение апокрифической книги Еноха (Казань, 1888).

<sup>13</sup> As we will see later it was sort of an illusion because Sokolov considered the long recension as superior and older than the short recension, which he thought was an incomplete and truncated text.

<sup>14</sup> М.И. Соколов, "Славянская книга Еноха Праведного. Тексты, латинский перевод и исследование," Материалы и заметки

destiny of 2 Enoch scholarship was the fact that Sokolov provided the original Slavonic text with a Latin translation which greatly facilitated future translations into European languages.

In 1896, the long recension of the Book of the Secrets of Enoch (including references to the short recension) was translated by W. R. Morfill into English and provided with an introduction by R. H. Charles.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to previous attempts, the German scholar Nathaniel Bonwetsch gave a German translation of both recensions (long and short) of the book.<sup>16</sup> One should mention that these translations were based on Sokolov's published evidence, and on his assumption that the long recension is the original. A later Latin translation, following Sokolov's attempt, was provided by Stephanus Szekely in 1913.<sup>17</sup> A Hebrew translation was made by A. Kahana and published in his edition of the Pseudepigrapha.<sup>18</sup>

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по старинной славянской литературе вып. 3, № 7. М., 1910.

<sup>15</sup> R. H. Charles, and W. R. Morfill, The Book of the Secrets of Enoch (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1896). Another English translation was provided later by Nevill Forbes and published by R.H. Charles in volume two of The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913). The difference between these translations is that the second (Forbes) clearly separates both recensions and presents the longer recension and the shorter recension synoptically.

<sup>16</sup> G. N. Bonwetsch, "Das slavische Henochbuch. - Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft zu Göttingen Philologisch-historische Klasse." Neue Folge Band I, N 3 (Göttingen, 1896). A second edition of the book was published in 1922. G. N. Bonwetsch, Die Bücher der Geheimnisse Henochs: Das sogenannte slavische Henochbuch (TU 44; Leipzig, 1922).

<sup>17</sup> Bibliotheca Apocrypha (Freiburg, 1913).

<sup>18</sup> A. Kahana, Ha-Sefarim ha-Hitsonim le-Torah (Jerusalem, 1936-37), reprinted in 1978.

The next stage in scholarship on 2 Enoch begins with the work of French scholar André Vaillant. In 1952, Vaillant published a new critical edition of the text which he based on a new hypothesis concerning the origin of the short recension.<sup>19</sup> At present, Vaillant's edition is accepted by scholars as a useful source of scholarship on 2 Enoch, and the best working translation.

However, a recent English translation by F. Andersen was based on his own independent study of published and unpublished manuscripts,<sup>20</sup> and on valuable recent publications by Russian scholars.<sup>21</sup>

### Recensions

As previously stated, the Book of the Secrets of Enoch exists only in the Old Slavonic version, which has long and short recensions. The differences between the long and short recensions are not only a major textual problem of 2 Enoch, but also, as we will see, a problem of different cultural and theological backgrounds. Therefore, it is important to introduce some scholarly views about these recensions.

From the early publications of Sokolov until the revolutionary

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<sup>19</sup> A. Vaillant, Le livre des secrets d'Enoch: Texte slave et traduction française (Paris: Institut D'Etudes Slaves, 1952; repr. Paris, 1976). The re-publication of Vaillant's French text was made by M. Philonenko in 1987. See A. Vaillant/M. Philonenko, "Livre des Secrets d'Enoch." in: La Bible. Ecrits Intertestamentaires. (Paris: Gallimard, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> See Andersen, 102-221. Another recent English translation was made by A. Pennington. See The Apocryphal Old Testament. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

<sup>21</sup> Especially the publications of N. A. Meshchersky and I. D. Amusin.

article of N. Schmidt,<sup>22</sup> and finally Vaillant's edition, the view that the short recension was merely a condensation of the long recension was the dominant opinion in Biblical scholarship.

M. I. Sokolov, R. H. Charles, as well as early translators W. R. Morfill, N. Bonwetsch, N. Forbes, and S. Szekely - were in agreement regarding the long recension as the earliest rendering of the Greek original. Sokolov was the first who supported the opinion that the earliest Slavonic redaction of 2 Enoch was connected with the long recension (represented by the manuscripts of the Southern-Slavic areas).

As Schmidt shows in his article, this opinion about the place of the long recension became adopted by the pillars of Old Testament scholarship at the beginning of our century.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, Nathaniel Schmidt was the first who argued for the originality of the short recension. In his opinion, behind the Slavonic version were two Greek recensions "probably translated at different times."<sup>24</sup>

A. Vaillant further developed Schmidt's hypothesis about the originality of the short recension. He suggested that this recension was the earliest, and was directly connected with the Greek original, which was translated into Old Slavonic in Western Bulgaria before

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<sup>22</sup> See N. Schmidt, "The Two Recensions of Slavonic Enoch," JAOS 41 (1921): 307-312.

<sup>23</sup> It was adopted by Harnack (Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur, II, 1, Berlin, 1897), Littmann (Jewish Encycl. V, New York, 1903), Bousset (Die Religion des Judentums, Berlin, 1903), and Schürer (Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes, III, 4th ed. Leipzig, 1909).

<sup>24</sup> Schmidt, 310.

the 11th century. Vaillant also asserted that the long recension is a revision of the earliest text and was written after the 14th century.

As was already mentioned, Vaillant believed that the background of the short recension of the Old Slavonic version was the text written in the *Greek* language. Supporting his theory of a Greek original, Vaillant pointed out the parallels between some places of 2 Enoch and the Byzantine Greek text of the 13th century, "Debate of the Panagiotte and the Azymite."<sup>25</sup> He presumed that the Greek original of 2 Enoch existed until the 13th century C. E.

It is important to note that both Schmidt and Vaillant supported two stages of translation and that both assumed that the Greek prototext of the short recension was an intermediate event, linking a possible Hebrew original and the Old Slavonic translation.<sup>26</sup> As Schmidt stated, "the peculiar nature of the Greek original of the short recension is probably due to its being a translation of an Aramaic or Hebrew work written in Palestine before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D."<sup>27</sup>

Schmidt also suggested that the long recension had different

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<sup>25</sup> Vaillant, XVI-XVII.

<sup>26</sup> In his recent edition of the English translation Australian scholar F. I. Andersen also supported this opinion. He stated that "after two stages of translation through Greek to Slavonic, it is not now possible to tell how much written material in a Semitic language might lie behind those portions of the text which still have Semitisms, let alone to determine which Semitic Language it might have been" (94).

<sup>27</sup> Schmidt, p. 311. Further he stated that "there is nothing that forbids the assumption that *practically all* of the short recension represents the text written in Palestine" (311).



theological and cultural settings, and was "made by an Alexandrine Jew who felt that there were many things that could be profitably added to the book."<sup>28</sup> Rubinstein also supported this view, pointing out that many of the "Hellenistic" and mythological features found in the long recension are absent from the short one.<sup>29</sup> In contemporary Biblical scholarship, it is normal to follow the suggestion that the provenance of the long recension is Egyptian<sup>30</sup> and that of the short recension is Palestinian.<sup>31</sup> Andersen also is inclined to place the book, or at least its original nucleus, early rather than late, and in a Jewish rather than in a Christian community.<sup>32</sup>

In spite of these distinctions of the provenance of the recensions, the actual theological background of 2 Enoch remains "an enigma" for scholars.

### Intellectual Background

F. I. Andersen, in his introduction to the new English translation of 2 Enoch, stated that so far "all attempts to locate the intellectual backgrounds of 2 Enoch have failed."<sup>33</sup> There have,

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<sup>28</sup> Schmidt, 311.

<sup>29</sup> A. Rubinstein, "Observations on the Slavonic Book of Enoch." Journal of Jewish Studies 15 (1962): 1-21.

<sup>30</sup> This hypothesis belongs to R. H. Charles. See The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, vol. 2, 429.

<sup>31</sup> James H. Charlesworth, The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research (Missoula: Scholar Press, 1976), 104.

<sup>32</sup> Andersen, 97.

<sup>33</sup> Andersen, 95. He added that "there must be something very peculiar about a work when one scholar concludes that it was written by a hellenized Jew in Alexandria in the first century B. C., while another argues that it was written by a Christian monk in Byzantium

however, been several very serious attempts to examine the roots of religious tradition behind the book.

Vaillant offers a controversial hypothesis that the Book of the Secrets of Enoch is in some points the Christian counterpart (or even revision) of 1 Enoch.<sup>34</sup> Jean Daniélou mainly supports Vaillant's position. He adds, however, that "not all Vaillant's arguments may strike the reader as of equal value."<sup>35</sup> He points to the Jewish Christian character of the text, which, in his opinion, "it is hardly possible not to notice."<sup>36</sup>

J. T. Milik also supports the idea of a Christian origin, asserting that the Greek text of the book was written by a Studionite monk who probably lived in Byzantium in the ninth or the tenth century C. E.<sup>37</sup> The hypothesis is a very natural one if the reader considers some details of the book, for example, the narrative about Melchisedek.

Many scholars disagree with the idea of the Christian background of the document. R. H. Charles supported the view that the author of 2 Enoch was a Jew who lived in Egypt and belonged to the Orthodox Hellenistic Judaism of his day.<sup>38</sup> He concludes that the

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in the ninth century A. D." Andersen, 95.

<sup>34</sup> Andersen in his critique of this position says: "Vaillant's arguments that 2 Enoch is a Christian revision of 1 Enoch are unconvincing...very little can be demonstrated by way of direct connection between the two works and the divergences are numerous and substantial." Andersen, 95-96.

<sup>35</sup> Jean Daniélou, The Theology of Jewish Christianity (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), 16.

<sup>36</sup> Daniélou, 12.

<sup>37</sup> J. T. Milik, The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4 (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1976), 112.

<sup>38</sup> The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, 429.

text itself in its present form was written between 30 B. C. and A. D. 70.<sup>39</sup>

G. Scholem criticizes Vaillant's position about a possible Christian provenance of 2 Enoch.<sup>40</sup> He also disagrees with J. Daniélou about his assumption that the Slavonic Enoch was a product of a Jewish Christian community.<sup>41</sup>

Schmidt stresses that "there are no signs in the short recension of distinctively Christian influence."<sup>42</sup> S. Pines also criticizes the idea, and states that "the absence in the short recension of any reference to Christ or to any specific Christian belief would be surprising in a Christian work."<sup>43</sup>

Andersen offers a strong criticism of the scholars (Vaillant and Milik) who defend the idea of Christian authorship.<sup>44</sup> Arguing against Vaillant's position, he reasons that there are no direct connections between 1 Enoch and 2 Enoch. Moreover, the theological

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 429. He lists several reasons for adoption this position. In his opinion, "it was written after 30 B. C., for it makes use of Sirach, 1 Enoch, and the Book of Wisdom, and before A. D. 70 for the temple is still standing." Ibid., 429.

<sup>40</sup> G. Scholem, Origins of the Kabbalah (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 73.

<sup>41</sup> Scholem, Origins of the Kabbalah, 73.

<sup>42</sup> Schmidt, 312.

<sup>43</sup> S. Pines, "Eschatology and the Concept of Time in the Slavonic Book of Enoch," in Types of Redemption, ed. by R. J. Zwi Werblowsky (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 72.

<sup>44</sup> Andersen says that one of the most important evidences against Christian authorship is "the total lack of a Christian Savior or scheme of salvation. On the contrary Enoch occupies an exalted position as God's chosen and prime agent which is totally incompatible with Christian belief in Jesus as Messiah." Andersen, 96.

perspectives of both books are different. He states that, "in particular, 1 Enoch has an interest in history not present in 2 Enoch, while 2 Enoch has an interest in creation, which is not present in 1 Enoch."<sup>45</sup>

He also rejects any direct relationship between the text of the New Testament and the text of 2 Enoch in any literary or doctrinal aspects (such as, for example, the portion about Melchisedek). Andersen asserts that the suspected echoes of the New Testament seem to be of this kind, and indicate more likely the influence of a Christian scribe, than the intention of a Christian writer.<sup>46</sup> His severe conclusion is that "there is not a distinctively Christian idea in the book."<sup>47</sup>

It is very important to mention that there is evidence that the document has been influenced by the "Zoroastrian" tradition.<sup>48</sup>

### The Language of Composition

The problem of the language of the composition has traditionally been an essential element in the argument about the intellectual backgrounds of 2 Enoch. Let us illustrate how hypotheses of some scholars about the original language of the book were radically influenced by further conclusions about the cultural and theological backgrounds of the text, and, on the other hand, how

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<sup>45</sup> Andersen, 95.

<sup>46</sup> Andersen, 95.

<sup>47</sup> Andersen, 95.

<sup>48</sup> Charles mentioned this and pointed out that Zend elements are adopted in the system of 2 Enoch. For detailed analysis of this problem see S. Pines, 75-87.

some theological presuppositions challenge the common opinions about the language of composition of 2 Enoch.

In 1918 A. S. D. Maunder, in her article "The Date and the Place of Writing of the Slavonic Book of Enoch," claimed that 2 Enoch was originally composed in Slavonic, in the "middle Bulgarian" period, i.e. between the 12th and the 15th centuries C. E.<sup>49</sup> The basis for this unusual claim was Maunder's hypothesis that the text itself was a product of the Manichean (Zoroastrian) sect of the Bogomils. This theory rests upon the certain "Manichean" features of the book such as the dualism of good and evil powers. Maunder found that it perfectly fits in Bogomil "teaching" that "God had two sons, Satanail and Michael."<sup>50</sup>

She also offered a summary of the astronomical observations which are connected with the "astronomy" of the heavens in the book. The article presented a "challenge" to one famous scholar,<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> A. S. D. Maunder, "The Date and Place of Writing of the Slavonic Book of Enoch," The Observatory 41 (1918): 309-316.

<sup>50</sup> See Maunder, 315.

<sup>51</sup> Charles in his critical response on Maunder's article notes: "For some reason or other astronomers (Maunder was an astronomer, A.O.) are very much at fault in the field of apocalyptic. Sir Isaac Newton, the greatest of them all, makes a poor figure in his attempt to interpret the Apocalypse. Dupuis and many others who approach it from the astronomical standpoint are much worse. But for wild extravagance in interpretation the Russian astronomer, Professor Morosow bears the palm. Morosow claims that he has established that the Apocalypse was written in A.D. 395 (the actual day and hour being given) and its author was John Chrysostom! Mrs. Maunder seems to me to be in the same class with the Russian scholar." R. H. Charles, "The Date and Place of Writings of the Slavonic Enoch," The Journal of Theological Studies 22 (1921): 163.

but it is a good illustration of how the claims of provenance influenced the conclusions about the language of composition in the situation with 2 Enoch.

In other cases, hypotheses about the language of composition are also connected closely with the ideas about a possible provenance of the book. S. Pines believes that the Slavonic work is definitely translated from the Greek.<sup>52</sup> He, however, leaves the question of the language of composition<sup>53</sup> open. In his opinion it is difficult to define it. He notes that in the book "there are many apparent Hebraisms, but this fact does not by itself prove much; for the author may be supposed to have been familiar with the language of the Septuagint."<sup>54</sup>

Some cautious scholars, who avoid closing the question of the provenance, are also very careful in their treatments of the language of composition. For example, Andersen is very cautious and ambiguous in dealing with the language of composition. On the one hand, he agrees with the opinion that the document could be, like most of the early Slavonic literature, translated from Greek,<sup>55</sup> and in his opinion "Greek is indicated as the language behind the Slavonic version."<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, he points out that "it is theoretically

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<sup>52</sup> Pines, 73. His "Zoroastrian" presuppositions are certainly behind this opinion.

<sup>53</sup> His question is: "Was the work originally in Greek or translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?"

<sup>54</sup> Pines, 73.

<sup>55</sup> Andersen, 94.

<sup>56</sup> Andersen, 94. He stressed that some materials preserved "traces" of Greek words and expressions.

possible that the book, or at least parts of it came directly from Hebrew into Slavonic."<sup>57</sup>

The tendency to consider the text of 2 Enoch as the product of two stages of translation (from Hebrew into Greek and then into Slavonic) - is still the predominant theory in contemporary scholarship.

In 1963, the Russian scholar N. A. Meschchersky introduced the premise that the short recension of the text of 2 Enoch was translated into Slavonic directly from its Hebrew original.<sup>58</sup> This hypothesis challenges the earlier statements from scholars, who suggested the book was translated from the Greek, as well as the theories of scholars like Schmidt<sup>59</sup> and more recent observations of Andersen<sup>60</sup> regarding the impossibility of determining which language might lie immediately behind the Slavonic version. In his article about the origins of the Slavonic Book of Enoch<sup>61</sup> Meschchersky gave several reasons which support his hypothesis that the short recension was translated directly from a Semitic language into Old Slavonic. They are:

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<sup>57</sup> Andersen, 94. On this question, he also added that "but it is more likely that the Semitisms of the book are due to Hebrew (or Aramaic) sources behind the Greek version." Ibid, 94.

<sup>58</sup> Н. А. Мещерский, Следы памятников Кумрана в старославянской и древнерусской литературе, стр. 147.

<sup>59</sup> He stated that "it is impossible to decide whatever the book was written in Hebrew or Aramaic." Schmidt, 312.

<sup>60</sup> See Andersen, 94.

<sup>61</sup> Н. А. Мещерский, "К вопросу об источниках славянской книги Еноха," Краткие сообщения Института Народов Азии, 86 (1965): 72-78.

a. Meschchersky belonged to an elite group of scholars, devoted to the study of medieval Slavonic literature. His scholarly activity was connected with a wide field of Old Slavonic translations from Greek and Hebrew originals. He noticed that the short recension of the Slavonic Book of Enoch has similarities to other Slavonic books translated from Semitic originals in the early period of Kiev's Russia (as for example the Book of Esther).<sup>62</sup> He noted that both of these texts have a similar unique vocabulary (as for example the verb "ПОТУХНУТИ," "to go out")<sup>63</sup> which can be found only in translations from Semitic originals.<sup>64</sup>

b. Meschchersky's second supporting argument refers to the short recension's tendency toward transliteration of proper names according to Hebrew spellings; this is a departure from the usual Greek-Slavonic patterns of the Byzantine Greek originals, which are connected to the Septuagint tradition. One of Meschchersky's examples of this type of transliteration is the spelling the name of Methuselah<sup>65</sup> as "Мефѳсаломъ," instead of the normal Byzantine-Slavonic form "Мефѳсаль." <sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>63</sup> In his other article "К истории текста славянской книги Еноха," Византийский Временник 24 (1964): 91-108 Meschchersky gives other examples of rare words in both texts (Esther and Enoch): "Домачадецъ," "Домачадица," "Стояние еже есть о нем," "Странамъ и болярюмъ земнымъ, и иже их о нем," 107.

<sup>64</sup> Н. А. Мещерский, "К вопросу об источниках славянской книги Еноха," 78.

<sup>65</sup> Genesis 15:27.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 77.



c. Meschchersky's third characteristic is the preservation in the document of certain Hebrew words without Slavonic translation. He pointed out, as an example, to the preservation of the original Hebrew spelling of the name of "אופנים" as "Ἐφάνημъ" (the name of the burning "Wheels of the Throne" in Hebrew angelology).<sup>67</sup>

d. Finally Meschchersky noted that the most important evidence in support of his idea is the grammatical form of the phrases with the nouns "a hand," "a face," "a head," and "a soul," which are used in the text not in proper direct meanings but as metaphors for the description of conditions of presence, dominion, etc., a usage widespread in Hebrew and Aramaic. He noticed that these nouns in 2 Enoch are accompanied by certain prepositions: "в" (in) and "на" (on).<sup>68</sup> This is very unusual for Greek and Slavonic grammar, where the absence of the prepositions is expected in these particular phrases.<sup>69</sup>

At the end of his article Meschchersky drew the conclusion that the possible Semitic original of the short recension of 2 Enoch could be a medieval Enochic text which preserved some ancient Enoch material from the period of Qumran.<sup>70</sup> It is interesting that he

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>68</sup> He gives as examples phrases "Несте служаще в лице Господне", "И възде гласъ ихъ в лице Господне", "Мефусалом ста на главе олтаря и на главе всих людей от дни того." Ibid., 78.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 77-78.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 78. This idea about the Qumran origin of 2 Enoch later was supported by another Russian scholar, expert in Qumran literature, I. D. Amusin. See И. Д. Амусин, Кумранская община (Москва: Наука, 1983), стр. 46.

suggested that this possible medieval Semitic text was probably 3 (Hebrew) Book of Enoch<sup>71</sup> and especially its central part, which in his opinion is most closely connected with the material of 2 Enoch.

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<sup>71</sup> Notable because N. A. Meschchersky didn't have the text of 3 Enoch, published by H. Odeberg in 1928 (probably because of Soviet censorship of Jewish and Christian texts and authors). For his conclusions he used the description of the book in Theologische Literaturzeitung 62 (1937): 457-458. Because of that fact his assumptions were opposite to Odeberg, who suggested that 2 Enoch represents an earlier tradition than 3 Enoch.

## CHAPTER II

### ANALYSIS OF THE MERKABAH STRATUM OF THE TEXT

#### Short History of the Approach

In spite of many internal and external evidences of possible connections between the text of 2 Enoch and texts of the Jewish mystical tradition (Merkabah or Hekhaloth literature<sup>72</sup>) most scholars have avoided the pursuit of further study in this direction. This has probably occurred because Christian scholars were more interested in the "intertestamental" perspective on 2 Enoch, as the "pseudepigrapha" text of early premishnaic Enoch literature similar

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<sup>72</sup> The term "Merkabah" is closely connected with the term which designates the mystical interpretation ("Ma'ase Merkabah" - "The Account of the Chariot" or "The Works of the Divine Chariot") of the first chapter of Ezekiel. Earliest traces of the Merkabah tradition are situated in apocalyptic and Qumran literature. However, as Gruenwald notes, the main corpus of the Merkabah literature was composed in Eretz -Yisrael in the period 200 - 700 C.E. Some references to this tradition can be found also in the literature of German Hasidim (12 - 13 centuries C.E.) and medieval Cabalistic writings (The Zohar).

The term "Hekhaloth" ("Divine Palaces") designates the corpus of literature that first gives a full-scale presentation of Merkabah mysticism (the beginning of the tradition is connected with the circle of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai and his pupils). According to Gruenwald the main subjects dealt with in the Hekhaloth literature are: heavenly ascensions and the revelation of cosmological secrets. See Ithamar Gruenwald, Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980).

to 1 Enoch and the Enoch Qumran materials. They were slow to discuss the apparent "Merkabah" features of 2 Enoch.

On the other hand, those scholars who have been seriously engaged in Merkabah studies (besides short references to the book) have historically lacked the motivation to work with the Slavonic translation of the Merkabah's narrative.<sup>73</sup> A primary obstacle to widescale research of the document from this perspective was the Slavonic language, itself categorized by most Biblical scholars as "esoteric".

Despite the absence of fundamental studies in this direction, one may find some interesting attempts to establish possible connections between 2 Enoch and Jewish mystical tradition. One of the most impressive was the research of H. Odeberg. In his edition dedicated to the popularly known 3 (Hebrew) Book of Enoch, Odeberg makes interesting observations of distinct parallels between 2 Enoch and the famous text of Merkabah tradition "Sefer ha-Hekhaloth" (or according to Charles' "pseudepigrapha" classification - "3 Enoch").<sup>74</sup>

Unfortunately, Odeberg's analysis was based on the text of the long recension used by Charles in the second volume of his Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Therefore, many essential "Merkabah" features of 2 Enoch, preserved only in the short

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<sup>73</sup> A rare exception in this situation is the works of Gershom Scholem. See his Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York: Schocken books, 1954) and Origins of the Kabbalah (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

<sup>74</sup> Hugo Odeberg, 3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch (New York: KTAV, 1973), part I, 52-63.

recension, remained unnoticed by Odeberg.<sup>75</sup> In spite of this handicap, Odeberg found a number of provocative similarities, both in the forms and the contents of the books. First, he discovered that the parallels clearly show that 3 Enoch is founded on the same traditions as 2 Enoch, at least to a considerable degree. Second, that on the whole, the evolution of these traditions is further advanced in 3 Enoch than in 2 Enoch. Third, that the conceptions of 3 Enoch in most cases are direct continuations on the lines of development begun by 2 Enoch.<sup>76</sup>

Before his final summary, Odeberg drew several vital conclusions. These referred to "...The entirely Jewish character of a considerable part of the present 2 Enoch; the strikingly close parallels<sup>77</sup> not only in general and detailed conception, but also in terms and expressions<sup>78</sup> between this Jewish stratum and 3 Enoch; and the unmistakably earlier stage of development in 2 Enoch (as

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<sup>75</sup> The material of the long recension as the basis of his conclusions was the main reason why he also supported the idea of a Greek original for 2 Enoch. In his opinion "...That 2 Enoch has been extant in Greek is evident. The traces of a Greek text underlying the present 2 Enoch are numerous: Phoenixes, Chalkadri, Arkhas, the Greek names of the planets, etc." Odeberg, part 1, 63.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., part I, 60.

<sup>77</sup> Odeberg in his elaborated observations shows parallels between 2 Enoch and 3 Enoch in the features of angelology, in the conception of Enoch (his image and his functions), in the character of the celestial songs (Qedussa) and in the features of the Divine Judgment.

<sup>78</sup> It is also important to keep in our mind some stylistic features of the text. In the opinion of Andersen "the book is basically Midrash: but the sparse plot is almost lost in the large amount apocalyptic material that it carries." Andersen, 91.

compared with 3 Enoch) of otherwise identical conceptions and ideas common to 2 and 3 Enoch."<sup>79</sup> His final conclusion is that "there was originally a Jewish writing, belonging to the Enoch literature and embodied in the present 2 Enoch, and that this Jewish Book of Enoch was well within the circle from which 3 Enoch has emanated."<sup>80</sup>

This idea of Odeberg regarding a Jewish provenance of the original of 2 Enoch is a valid line of thought. This opinion can be supported also by the references in the Book of Zohar. This medieval compendium of Jewish mysticism twice mentioned<sup>81</sup> the book under the title "Sefer Razin de Hanok" ("The Book of the Secrets of Enoch")<sup>82</sup> (at the beginning of section Tezawweh, ii. f. 80b, ed. Amst.).

Apparently this refers to the earliest "merkabah" midrashim of the 1st and 2nd centuries C. E., part of which was preserved in the short recension of 2 Enoch.<sup>83</sup>

The purpose of the following observations is to continue the research on the materials of the short recension, as well as to try to establish other important parallels between 2 Enoch and Jewish mystical tradition. Before these observations it would be useful to give a brief description of the structure and the content of the short

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>81</sup> See The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnall, 1901), vol. I, 677.

<sup>82</sup> The Slavonic Book of Enoch has exactly the same title: "КНИГА Ш ТАНАХЪ ЕНОХОВЪ", "КНИГА СВЯТАШ ТАНАХЪ ЕНОХОВЪ." See Vaillant, 1.

<sup>83</sup> We suggest this date because the book doesn't mention famous rabbinical authorities of Mishnaic and postMishnaic periods, as was usual for later merkabah midrashim.

recension so as to have a broad picture of the material.

### Exposition

In Vaillant's edition of the Slavonic text of the book, the material of the short recension has 23 chapters. This division repeats the original one found in Slavonic manuscripts.<sup>84</sup>

In the new English translation made by Andersen the short recension was divided in 73 textual blocks (chapters) which corresponded to similar chapters in the long recension.<sup>85</sup> The division was based on the thematic principle - each new theme or new event in the text was separated. These chapters, therefore, are not equal in size, some of them have only one or two sentences, while others occupy one or two pages. In our further description of the content we will use Andersen's division into 73 chapters.

Chapters 1 through 20 are dedicated to the celestial journey of Enoch through the seven heavens. The narrative has the form of the story which was told by Enoch, probably to his children.

In the beginning of the story Enoch says that when 365 years were completed for him, on the assigned day of the first month while he slept two huge men with their faces like the shining sun appeared

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<sup>84</sup> When I worked with the manuscripts, I found that some of them even have titles for the chapters. Vaillant for some reason did not include these titles.

<sup>85</sup> Andersen's edition presents the long and short recensions as parallel texts. This was the reason he divided the short recension as well as the long one into 73 chapters. In this situation, because the long recension has many additional interpolations, some chapters of the short recension actually do not have any content.

to him and said to him that the eternal Lord sent them to him. They took him up on their wings and carried him up through the seven heavens to the throne of the Lord. The book describes the topography, the items, and the inhabitants of each heaven; the treasures of the snow, the dew, and the cold in the first heaven; the prisoners of measureless judgment in the second one; the tree of life and Paradise in the third heaven; the movements of the sun and moon, flying spirits with six wings in the fourth heaven; many armies and the Watchers in the fifth heaven; seven radiant angels-leaders, grouped together, in the sixth heaven; and finally, a great light and the fiery armies of incorporeal beings (angels, archangels, etc.) near the throne of the Lord in the seventh heaven. The part of the text in the section dedicated to the fourth heaven has a detailed and extended description of a unique solar calendar.

Chapters 21 through 23 are dedicated to the appearance of Enoch before the Lord, his heavenly transformation and his extraction from his earthly clothing, and his heavenly education. In the text, Enoch recounts how the archangel Gabriel (in the narrative - Gabril) met him and encouraged him to be brave before the face of the Lord. Further, Gabriel carried him up and put him down in front of the face of the Lord. The Lord invited Enoch to stand in front of His face forever. Then Michael extracted Enoch from his earthly clothing, anointed him with delightful oil, and Enoch became like one of the glorious ones. After this, Vereveil, another archangel, read to Enoch for thirty days and thirty nights books about all the deeds of the Lord. Then Enoch sat down for a second period of thirty days and thirty nights and wrote down 360 books about everything that



the archangel had explained to him.

Chapters 24 through 32 are dedicated to the Lord's instructions to Enoch about the account of the creation of the world. The Lord called Enoch and placed him to the left of himself closer than Gabriel, and He told him how He created the world from the beginning and how He established the foundation and created a visible creation - the solid structure above the waters, the sun, the armies of bodiless creatures, the vegetation, the fish, the birds, and finally, how through His wisdom He created man. The narrative of this section comes from the Lord's lips.

Chapters 33 through 38 are connected with the Lord's assignments to Enoch before his trip to the earth where he must instruct his children and distribute his books to them so they may know their Creator. The Lord also revealed to Enoch the future destiny of the earth - the Flood which He will create in Enoch's generation and His plan for the salvation of mankind through a righteous man of Enoch's tribe (probably Noah).

Chapters 39 through 66 describe the instruction which Enoch gave to his sons and the elders of the people during his thirty days' visit to the earth. The subject of these instructions includes the short description of Enoch's journey through the different heavens and Paradise, the description of the appearance of the Lord, moral prescriptions, and regulations about animal sacrifices. The section was written in various genres, from traditional halakot to paranesis.

Chapters 67 through 70 describe the final departure of Enoch to heaven and the priestly duties of Enoch's relatives - his son Methuselah and Methuselah's grandson, Nir. Starting with chapter

67, where Enoch the storyteller becomes the character of the text, and further to the end of the book the narrative has the form of an impersonal story without a concrete storyteller.

Chapters 71 through 73 are dedicated to the Melchisedek legend. The detailed description of the legend will be given later in the section dedicated to the analysis of the story.

### The Further Development of Odeberg's points

#### "The Prince of the Presence"

The most impressive similarities between 2 Enoch and Jewish mystical tradition are probably situated in the textual narrative in the person of Enoch himself, through the descriptions of his position, his transformation, and his new role and functions in the celestial realm near the Throne of Glory. In these features, one may find the origins of another image of Enoch (quite different from early Enoch literature) which was developed later in Jewish mysticism (in late Merkabah and Zohar) - the image of the angel Metatron, "The Prince of the Presence" - שַׁר הַפְּנִיּוֹת.

Odeberg may well be the first scholar who discovered the characteristics of "the Prince of the Presence" in Enoch's image in the long recension of the Slavonic Enoch. He noticed in the synopsis of certain parallel passages from 2 and 3 Enoch that the phrase "stand before my face forever"<sup>86</sup> in the context of the elevation of Enoch means not just a normal Hebraism "be in the presence" but

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<sup>86</sup> "СТАНИ ПРѢД ЛИЦЕМЪ МОИМЪ ВО ВѢКЫ." Vaillant, 24. Here and further for Slavonic citations we will use Vaillant's text.

establishes the angelic status of Enoch as Metatron, the Prince of the Presence.<sup>87</sup>

The title itself is developed mainly in chapters 21-22,<sup>88</sup> which are dedicated to the description of the Throne of Glory. In this material, one may find many promises that Enoch will "...stand in front of the face of the Lord forever".<sup>89</sup>

Concluding Enoch's story in 67:2 there is a final statement about this theme: "...and the Lord received him and *made* him stand in front of his face for eternity".<sup>90</sup>

It is necessary to mention that the text of the long recension is identical on these points with the text of the short one.

About the theological background of the problem, it is worthy to note that the title was connected with the image of Enoch-Metatron in the "Metatron mysticism" tradition,<sup>91</sup> which is "crystallized in the classical<sup>92</sup> Hekhalot literature."<sup>93</sup> According to the legend of this tradition, Enoch "was raised to the rank of first of the angels and שר הפנים (literally, "prince the divine face", or "divine presence")."<sup>94</sup> 3 Enoch as well as later mystical literature has a very

<sup>87</sup> Odeberg, part 1, 55.

<sup>88</sup> Here and later I have used Andersen's new English translation, and follow his division in chapters.

<sup>89</sup> See 21:3; 21:5; 22:6; 22:7.

<sup>90</sup> Andersen, 195.

<sup>91</sup> Gershom G. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, 67.

<sup>92</sup> About different stages in Hekhaloth tradition see: Ithamar Gruenwald, Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 98-123.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>94</sup> Scholem, 67.

well developed theology connected with the title.<sup>95</sup>

Odeberg noticed that the title "Prince of the Presence" represents "the Prince who has access to the Divine Presence or who represents the Divine Presence to man."<sup>96</sup> In his opinion late cabalistic material often played upon the word פנים ("face") in the explanation of the title, "He is called the Prince of Panim for he has two Panim, Judgment and Mercy."<sup>97</sup> According to another passage the title is connected with only one aspect: "Metatron is the Prince of the Presence on the side of Good and Samael the Prince of the Presence on the side of Evil."<sup>98</sup>

### "God's Secrets"

Another interesting point of Odeberg's observations, dedicated to the similarities of 2 Enoch and Jewish mystical lore, is connected with the problem of Enoch's initiation into the "Mystery of Creation." Odeberg noticed that the instructions of Enoch concerning the "Account of Creation" (Ma'aseh Bereshit) occupied a very prominent part of the narratives of 2 and 3 Enoch. An important parallel is the fact that in the preceding narrative before the account of creation the instructions about the secrets and mysteries were given through

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<sup>95</sup> "God took me from the midst of the race of the flood and carried me on the stormy wings of the Shekhinah to the highest heaven and brought me into the great palaces on the heights of the seven heaven Araboth...and He stood me there daily to serve the throne of glory." Scholem, 67.

<sup>96</sup> Odeberg, part 1, 118.

<sup>97</sup> Odeberg, part 1, 118.

<sup>98</sup> Odeberg, part 1, 118-119.

angels. In the case of 3 Enoch, the angels are called the "Prince of Wisdom" (שר החכמה) and the "Prince of Understanding" (שר הבינה); in the case of 2 Enoch, the angel Vereveil (Βερεβειλα) discovered the secrets of heaven and earth before Enoch.<sup>99</sup> A contrast is found in the account of creation, where the Holy One (in 3 Enoch) or the Lord (in 2 Enoch) *himself* reveals the mystery.<sup>100</sup> In 2 Enoch 24:2-4 (short recension) the Lord says to Enoch: "Whatever you see, Enoch, things standing still and moving about and which were brought to perfection by me, *I myself will explain it to you*<sup>101</sup>...And not even to my angels have I explained my secrets, nor related to them their composition, nor my endless and inconceivable creation which I conceived, as *I am making them known to you today*<sup>102</sup>."<sup>103</sup>

As Odeberg noted, the reason for the change is to be seen in the undeniable statement that these latter secrets are not even revealed to the angels<sup>104</sup> and could therefore be handed over to Enoch only by God himself.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> This role of Enoch as so-called "The Knower of Secrets" also has a very rich background in Jewish mysticism. See Odeberg, part 2, 30.

<sup>100</sup> An interesting detail of the narrative is the fact that right before the instruction in 2 Enoch the Lord called Enoch and placed him to *the left* of himself closer than Gabriel. Andersen, 143.

<sup>101</sup> "АЗ ЖЕ КОЗВЕЩАЮ ТЕРЕ." Vaillant, 28.

<sup>102</sup> "ТЕБѢ КОЗВѢЩАЮ ДНЕСЬ." Vaillant, 28.

<sup>103</sup> Andersen, 143.

<sup>104</sup> "...And not even to my angels have I explained my secrets, nor related to them their composition, nor my endless and inconceivable creation which I conceived as I am making them known to you today" (24:3).

<sup>105</sup> Odeberg, 30.

This instance, the account of creation among the mysteries of heaven and earth, is another distinct feature of the tradition of Jewish mysticism.<sup>106</sup> Isaiah Tishby comments that "early Jewish mysticism, which is mentioned in Talmudic Literature as being the preoccupation solely of a chosen few, is comprised of two main areas: ma'aseh bereshit (the account of Creation) and ma'aseh merkavah (the account of the Chariot)."<sup>107</sup> He also asserts that the understanding of the causes and processes of the formation of the world is one of the central themes in late Jewish mysticism (in Zohar, and in Kabbala generally).<sup>108</sup>

3 Enoch, which has a more developed narrative on this point, emphasizes the place of ma'aseh bereshit:

Henceforth the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed to me all the mysteries of Torah and all the secrets of wisdom and all the depths of the Perfect Law and all living beings' thoughts of heart and all the secrets of the universe and *all the secrets of Creation* were revealed unto me even as they revealed unto the Maker of Creation.<sup>109</sup>

The ultimate value of this knowledge is stressed by the fact that right after the instruction about Creation in 3 Enoch, God clothed

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<sup>106</sup> Andersen shows an interesting parallel on this point in Christian literature. He noticed that "in the NT the mystery that the angels are curious about is the Gospel. Here it is the story of creation. This is the only subject on which the Lord himself discourses to Enoch. According to Epistula apostolorum (19) believers have privileges denied to angels." Andersen, 142.

<sup>107</sup> The Wisdom of the Zohar: an Anthology of Texts (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994), 587.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 549.

<sup>109</sup> Odeberg, 30-31.

Metatron (Enoch) *in a garment of glory*, put a royal crown on his head and called him "the Lesser YHWH".<sup>110</sup>

### "The Garments of Glory"

Another section of Odeberg's observations is centered on the nature of Enoch's divine transformation into "garments of glory."<sup>111</sup> In the book the Lord commanded the archangel Michael, "Take Enoch, and extract (him) from the earthly clothing. And anoint him with the delightful oil, and *put (him) into the clothes of glory* (22:8-9)."<sup>112</sup> Odeberg highlighted the distinct similarities in this point between 2 and 3 Enoch.<sup>113</sup>

Concerning this point, Odeberg interprets the change of "clothing" in both narratives as the transformation from mortal "nature" to the immortal.<sup>114</sup> In addition to the "ontological" meaning of "garments," this term also bears another more symbolical meaning, which will be elaborated at a later point.

This particular passage has many parallels in early apocalyptic literature, as well as to the Merkabah texts. Odeberg comments that in early traditions "the garments of Glory" was a necessary condition for entering into the area of the highest heaven.<sup>115</sup> In the text of 2 Enoch, one may see that the narrative precedes the command of the

<sup>110</sup> 3 Enoch, 32.

<sup>111</sup> "ОБЛАЧНИ В ОУЗЫ СЛАВНЫ." Vaillant, 24.

<sup>112</sup> Andersen, 139.

<sup>113</sup> Odeberg, part 1, 55.

<sup>114</sup> He comments, that "the raiment of glory" is "a mark of the holy, celestial nature of its bearer." Odeberg, part 2, 32.

<sup>115</sup> Odeberg, part 2, 32.

Holy One, "Let him (Enoch) come up."<sup>116</sup>

One should be aware that the term "garments of Glory" in early apocalypticism has strong moral connotations. It designates a level of moral perfection and is "designed for the righteous and elect."<sup>117</sup> Almost every famous character of the "ascension stories" - for example, Isaiah ("Ascension of Isaiah"), and Ezra ("2 Esdras") - could ascend to the highest realm only after receiving "the Garments of Glory".<sup>118</sup> 2 Enoch does not appear to have a strong emphasis on the moral meaning of "the garments". Therefore, it may be deduced that the text represents a sort of "intermediate" stage, between the apocalyptic and merkabah traditions.

The interesting point is the fact that the passage itself consists of several important reminiscences of Merkabah and later Jewish mysticism. At an important place in the vocabulary of the passage, the term "garments" (his "earthly garments" (ЗЕМНЫХ РИЗЪ)) is transformed into the "garments of God's Glory." The term "garments" (especially in the later stages of the tradition) is connected with the symbolism of divine emanations or attributes (so-called "sefirot").<sup>119</sup> It is worthy to mention that the symbolism of the sefirot was developed in the later stages of Merkabah tradition.<sup>120</sup> The earliest

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<sup>116</sup> Andersen, 139.

<sup>117</sup> Odeberg, part 2, 32.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>119</sup> Unfortunately this aspect of the term remains unnoticed in Odeberg's observations.

<sup>120</sup> As Scholem wrote, that "its connection with the Merkabah literature is fairly evident." Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, 75.



extant text dedicated to the account of sefirot is the Hebrew text "Sefer Yetzirah" ("The Book of Creation") which was most likely written between the third and sixth centuries C. E.<sup>121</sup> The book is dedicated to the description of the system of ten "sefirot"<sup>122</sup> as primary numbers which, together with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, form the basic elements of existence.<sup>123</sup>

A more detailed description of "garments of Glory" in 3 Enoch gives important parallels to the symbolism of "sefirot." In the book Metatron says to R. Ishmael: "He (the Holy One) made me a garment of glory on which were fixed all kinds of *lights*<sup>124</sup>, and He clad me in it. And He made me a robe of honor on which were fixed all kinds of beauty, splendor, brilliance and majesty."<sup>125</sup> According to another late text<sup>126</sup> Metatron "is clad in *eight*<sup>127</sup> garments, made out of the Splendor of Shekina."<sup>128</sup> The famous medieval text "Pardes Rimmonim" stated that "All the ten Sefirot *clothe* themselves in

<sup>121</sup> Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, 75.

<sup>122</sup> Sefer Yezirah is the earliest mystical work where the term sefirot and the division into ten were introduced.

<sup>123</sup> The Wisdom of the Zohar, 269.

<sup>124</sup> "Lights" as well as "garments" is a technical term in the tradition for designation of the sefirot. Tishby gives the list of these terms in late Jewish mysticism: "we have a whole string of names: "Levels," "powers," "sides," or "areas" (sitrin), "worlds," "firmaments," "pillars," "lights," "colors," "days," "gates," "streams," "garments," "crowns," and others. Each term designates a particular facet of the nature or work of the sefirot." The Wisdom of the Zohar, 269.

<sup>125</sup> Odeberg, part 2, 32.

<sup>126</sup> "Alpha Beta de Metatron."

<sup>127</sup> Apparently in eight lower sefirot - Binah, Hesed, Gehurah, Rahamim, Netsah, Hod, Yesod, Malkhuth.

<sup>128</sup> Odeberg, part 2, 32.

Metatron in order to work through him in the world."<sup>129</sup>

In these texts we can see a kind of evolution of the symbolism of "garments," as sefirot, in which 2 Enoch represents the earliest stages of the tradition.

### "The Knower of Secrets"

The Merkabah tradition emphasizes the role of Metatron as the "Knower of Secrets" (Yode Razim - יודע רזים). According to one Hekhaloth text he is "wise in the secrets and Master of the mysteries."<sup>130</sup>

He is the one who received these secrets from the angels and from the Lord (the Holy One). He also is "the Revealer of Secrets" who is responsible for the transmission of the highest secrets to the Princes under him, as well as to mankind. In chapter 38 of 3 Enoch, Metatron told R. Ishmael that he was the person who revealed secrets to Moses, in spite of the protests of heavenly hosts: "...when I revealed this secret to Moses, then all the host in every heaven on high raged against me and said to me: Why do thou reveal this secret to a son of man...the secret by which were created heaven and earth...and the Torah<sup>131</sup> and Wisdom and Knowledge and Thought and

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<sup>129</sup> Pardes Rimmonim, Gate XVI. ch. 4.

<sup>130</sup> Odeberg, part 2, 30.

<sup>131</sup> An interesting detail of this later Merkabah narrative (3 Enoch) is *the content* of these secrets. The totality of Gnosis was represented through the image of Written and Oral Torah. In contrast, in 2 Enoch the content of the secrets into which Enoch was initiated was connected with "the deeds of the Lord, the earth and the sea...the changes of the years and the movements of the day..."23:1. We can see that 2 Enoch in this point presents an earlier,

the Gnosis of things above and the fear of heaven. Why do thou reveal this to flesh and blood?"<sup>132</sup> According to this theological material, Enoch (Metatron) is responsible for transmission of the secrets of Written Torah as well as the Oral Tradition. "And Metatron brought them out from his house of treasures and committed them to Moses, and Moses to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets and the prophets to the men of Great Synagogue..."<sup>133</sup>

In late Merkabah, Metatron (Enoch) is the guide and the revealer of secrets to all who are initiated into the account of chariots.<sup>134</sup> Hekhaloth literature (Hekhaloth Rabbati, Shi'ur Qomah, etc.) demonstrates these functions of Metatron. He is the guide and the revealer of the secrets to R. Ishmael and to R. Akiba. Sometimes in the Merkabah narrative his role is extended to the titles of the Prince of Wisdom and the Prince of Understanding.<sup>135</sup>

It is apparent that in 2 Enoch one may see some kind of preparation of Enoch for his role as Metatron, "the Knower of Secrets." The preparation has several distinctive stages. First, the

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possibly preMishnaic tradition, where the images of Oral tradition had not yet crystallized.

<sup>132</sup> Odeberg, part 2, 177-178.

<sup>133</sup> Odeberg, part 2, 178.

<sup>134</sup> Metatron himself was some sort of Merkabah' mystic par-excellence and a good example for "Yorde Merkabah". As Alexander notes, it is not hard to see why he attracted mystics. "He was a human being who had been elevated over all the angels, and was living proof that man could overcome angelic opposition and approach God. *He was a powerful "friend at court."* P. Alexander, "3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch," The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, ed. by James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1983), vol. I, 244.

<sup>135</sup> Odeberg, part 2, 30.

archangel Vereveil began Enoch's instruction in these secrets. "He was telling me all the deeds of the Lord, the earth and the sea, and all the elements and the courses...and the Hebrew language, every kind of language of the new song of the armed troops and everything that it is appropriate to learn" (23:1-2). Second, the Lord, himself, continued to instruct him in the secrets which He had not even explained to His angels (24:3). Finally, the Lord promised him the role of "Knower of Secrets." The important detail here is that the promise is closely connected with other titles of Metatron such as "The Prince of Presence," "The Heavenly Scribe," and "The Witness of the Judgment." In the text the Lord promised:

...and you will be in front of my face from now and forever.<sup>136</sup>  
 And you will be seeing my secrets<sup>137</sup> and you will be scribe for my servants<sup>138</sup> since you will be writing down everything that has happened on earth and that exists on earth and in the heavens, and you will be for me a witness of the judgment<sup>139</sup> of the great age (36:3).<sup>140</sup>

This substantial passage graphically depicts the interrelation of the future roles of Enoch (Metatron) in the narrative of 2 Enoch. In spite of the fact that the text does not elaborate the real embodiments of these roles and titles, but only promises and initiations in these roles, it does give the certain feeling that the text

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<sup>136</sup> "The Prince of Presence."

<sup>137</sup> "The Knower of Secrets."

<sup>138</sup> "The Heavenly Scribe."

<sup>139</sup> "The Witness of Divine Judgment."

<sup>140</sup> It is important to note that this remarkable compendium of Merkabah titles of Metatron can be found *only in the short recension*. The long recension doesn't include this material.

of 2 Enoch is part of larger tradition and that its author has prior knowledge of the future development of these titles and the deeds behind them. Therefore, 2 Enoch is obviously not just the early stage of certain tradition, it is also the *early stage of Enoch's story*.

It is intriguing that the narrative of 2 Enoch does not show the promised powerful deeds of Enoch in different offices of the heavenly realm (those of The Knower, The Scribe, The Witness, and The Prince of Presence) even in early "primitive" Merkabah or apocalyptic form. It looks as if the author of the text deliberately avoids these details and keeps in mind that the time has not yet arrived for these facts and that Enoch is supposed to return to the earth, and only after that trip he will be again initiated into these promised roles. At that point it will be eternal.

In this aspect it seems to me that the narratives of 2 Enoch and 3 Enoch were written from different temporal perspectives. The "chronological" point of 2 Enoch is the Antediluvian period of Enoch's story. This explains why "there is no place for Abraham, Moses, and the rest"<sup>141</sup> and why "there is no reference to the Torah."<sup>142</sup>

It is not the retelling of the story from a Christian point of view, where the author transformed Jewish material into some kind of "neutral" narrative without traditional themes and symbols. It seems more likely that the author's purpose is the accurate representation of a certain stage in Enoch's story, and nothing more.

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<sup>141</sup> Andersen, 96.

<sup>142</sup> Andersen, 96.

### "The Heavenly Scribe"

Odeberg believed that Enoch's initiation into the Secrets (and his title - the Knower of Secrets) is closely connected with his scribal activities and another of his titles - "the Scribe" (סופר) or "the Heavenly Scribe".<sup>143</sup> The steps in the development of this theme in 2 Enoch are apparent. From our perspective Enoch's scribal functions have several aspects:

1. He was initiated into the scribal activities by the Lord *Himself*. "And the Lord said to Vereveil, 'Bring out the books from the storehouses, and *give a pen to Enoch*<sup>144</sup> and read him the books.' And Vereveil...gave me the pen<sup>145</sup> from his hand" (22:11).<sup>146</sup>
2. He writes down the mysteries which were explained to him by angels.<sup>147</sup> In 23:4 angel Vereveil commands him: "Write everything that I have explained to you."<sup>148</sup>
3. The results of his scribal activity were a certain number of books. "I wrote accurately. And I expounded 300 and 60 books"

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<sup>143</sup> Odeberg, part. 1, p.56. He also stresses that the function of Enoch as Scribe is not emphasized in 3 Enoch. Odeberg, part 2, 8.

<sup>144</sup> "ВДАИ ЖЕ ТРОСТЬ ЕНОХОВИ." Vaillant, 26.

<sup>145</sup> "ВДАСТ МИ ТРОСТЬ." Vaillant, 26.

<sup>146</sup> Andersen, 141.

<sup>147</sup> There are no evidences in the short recension that Enoch wrote down the instructions of the Lord about creation.

<sup>148</sup> Andersen, 141.

(23:6).<sup>149</sup>

4. The Lord instructed Enoch to deliver these books in his handwriting to his sons (33:8), and to distribute the books in his handwriting to his children, and they to their children, and they to their children, for they will read them from generation to generation (33:8-10).

5. The Lord appointed the guardian angels for Enoch's writings.

For I will give you an intercessor, Enoch, my archistratig, Michael, on account of your handwritings and the handwritings of your fathers - Adam and Seth. They will not be destroyed until the final age. For I have commanded my angels *Arioch and Mariokh*, whom I have appointed on the earth to guard them and to command the things of time to preserve the handwritings of your fathers so that they might not perish in the impending flood which I will create in your generation. (33:10-12)<sup>150</sup>

The motif of guardian angels of the books is very specific for the esoterism<sup>151</sup> of Merkabah tradition. This motif can be found in 3 Enoch as well as in late texts of the tradition.

6. Finally the Lord gave the promise to Enoch about his future role as the Heavenly Scribe when he will return to heaven after the

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<sup>149</sup> Andersen, 24.

<sup>150</sup> Andersen, 157.

<sup>151</sup> Alexander noted that "classic rabbinical literature makes it clear that there was an esoteric doctrine in Talmudic Judaism. It was concerned with two subjects - the Account of Creation (Ma'aseh Bere'sit) and the Account of the Chariots (Ma'aseh Merkabah). All study and discussion of these topics in public was banned." Alexander, 229-230.

instructions of his sons, "...and you will be the *SCRIBE*<sup>152</sup> for my servants, since you will be writing down everything that has happened on earth and that exists on earth and in the heavens, and you will be for me a witness of the judgment of the great age" (36:3).<sup>153</sup>

To conclude this section we shall examine an interesting detail which from the point of view of the writer is very important as a characteristic of a hypothetical provenance, but which has remained unnoticed by scholars. In 23:4, when Enoch was already in the highest realms, Vereveil gave him permission *to sit down*.<sup>154</sup> "You sit down; write everything..." And Enoch said, "And *I sat down*<sup>155</sup> for a second period of 30 days and 30 nights, and I wrote accurately" (23:6).<sup>156</sup> It is important that this fact of Vereveil's suggesting that Enoch be seated occurred after Enoch had been "brought in front of the face of the Lord" (22:6), and was invited by the Lord "to stand in front of his face forever" (22:6-7).

According to Rabbinical tradition, "there is no sitting in heaven."<sup>157</sup> An allegorical description, occurring in 3 Enoch, depicts

<sup>152</sup> "книжник" Vaillant, 36.

<sup>153</sup> A very important feature for understanding the Merkabah origin of 2 Enoch: the functions of Enoch as the Scribe will be connected with his role as the witness of the Divine Judgment: "Metatron sits and judges the heavenly household" or "Metatron, the angel of the Presence, stands at the door of the Palace of God. And he sits and judges all the heavenly hosts before his Master. And God pronounces judgment and he executes it." Odeberg, part 2, 171.

<sup>154</sup> "СѦДН." Vaillant, 26.

<sup>155</sup> "сѦДОУ." Vaillant, 26.

<sup>156</sup> Andersen, 141.

<sup>157</sup> TB. Chag. 15a.



God's placing Metatron on a throne at the door of the seventh Hall (Chapter 10). In his commentary on this section of 3 Enoch, Odeberg states that "assigning *a seat* or a throne to any angel-prince or to any one beside the Holy One, might endanger the recognition of the absolute sovereignty and unity of the Godhead."<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, he reasoned that according to Chag. 15a of the Babylonian Talmud, the privilege of "sitting" was accorded to Metatron by virtue of his character as "scribe": for he was granted permission as a scribe "to sit and write down the merits of Israel."<sup>159</sup>

This fact, that the function of Enoch as the Scribe accompanied with his "seating" in the text of 2 Enoch is one more powerful example that further strengthens the hypothesis regarding the connection of the text of 2 Enoch with the Merkabah tradition.

#### The Further Development of Scholem's Points

One of the most profound experts in the history of Jewish mysticism in the 20th century, Gershom Scholem was a unique exception in his field, persistently trying to investigate the relationships between the text of 2 Enoch and Jewish mystical tradition. His commentaries on different details of the narrative of 2 Enoch and possible parallels between the text and Merkabah literature do not, however, have systematic form. In many cases, these remarks are short, but they are always impressive and astute, and give many insights which relate to the subject of the current

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<sup>158</sup> Odeberg, part 2, 27.

<sup>159</sup> Odeberg, part 2, 27.

study. We shall now turn to consider some of Scholem's arguments.

### "Stones"

In his book Ursprung and Anfänge der Kabbalah (1962),<sup>160</sup> Scholem draws the reader's attention to an interesting detail of the creation narrative of 2 Enoch. The point is connected with enigmatic stones which were placed by the Lord in the waters during the process of creation.<sup>161</sup>

In chapters 28-29, when the Lord instructed Enoch about the secrets of the Account of Creation, He said:

Then from the waters I hardened<sup>162</sup> *big stones*,<sup>163</sup> and the clouds of the depths<sup>164</sup> I commanded to dry themselves. And I did not name what fell to the lowest places.<sup>165</sup> Gathering the ocean into one place, I bound it with a yoke. I gave to the sea an eternal boundary, which will not be broken through by the waters. The *solid structure*<sup>166</sup> I fixed and established it above the waters (28:2-4).<sup>167</sup>

Scholem shows the relationship between these enigmatic stones

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<sup>160</sup> English translation: Gershom Scholem, Origins of the Kabbalah (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

<sup>161</sup> Scholem, 73.

<sup>162</sup> I think "placed" would be better translation of this verb.

<sup>163</sup> "КАМЕННЕ БЕЛНКО." Vaillant, 30.

<sup>164</sup> "БЕЗДНЫМЪ." Vaillant, 30. The proper translation of this word is "*abyss*."

<sup>165</sup> "БЕЗДНЫ." Again the same term as previous, which better translate as "*abyss*."

<sup>166</sup> "ТКЕРДЪ." Vaillant, 30. An important detail for further observation is the fact that this Slavonic word can be better translated as foundation. Its following after the verb ωϛΗΟΚΑΧ ("established") stresses the meaning.

<sup>167</sup> Andersen, 147.

of 2 Enoch and cosmogonic tradition of "an esoteric baraita<sup>168</sup> [a mishnah, not universally and canonically accepted], in which the word *תהו ובהו* in *בהו* of Genesis 1:2 was interpreted as 'muddy stones, sunk in the abyss'.<sup>169</sup> Unfortunately Scholem failed to develop this point and did not comment on it further. Therefore, it will be necessary to establish some additional parallels in Jewish mystical tradition.

In the late Jewish mysticism (especially in the Zohar) the theme of the big stones placed by the Creator in the waters (in the abyss) occupied an important place. In Zohar I, 231a-231b lies the following passage:

The world was not created until He had cast a single stone, and this stone is called even shetiyah ("foundation stone"). The Holy One, blessed be He, took it and *threw it into the abyss*, and it became lodged there from the upper to the lower worlds, and from it the world was founded. It is the central point of the world, and at this point the Holy of Holies stands. This is the meaning of "Who cast its cornerstone?" (Job 38:6),<sup>170</sup> as it is said, "A tried stone, a costly cornerstone [of sure foundation]" (Isaiah 28:16), and it is written "the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone" (Psalm 118:22). Come and see. This stone was created from fire, air and water. It was composed of them all and became a single stone, and it stands *above the deeps*. Sometimes waters flow from it, and *the deeps* are filled. This stone stands as a sign in the center of the world... This stone is a good stone. This is the secret of "you shall set it in settings of stones, four rows of stones" (Exodus, 28:17).<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Hagigah 12a.

<sup>169</sup> Scholem, 74. He also mentioned an other possible parallel - "the muddy stones from which *darkness flows*" in the Targum on Job 28:8.

<sup>170</sup> See earlier footnote about the parallel in the Targum on Job.

In Zohar II, 222a-222b this theme has a more sophisticated form:

When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, He threw down a precious stone from beneath the throne of His glory, and it sank *into the deep*. One edge of the stone became lodged *in the deep*, and another in the realms above. And there was another edge, a supernal one, a single point, which is in the middle of the world, and the world expanded from there, to the right and to the left, and upon all sides, and it is sustained by this central point. This stone is called "shetiyah" (foundation), because from it the world was founded (ashtil) on all sides. Moreover shetiyah [may be read] shat yah ("the Lord placed"). The Holy One, blessed be He, placed it so that it might be the foundation of the world, and the foundation of all.<sup>172</sup>

We will now draw attention to some important details of both of the above narratives. The text of 2 Enoch uses the term БЕЗДАНА<sup>173</sup> (literally, "abyss"),<sup>174</sup> which also occupied a prominent place in the narrative of Zohar.<sup>175</sup> In Zohar, the Holy One threw down a stone from beneath, and it sank into the abyss. The text of 2 Enoch does not directly relate throwing the stone into the abyss but does utilize the phrase, "I did not name what fell to the abyss" (28:3), which implies that this act of the Lord already had taken place.

Another important motif of both texts which is connected to the stones is the theme of "establishing the foundation." 2 Enoch tells

<sup>171</sup> The Wisdom of the Zohar, 571.

<sup>172</sup> The Wisdom of the Zohar, 570.

<sup>173</sup> МГЛАМ ЖЕ БЕЗДНЫМЪ - the clouds of the abyss, or the darkness of the abyss; ОУПАДЪБЪ БЕЗДНЫ - what fell to the abyss.

<sup>174</sup> Unfortunately, the new English translation did not translate the term in this way.

<sup>175</sup> "He...threw it into the abyss"; "Stone become lodged in the deep (abyss)"; "It stands above the deeps (abyss)"; "the deeps (abyss) are filled"; "it sank into the deep (abyss)."

about the stones (stone) as relating to the foundation, which the Lord established above the waters.<sup>176</sup> This labeling of stones as "foundation" is very typical for the Zoharic narrative, where the stone is referred to many times as shetiyah ("foundation") or even shetiyah ("foundation stone").<sup>177</sup>

One more explanation must be given to the number of stones (stone). We saw that the Zohar tells about one foundation stone. 2 Enoch speaks about stones.<sup>178</sup> But later in the narrative of 2 Enoch, the term switches from plural form to singular, then referring only to one stone: "From the rock<sup>179</sup> I cut off a great fire..."(29:3).<sup>180</sup>

### "Shiur Qomah"

One of the most controversial texts of the "Merkabah" tradition wears the title שיור קומה - "Shiur Qomah," which can be translated as "The Measurement of the Body." The term itself is connected with a passage in the Song of Songs.<sup>181</sup> The book is written in the typical Merkabah genre of ecstatic vision, when Metatron reveals to the visionary the proportions of God's body (this text, in contrast to 3 Enoch, has two visionaries - Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiba). The

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<sup>176</sup> Тврѣдь водружнх њ шеновахъ врѣхоу вод (literally - "I erected firm foundation and established it above the waters").

<sup>177</sup> See above.

<sup>178</sup> Камѣннѣ, Vaillant, 30.

<sup>179</sup> Камѣннѣ, Vaillant, 32.

<sup>180</sup> Andersen, 149.

<sup>181</sup> The Song of Songs 7:8. As Gruenwald notes, the book belongs to the tradition which is connected with Merkabah interpretation of the Song of Songs. See I. Gruenwald, Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism, 213.

main section of the text is dedicated to an anthropomorphic description of the mystical figure of the Godhead, appearing as the primal man.<sup>182</sup> The book gives different mystical names to God's limbs and provides their proper sizes which are measured by parasangs.<sup>183</sup>

It should also be noted that the dating of the earliest stratum in the book was the subject of major discussion, until finally the problem was resolved by Scholem.<sup>184</sup> He established the hypothesis that "the teaching of the Shiur Qomah does indeed represent a *second century* Jewish tradition."<sup>185</sup>

The reason for mentioning the book in these observations is related to its title - "The Measurement of the Body." The full term (in the Song of Songs only part of it is used) was first found in Tannaitic literature<sup>186</sup> "in connection with the vessels of the Temple."<sup>187</sup> However, in his book dedicated to the symbolism of the Kabbalah,<sup>188</sup> Scholem discovered that this rabbinical term is a remarkable likeness of a term which can be found in the narrative of

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<sup>182</sup> Scholem, Origins of the Kabbalah, 20.

<sup>183</sup> A parasang equals three miles.

<sup>184</sup> See his lecture "The Age of Shiur Qomah Speculation and a Passage in Origen" in G. Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965).

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, 38. This statement is very important for the date of 2 Enoch.

<sup>186</sup> Yerushalmi Shabbat 2d.

<sup>187</sup> Gruenwald, 213.

<sup>188</sup> G. Scholem, Elements of the Kabbalah and its Symbolism (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1977), 165 (in Hebrew).

the Slavonic Book of Enoch. If this hypothesis is correct,<sup>189</sup> then 2 Enoch could be the earliest text which contains a reference to the rabbinical term "the measurement of the body."

At this point, further examination of the text itself is warranted. The term is situated in a section which is devoted to Enoch's description of the appearance of the Lord (the features of His face and the limbs of His body). Enoch tells his children:

...I have heard the words from the fiery lips of the Lord. For the lips of the Lord are a furnace of fire, and his words are the fiery flames which come out. You, my children, you see my face, a human being created just like yourselves; I, I am one who has seen the face of the Lord, like iron made burning hot by a fire, emitting sparks. For you gaze into (my) eyes, a human being created just like yourselves; but I have gazed into the eyes of the Lord,<sup>190</sup> like the rays of the shining sun and terrifying the eyes of the human being.<sup>191</sup> You, {my} children, you see my right hand beckoning you, a human being created identical to yourselves; but I, I have seen the right hand of the Lord, beckoning me, who fills heaven.<sup>192</sup> You, you see *the extent of my body*,<sup>193</sup> the same as your own; but I, I have seen *the extent of the Lord*,<sup>194</sup> without measure<sup>195</sup> and

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<sup>189</sup> Scholem did not refer to the Slavonic original. He used for his conclusions Vaillant's French translation of the term as "l'étendue de mon corps" and "l'étendue du Seigneur," Vaillant, 39.

<sup>190</sup> ѠЧНЮ ГОСПОДНЮ, Vaillant, 38.

<sup>191</sup> ЧЛОВѢКОУ, Vaillant, 38. This technical term is a very interesting parallel to the anthropomorphism of "Shi'ur Qomah."

<sup>192</sup> ДЕСНИЦУ ГОСПОДНЮ ПОМАВАЮЩИ МН, ИСПОЛНЮЩИ НЕГО, Vaillant, 38. A better translation of this passage is "the right hand of the Lord, beckoning me, which (referred to the hand) fills heaven." In this suggested form the passage is an interesting parallel to the imagery of "The Measurement of the Body" where the small finger of God fills the whole world.

<sup>193</sup> ѠБЪЯТНЕ ТѢЛА, Vaillant, 38.

<sup>194</sup> ѠБЪЯТНЕ, ГОСПОДНЕ Vaillant, 38.

without analogy,<sup>196</sup> who has no end (39:3-6).<sup>197</sup>

Andersen noted that the first part of the term -  $\omega\beta\epsilon\lambda\alpha\tau\eta\epsilon$  (objatie) - is a rare word, which literally means "range" or "compass."<sup>198</sup> This Slavonic word may be more closely understood when related to English words "volume," "size," "capacity," "extent," "scope,"<sup>199</sup> or "definite quantity." It is very close to the meanings which can be associated with the Aramaic term  $\text{שׁיטור}$ . Markus Jastrow translated the term as "proportion," "standard," "definite quantity," "size," or "limit."<sup>200</sup> In Rabbinical literature, the term is often used for designation of legal quantities or proportions for eatables, as for example "all legal minimum sizes for eatables carried abroad on the Sabbath."<sup>201</sup>

Another part of the Merkabah term -  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\alpha$  (tela) literally means "physical body." The meaning is very close to the Aramaic term  $\text{קומה}$  (qomah) which means "body."<sup>202</sup>

<sup>195</sup>  $\beta\epsilon\zeta\mu\acute{\alpha}\rho\eta\omicron$ , Vaillant, 38.

<sup>196</sup>  $\beta\epsilon\lambda\pi\eta\kappa\lambda\alpha\delta\eta\omicron$ , Vaillant, 38. Also could be translated as "without example."

<sup>197</sup> Andersen, 163.

<sup>198</sup> Andersen, 163.

<sup>199</sup> Actually Andersen uses these terms in his translation: "extent" in the short recension and "scope" in the long one.

<sup>200</sup> M. Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature (New York: Shalom Publication, 1967), vol. II, 1565.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 1565.

<sup>202</sup> Scholem noted that the term qomah was often translated as "height" ("Measurement of the Height"), being used in the Biblical sense. He stresses that it is a wrong translation, because the term in this text signifies "body," as it is used in the Aramaic incantation texts. See G. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, 364. Marcus Jastrow in his dictionary defines the term as "height, stature, man's height." M. Jastrow, A Dictionary, 1332.



The full term can be translated as "The Extent of the Body" or as "The Measurement of the Body." The meaning is very close to the Rabbinical term שייעור קומה, which was used in the early Merkabah text of the second century C. E., "Shiur Qomah."

### Other Points

#### Adail, Arukhaz and a Great Aeon

The next focus again returns to the Account of Creation in the narrative of 2 Enoch.

During His instructions in Ma'ase Bereshit the Lord told Enoch that in the beginning of creation He had thought to create a visible creation from the invisible. This process occupies an important place in the narrative of 2 Enoch and demonstrates a complicated imagery of this stage of creation. For further explanation, here is the entire passage:

The Lord told Enoch:

And I thought up the idea of establishing a foundation, to create a visible creation. And I commanded the lowest things: "Let one of the invisible things come out visibly!" And Adail<sup>203</sup> descended, *extremely large*.<sup>204</sup> And I looked at him, and, behold, in his belly he had *a great age*.<sup>205</sup> And I said to him, "Disintegrate yourself, Adail, and let what is disintegrated from you become visible." And he disintegrated himself, and there came out from him *the great age*. And thus it carried all the creation which I had wished to create. And I saw how good it was. And I placed for myself a throne, and I sat down on it. To the light I spoke: "You go up

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<sup>203</sup> ἸΔΟΝΛΖ.

<sup>204</sup> A better translation is "extremely great."

<sup>205</sup> Β'ΓΚΑ ΒΕΛΗΚΑΓΟ, Vaillant, 30. It can be also translated as "great aeon."

higher and be solidified and become the foundation for the highest things." And there is nothing higher than the light, except nothing itself. And I spoke, I straightened myself upward from my throne. And I called out a second time into the lowest things, and I said, "Let one of the invisible things come out solid and visible." There came out Arukhas<sup>206</sup>, solid and heavy and very black. And I saw how suitable he was. And I said to him, "Come down low and become solid! And become the foundation of the lowest things!" And there is nothing lower than the darkness, except nothing itself (24-25-26).<sup>207</sup>

At this point, one should examine a wide variety of scholarly opinions about the essential terms and names mentioned in the passage. Scholem asserts that the image of the Great Aeon has important reminiscences of a prominent Cabalistic text, "The Book of Bahir." He wrote that the description of the creation of the primordial aeon, which in Bahir is connected with the symbolism of planting of the cosmic tree, has specific allusions to the great aeon Adail in the Slavonic Book of Enoch.<sup>208</sup> Scholem presents a convincing argument in establishing the fact that this symbol of the great aeon is a kind of allegory to the primordial light<sup>209</sup> of the Aggadah, which preceded the rest of creation.<sup>210</sup> He lists several similar features, for example the creation of the throne and the exegesis on Genesis 1:3.<sup>211</sup> These associations seem very convincing.

His parallel to Sefer Yezirah 2:6, concerning "how the invisible

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<sup>206</sup> ארזחאזב.

<sup>207</sup> Anderson, 145.

<sup>208</sup> Scholem, Origins of the Kabbalah, 73.

<sup>209</sup> "or ganuz."

<sup>210</sup> Scholem, 73.

<sup>211</sup> Scholem, 73.

things come out visibly,"<sup>212</sup> is a weak point.

In further discussion of the name Adail,<sup>213</sup> Scholem criticizes Vaillant's suggestion that the name is derived from a Hebrew word 'ado, which means "his eternity, his aeon."<sup>214</sup> Scholem, however, corrects this idea demonstrating that in Hebrew the word "ad" has the peculiar characteristic of being unable to carry a pronominal suffix.<sup>215</sup>

Another proper name of the narrative, Arukhaz, also presents several problems of interpretation. Charles believes that Arukhaz may have originated from Hebrew word רַקִּיעַ ("firmament").<sup>216</sup> Andersen thinks that the name could probably be derived from the Greek word ἀρχή. However he points out that the ending -as, which is not Slavonic, is doubtful.<sup>217</sup> His other option is the connection with a

<sup>212</sup> "From tohu, he created the real and he made nonbeing into a being, and out of the visible ether he hewed great columns" (Yezirah 2:6).

<sup>213</sup> Several attempts have been made to give the etymology of the name Adail. Charles asserts that it is derived from Hebrew - יד אל = "The hand of God" (The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, vol. II, 445). Another scholar L. Cry offers to read it as אור אל, "the light of God". In his opinion, some letters in the Hebrew word אור, "light" were transformed. Resh was changed into dalet. Waw was transposed. As results of these transformations it sounds like Adoil. See L. Cry, "Quelques Noms d'Ange ou d'Étres Mystérieux en II Hénoc," Revue Biblique 49 (1940): 201. Milik comments that the etymology of "Adail" is uncertain, "perhaps a Greek and Semitic hybrid: Hades + El." J.T. Milik, The Books of Enoch, 113.

<sup>214</sup> Vaillant, xi.

<sup>215</sup> Scholem, Origins of the Kabbalah, 73.

<sup>216</sup> The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, 445.

<sup>217</sup> Andersen, 144-145.

Hebrew word aruk ("extended").<sup>218</sup>

Vaillant supports the view that the term "Arukhaz" is connected with the image of foundation (Greek, στερέωμα; Hebrew, רָקִיעַ). In his opinion it was composed from Hebrew words aruch, "arranged," and az, "hard."<sup>219</sup>

Milik traced the meaning "Arukhaz" to the Hebrew feminine term אַרוּכָה ("geographical basin") transcribed with the masculine flexional ending as Aruchaz.<sup>220</sup>

There are other possible interpretations of the terms "Great Aeon," "Adail," and "Arukhas." In the Zohar I, 17a - 18a one may find some provocative material from the Account of Creation describing the same stage in the story of creation which also began, as the passage of 2 Enoch, with the idea of establishing a "foundation."

Let there be a firmament"- an *extension* took place, one from the other. El is the right-hand cluster, "great God" (אל גדול). An *extension* occurred from the waters in order to complete this name, El, and it was included in this *extension*, one with the other, and there was *extended* from El-Elohim. These letters, HYM, were *extended* and reversed, thus becoming the *lower* waters, YMH. The extension took place on *the second day* -the upper waters, HYM, "this is the great sea" (Psalm 104:25). "The sea" is the *upper* waters, the exact opposite of these letters: YMH, the *Lower* waters. Once they had been put in order they all became one single whole, and this name extended into several places. The upper waters were male and the lower waters were female. At first there were *waters within waters*, until they were separated, so that a distinction could be made between the upper and the lower waters: these were Elohim,

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>219</sup> Vaillant, xi-xii.

<sup>220</sup> Milik, 113.

and these were Adonai, the upper he and the lower he. It is written "And God made the firmament."<sup>221</sup>

First of all the applicable correlation between this narrative and the passage of 2 Enoch lies in the similarities between "Adail"<sup>222</sup>(or "Adoil") and אל גדול - El gadol (or gadol-El, גדול אל), "great one." The fact is that, in the Slavonic text, immediately following the introduction of the name "Adoil," we have his definition as "great one": "АДОИЛЪ ПРВЕАНКЫ СЪАЛО,"<sup>223</sup> "Adoil, great one,"<sup>224</sup> which in Hebrew is identical with his name.<sup>225</sup>

A second facet is that the title El Gadol in the Zohar is identified with *upper* waters. A similar pair can be traced in 2 Enoch where Adoil is matched with *upper* foundation.

There is a symmetrical picture, found in the case of Arukhaz: Arukhaz, *lower* foundation in 2 Enoch, and "other *extension*,"<sup>226</sup> *lower* waters in the Zohar.

### "The Lad"

As was already mentioned, the most impressive alignments between the texts of Slavonic Enoch and Merkabah tradition are dependent upon developing the themes connected with the Celestial

<sup>221</sup> The Wisdom of the Zohar, 579-580.

<sup>222</sup> Actually, in Slavonic text this name is "Adoil"- АДОНИЛЬ.

<sup>223</sup> Vaillant, 29-30.

<sup>224</sup> Andersen translated it as "extremely large"; see earlier.

<sup>225</sup> The title El gadol, "great God," can be connected with the term "Great Aeon," which came out from the belly of "Great One,"- Adoil. Compare also Zohar's narrative: "At first there were *waters within waters*."

<sup>226</sup> I support the opinion that the name "Arukhas" derived from a Hebrew word aruk, "extension."

Titles of Enoch (Metatron). They give new evidence that the Metatron tradition has deep connections with early, possibly preMishnaic, mystical literature.

The titles or "names" of the main character (Enoch or Metatron) of early Jewish mystical literature ("apocalyptic" as well as "merkabah") denote something more important than the mere facts of the textual content. The theological meanings of these "names" probably have long-lasting theological ramifications for the "scholarly" destiny of certain documents, and the understanding of the traditions behind these texts.

The process of the hidden theological transfiguration, when one name ("Enoch") suddenly becomes transformed into another name ("Metatron"), does not demonstrate the continuity of textual tradition. On the contrary, there rather is a kind of gap between the Enoch literature (1 Enoch, Qumran Enoch, 2 Enoch) on one side, and the Metatron literature (Shiur Qomah, 3 Enoch, Hekhaloth Rabbati, Hekhaloth Zoterati, etc.) on the another. In this situation, the historical and theological provenance of the name "Metatron" still remains an enigma for scholarship.

It seems that something is missing between these two great theological streams regarding the names. The results of the situation of the "missing link" have had negative consequences regarding the understanding of the mystical literature of the "intertestamental" period.

Fortunately, an apparent "bridge" has been found which may fill the gap between the prerabbinic Enoch and the rabbinical Metatron. This bridge possibly exists in *the indissoluble continuity*

of the titles of this main character, which are common to both traditions. The titles, as the developed images of the Heavenly *roles* of Enoch (Metatron), help us to see transparent theological reality behind the enigmatic "names" with their hidden meanings.

A good illustration of this hypothetical promise can be the observation of another Celestial title of Enoch (Metatron) - Na'ar, נער, which can be translated as "The Boy" or "The Lad."<sup>227</sup>

According to Jewish mystical lore (The Zohar), this title is a type of "proof" of the theological assumption that Metatron is the translated Enoch ben Yared. The tradition derives this title from the exegesis of Proverbs 22:6 (חנף לנער), which was interpreted as "Enoch was made into the Na'ar, i.e. Metatron."<sup>228</sup>

The theological meaning of the title in Merkabah is connected with several possible explanations. According to one of them, the name may be explained by the fact that Metatron grows old, and is then constantly rejuvenated.<sup>229</sup> Another possible explanation is that he is young in comparison with other angels who existed from the beginning.<sup>230</sup> Finally it can indicate Metatron's role as the Lad (Boy) of the Shekhina. As Tishby explains "he ministers to her, derives

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<sup>227</sup> According to Tishby it is the most popular title of Metatron. "Metatron is known by many names and titles, but his regular designation, found even in the earlier literature, is נער, na'ar - "boy", or "lad)." Tishby, 628.

<sup>228</sup> Odeberg, part 1, 119.

<sup>229</sup> I. Tishby, 628: "...it is the mystery of the boy who reaches old age and then reverts to his youth as at the beginning."

<sup>230</sup> Odeberg, part 1, 80.

influence from her, and is assisted by her in his work."<sup>231</sup> In many aspects, the title remains a mysterious theological puzzle.

But the most mysterious thing connected with this title is the fact that great scholars of Jewish mystical literature (Scholem, Odeberg, etc.) did not find the important title in the narrative of 2 Enoch.

One possible explanation of this situation can be found in the evidence that Vaillant did not pay enough attention to the variants of the reading of the term "Youth" in his edition, considering this reading as a "corruption" and consequently dedicated just a few sentences to this fact. According to his observations this "corruption" became possible because the Slavonic word  $\text{ѢНОШЕ}$ , the vocative form of "Enoch," is very similar to "Youth,"  $\text{ЮНОШЕ}$ .<sup>232</sup> It probably explains why those scholars who based their research on Vaillant's text also missed this vital point. Only the new collation of manuscripts for Andersen's translation again drew attention to this variant.

It is ironic, in relation to this situation, that Andersen, who dedicated a lot of attention to this variant, did not trace the possible parallels between this name and the title of Metatron, but J. H. Charlesworth gives a short note to the verse that "It cannot be a coincidence that this title is identical with that of Enoch (= Metatron) in 3 Enoch."<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Tishby, 628.

<sup>232</sup> See Vaillant, 8.

<sup>233</sup> Andersen, 119.



### Some Conclusions

It would be useful now to give a general picture of the discovered Merkabah material. This picture will be mainly connected with the form and the content of examined textual material.

1. The observations show that the parallels between the narrative of the short recension of 2 Enoch from one side and "Merkabah" material from another side are situated in chapters 21 - 39 (according to the classification of Andersen, which includes 73 chapters). These parallels are mainly dedicated to two subjects:

a. The heavenly transformations of Enoch near the Throne of Glory and his new functions (usual themes of the Account of Chariot), which are found in chapters 21-24 and 33-39.

b. The instructions about the creation and cosmogony (usual themes of the Account of Creation), which are found in chapters 24-32<sup>234</sup>.

2. These observations testify to the understanding that in the central part of the text of the short recension of the book (chapters 21-39) there are two narrative blocks dedicated to two main accounts of the Merkabah tradition:

a. The Works of the Divine Chariots - ma'aseh merkabah.

b. The Works of the Creation of the World - ma'aseh bereshit.

The titles of Enoch (Metatron), the themes of the "garments of glory," and "the measurement of the body" are situated in the section

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<sup>234</sup> The short recension doesn't include chapters 31 and 32.

of ma'aseh merkabah of 2 Enoch (Chapters 21-22 and 33-39). In Merkabah tradition these "items" are typically located in this section. The following is a brief outline:

The titles:

"The Prince of Presence" - 21:3; 21:5; 22:6; 22:7; 36:3.

"The Knower of Secrets" - 23:1-2; 24:3; 36:3.

"The Heavenly Scribe" - 22:11; 23:4; 23:6; 33:8-10; 36:3.

"The Witness of Divine Judgment" - 36:3.

"The Lad" - 21:3.

Other themes:

"The garments of the Glory" - 22:8-9.

"The measurement of the body" - 39:3-6.

On the other hand, the theme that God Himself opened the secret of creation to Enoch, the themes of "big stones," and the creation the firmament (Adoil - Aruk haz) are found in ma'aseh bereshit of 2 Enoch - chapters 24-32. The following is a brief outline:

"God Himself opened the secrets" - 24:2-4.

"Stones" - 28:2-4; 29:3.

"Adail, Aruk haz" - 24;25;26.

3. The preceding observations demonstrate close relationships and an interdependence between both mystical accounts in the narrative of the short recension of 2 Enoch, in chapters 21-39. It shares certain similarities with the rabbinical perspective where "Ma'aseh Merkavah go hand in hand with the Ma'aseh Bereshit, that is, Jewish cosmology, and, together, they form the two branches of

the esoteric teachings."<sup>235</sup>

4. The observations also illustrate that the textual stratum of these chapters includes Slavonic terms which have clear linguistic parallels to certain technical terms of Merkabah tradition.

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<sup>235</sup> Gruenwald, vii.

CHAPTER III  
SEARCH FOR THE MERKABAH COMMUNITY

The Question of Legitimization and the Community of the Text

The assumption that some features of the text of 2 Enoch have some similarities with the Merkabah tradition does not resolve the problem of the text. On the other hand, these similarities raise extremely difficult questions about paradoxical features of this Merkabah material. For understanding the differences of Slavonic Merkabah let us review some traditional settings of classic Merkabah material.

Traditionally, the scholars of this material stress that the theme of Torah is one of the fundamental unifying ideological principles behind the corpus of Merkabah literature. In their opinion a large proportion of material in this tradition as well as the teleology of the heavenly ascent itself are directed toward the specific aim of mastering the Torah.<sup>236</sup> It is also important to note in this context that in the bulk of classic Merkabah material a specific title of Metatron was "Prince of Torah," Sar Torah. In this role, he was the prime target of the adjurations of famous scholars of the Torah - R. Ishmael, R. Akiba, etc. - because the chief benefit that they expected

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<sup>236</sup> David J. Halperin, The Faces of the Chariot (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1988), 376.

from their heavenly journeys was a magical ability to master the Torah without effort.<sup>237</sup>

Another aspect of this problem is connected with legitimization of the mystical lore of Merkabah in the framework of orthodox rabbinical Judaism. I. Chernus shows that even in the earliest stages of the tradition Merkabah was closely connected with haggadot, nurtured on the stories about Moses who climbed to heaven and seized Torah from the angel.<sup>238</sup> In the opinion of Chernus, use of the Sinai imagery was a kind of legitimating paradigm which helped early Merkabah mystics to avoid the situation where they could be labeled as "minim," heretics, which usually were represented in the Jewish orthodox mindset as Jewish Gnostics or other Hellenistic groups. The consequences of this sort of labeling could be an exclusion from the rabbinical community, a fate which Merkabah mystics obviously wished to avoid.<sup>239</sup> The strong emphasis on the Sinai experience and other names and symbols connected with this event like Moses, the Torah, the Great Synagogue, etc. gave the mystics an interpretive framework in which their Merkabah material has a relevant ideological meaning in the traditional community. This "Sinai" bridge later had certain consequences for the "extension" of the Jewish canon to the assumptions about Unwritten Torah given

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<sup>237</sup> Halperin, 384.

<sup>238</sup> In this situation some scholars consider the texts like "Ascension of Moses" as closely connected with the earliest stages of Merkabah.

<sup>239</sup> Ira Chernus, Mysticism in Rabbinical Judaism (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982), 13.

by the Lord to Moses on the mountain of Sinai.<sup>240</sup> This extension of "the fence around the Torah" to new mystical dimensions also had very deep influences on the theology of heavenly ascent itself. The teleology of these journeys were rethought from Gnostic value of the ascent as the Great Escape<sup>241</sup> to the rabbinical understanding of instrumental purposes of these visionary experiences. As Chernus says, "While the mystic in his ascent gains revealed knowledge, that knowledge could not be redemptive in itself. For the fundamental knowledge necessary for redemption is that revealed in the paradigmatic event - the revelation of Torah."<sup>242</sup>

In the light of these observations it is evident that the community behind the text of 2 Enoch had some reasons to avoid traditional ways of legitimization of their mystical material. Jewish in form, this Merkabah does not manifest traditional Judaic symbols in its content. This situation could be explained by several factors:

- a. Later Christian redactions eliminated all Judaic imagery from the material.
- b. The material belonged to a specific non-orthodox Jewish

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<sup>240</sup> In this context Sinai itself has been remodeled as great Merkabah's event - some sort of Merkabah for all Israel. The late compilation of Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer says, "R. Elasar b. Arak says: When the Holy One blessed be He descended to give the Torah to Israel, 600,000 angels descended with him corresponding to the 600,000 men of Israel and... they crowned Israel with the crown of the ineffable Name." Chernus, 2.

<sup>241</sup> Generally in Gnosticism the reception of revealed experiences (knowledge) is the central redemptive act. See Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).

<sup>242</sup> Chernus, 14.

Merkabah group, which did not care about possible exclusion from the orthodox community.

c. The members of 2 Enoch's community deliberately wanted to separate themselves from the rest of the orthodox Merkabah movement by the rejection of these authentic Jewish symbols.

d. The text of 2 Enoch represents a pre-legitimization stage in the developing of Merkabah tradition when the Sinai imagery was not yet included as an essential part of the material.

As we can see, the problem of the community of the text cannot be resolved without the clarification of the question about the possible date of the text itself. We need a certain understanding of the time when the formative ideological core of 2 Enoch was developed. Therefore our next step will be an attempt to locate this period from the point of view of Merkabah tradition.

#### The Date of the Text

We mentioned earlier that in the opinion of some scholars the Merkabah stratum of 2 Enoch apparently belongs to the earliest stage of Merkabah tradition. Odeberg and Scholem showed that the classical examples of Merkabah and Hekhaloth literature (Shiur Qomah, 3 Enoch) depend heavily on the content and technical terminology of 2 Enoch. If this hypothesis is correct we can assume that the main bulk of the material of the text was composed not later than the first or second century C. E.

In spite of the extremely ambiguous nature of the text there are some evidences which in our opinion give an opportunity to locate the date of the Merkabah stratum with even greater precision.

For these purposes let us again turn to the text itself and find these marks of time in the content of the material.

In chapter 8 of Slavonic Enoch there is an interesting description of the heavenly garden Paradise. The text says:

And the man took me from there. They brought me up to the third heaven. And they placed me in the midst of Paradise. And that place has an appearance of pleasantness that has never been seen. Every tree was in full flower. Every fruit was ripe, every food was in yield profusely; every fragrance was pleasant. And the four rivers were flowing past with gentle movement, with every kind of garden producing every kind of good food. And the tree of life is in that place, under which the Lord takes a rest when the Lord takes a walk in Paradise... This place has been prepared, Enoch, for the righteous...for them this place has been prepared as an eternal inheritance...<sup>243</sup>

It is interesting to note that the Slavonic text here uses two different terms for the word "Paradise" - one of them the traditional term  $\rho\alpha\iota$  (rai), which still is in use in Russian and in other Slavic languages. Another term is an extremely rare Slavonic word,  $\pi\omicron\rho\omicron\delta\alpha$  (poroda), which phonetically is very close to the Hebrew Merkabah term  $\text{פֶּרְדִּים}$ , pardes, the place of the destination in the heavenly ascent. We don't want to make a point here about distinct Merkabah features of this passage because someone can say that this Slavonic term could be easily traced to the Greek word  $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\iota\sigma\omicron\varsigma$  which is also very similar phonetically to  $\pi\omicron\rho\omicron\delta\alpha$ . We want to lead our investigation in another direction. We want to understand the theological differences between the usage of the word "paradise" in 2

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<sup>243</sup> Andersen, 115.



Enoch as the certain topological term to designate the Heavenly Garden that is located in the third heaven and the usage of the word פֶּרְדִּים in later Merkabah tradition, which in reality was designated not the certain heavenly "geographical" place but rather the process of the heavenly ascent.

A famous Talmudic story dedicated to the Merkabah experience tells us about four rabbis who entered Paradise (פֶּרְדִּים). The passage referred to the dangers confronting the mystics in their ascent through the seven palaces of the seventh heaven. The passage says, "The four entered in Pardes. Simeon ben Azai had a look at heaven and died; Simeon ben Zomah had a look and become insane; Elisha ben Abuya vandalized Paradise; only rabbi Akiba saw the forbidden terrain and managed to escape."<sup>244</sup> The story is relevant to our research because it shows the terminological changes of the word "paradise" inside Merkabah tradition. As Scholem shows,

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<sup>244</sup> Scholem gives additional Hekhaloth material, which helps to understand what really happened with these fellows. The passage certainly adds something to the situation: "R. Akiba warns his colleagues 'When you come to the place of the pure marble plates, do not say 'Water! Water!' For it is said: 'He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.'... Ben Azai was deemed worthy and stood at the gate of the sixth palace and saw the ethereal splendor of the pure marble plates. He opened his mouth and said twice, 'Water! Water!' In the twinkling of an eye they decapitated him and threw eleven thousand iron bars at him. This shall be a sign for all generations that no one should err at the gate of the sixth palace... Ben Zomah beheld the splendor of the marble plates and he took them for water and his body could bear it not to ask them, but his mind could not bear it and he went out of his mind...R. Akiba ascended in peace and descended in peace." Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism..., 14-15.

in the classic Merkabah lore the words "entered Paradise" do not relate to a certain topographical place in the heavenly realm. He illustrates it by using Rashi's commentary that explains the words "entered pardes" (ונכנסו לפרדס) as "ascended to heaven by means of a sacred name."<sup>245</sup>

In 2 Enoch we have another picture. As Gruenwald pointed out, the word "paradise" in 2 Enoch is still a place in heaven and not a *terminus technicus* for theosophical speculation.<sup>246</sup> This usage helps us to clarify chronological settings of the text of 2 Enoch and trace its core to the period when apocalyptic tradition just began its transformation into Merkabah settings. This topographical understanding of "paradise" is very close to other apocalyptic texts, such as the "Apocalypse of Moses," which also "geographically" considers Paradise only as the place in the third heaven.<sup>247</sup> It is important to note that the same position was held by the Qumran community. The theological shift was not yet made at Qumran. Milik's publications of Enoch's fragments showed that the Qumranites<sup>248</sup> used in their texts the term פרדס קשטא (pardes kushta)<sup>249</sup>- "paradise of righteousness" (as the designation of the

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<sup>245</sup> Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition, 17.

<sup>246</sup> I. Gruenwald, Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism, 50.

<sup>247</sup> Apocalypse of Moses, xxxviii, 4.

<sup>248</sup> About Merkabah at Qumran see: David Halperin, The Faces of Chariots. Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1988), 49-55.

<sup>249</sup> See for example 4QEn1xxvi in J. T. Milik, The Books of Enoch. Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4 (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1976), 232. Another early text of this tradition, 1 Ethiopic

place for righteous souls) which we have already seen is closely connected with the topographical descriptions of 2 Enoch.<sup>250</sup>

Moreover the evolution of the term "paradise" in the Merkabah tradition and generally in the pharisaic mindset puts the date of 2 Slavonic Enoch not later than about 55 C. E.,<sup>251</sup> when Paul, talking about his spiritual experiences, which were probably legitimate in his community, wrote to the Corinthians: "I know a man belonging to Christ, who, fourteen years ago, was caught up to the third heaven - whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know, God knows. And I know that this man *was caught up into Paradise* - whether in the body or out of the body, I don't know, God knows - and he heard things that cannot be told, that man may not utter."<sup>252</sup> We can see that a "paradigm shift" from a "topographical" to a "theosophical" usage of the word had already been made by this time, and Paul clearly articulated this situation.<sup>253</sup>

This assumption about the early composition of 2 Enoch, which

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Enoch, also uses the term "the Garden of Righteousness" in its description of Paradise: "And I came to the Garden of Righteousness..." M. Knibb, The Ethiopic Book of Enoch (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1978), vol. 2, 122.

<sup>250</sup> "This place has been prepared, Enoch, for the *righteous*...for them this place has been prepared as an *eternal inheritance*." 2 Enoch 9.

<sup>251</sup> About the date of 2 Corinthians see: J. W. Thompson, The Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (Austin: R. B. Sweet Co., 1970), 15-16.

<sup>252</sup> II Corinthians 12:2-4.

<sup>253</sup> Scholem proves that the Baraita about the four uses the same terminology as Paul. It gives Scholem the opportunity to say that "Paul's testimony is a link between older Jewish texts and the Gnosis of the Tannaitic Merkabah mystics." Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition, 18.

probably happened before the destruction of the Second Temple, corresponds to other information which can be found in the text. Other important evidence for an early date of the Merkabah material in the document is connected also with the imagery of Paradise's description. As we remember, the passage mentions the Tree of Life, under which the Lord takes a rest when the Lord takes a walk in Paradise. As Gruenwald notes, this description relates to the original abode of the Shekhinah before the Shekhinah ascended to heaven on account of the sins of mankind.<sup>254</sup> We could not find this place empty in later Merkabah tradition. 3 Enoch as the classic example of developed tradition already has a complete description of the abode of Shekhinah. It says, that "from the day when the Holy One, blessed be He, expelled the first Adam from the Garden of Eden, Shekina [Odeberg spelled the name in this way. A.O.] was dwelling upon a Kerub under the Tree of Life."<sup>255</sup> We should understand that the theology of Shekhinah's removal was generally connected in rabbinical and Merkabah circles with the experience of the destruction of the Second Temple, in spite of the fact that in its theological aspect this removal was traced to the sins of Adam and the Flood's generation.<sup>256</sup> This aspect gives the right to say that the

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<sup>254</sup> Gruenwald, 50.

<sup>255</sup> Odeberg, 13-14.

<sup>256</sup> According to later Merkabah material the removal of Shekhinah had several stages. "Shekhinah was removed from earth already with Adam's sins: to the first heaven, and then in six subsequent stages corresponding to the six following epochs of men's degradation from heaven to heaven (the epochs are: the sins of Cain, of the generation of Enoch, of the generation of the Flood, of the

narrative of 2 Enoch was probably composed before the destruction.

In addition, we can mention that 2 Enoch in the aspect of the Tree's imagery probably represents the intermediate stage between the traditions of Hekhalot literature, which are literally filled with Shekhinah's symbolism, and the tradition of the early documents like 1 Ethiopic Enoch and Qumran fragments, which do not mention at all the presence of the Lord in connection with the Tree and try to connect the Tree's imagery with the story about the deeds of Adam and Eve in Paradise. In conclusion it is possible to say that the date of the core of the text was composed in the period between the composition of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the date of 2 Corinthians, probably before the destruction of the Second Temple.

Now when we have completed our analysis of the hypothetical date of the text and thus located the hypothetical community of the text in certain chronological boundaries it is time to start our search for these communities. It seems to me that it would be useful to examine some details of the narrative which could represent the ideologies of religious groups which were marginal to orthodox Judaism at this time. One of these details in the text of 2 Enoch is connected with the Melchisedek legend which occupies a substantial part of the book.

#### Melchisedek's Portion of 2 Enoch

In the context of ambiguity and uncertainty of cultural and theological origins of the Book of the Secrets of Enoch even distant

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Dispersion, of the Sodomites and of the Egyptians in the days of Abraham)." Odeberg, 14.

voices of certain theological themes in the text become very important. One of these important theological reminiscences of 2 Enoch is the theme of Melchisedek - the legendary priest of God Most High.

Before the exposition of the content of the story it is worthy to mention that for a long time the material was considered to be an interpolation in the text of 2 Enoch. Charles, Bonwetsch, and Morfill thought that this theme was sort of an appendix and did not belong to the main body of the material. For this reason the legend was not investigated for a long time. Even Fred Horton in his fundamental research dedicated to the Melchisedek tradition<sup>257</sup> ignores the material of 2 Enoch on the basis that it is found only in one recension. Andersen corrects this mistake showing that this argument is not itself logical. In his opinion, based on his new collation of manuscripts, the facts are otherwise; the Melchisedek tradition is found in both recensions, in six manuscripts which represent four text families. His final conclusion is that "there is no evidence that the second part ever existed separately."<sup>258</sup> The omission of the legend from the important manuscript B (according

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<sup>257</sup> Fred Horton, The Melchizedek Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

to Vaillant's classification - N) could be explained by the fear of sacrilege. Rubinstein shows that in spite of the absence of the legend in this manuscript, phrases from later chapters treating of the priesthood of Meltuselah and Nir and the birth of Melchisedek are found interpolated in chapter XVII.<sup>259</sup>

### Exposition

Melchisedek's narrative occupies the last chapters of the book. The content of the story is connected with the family of Nir, the priest, who is pictured in the book as "second son of Lamekh"<sup>260</sup> and brother of Noah. Sophonim,<sup>261</sup> the wife of Nir, gave birth to a child "in her old age,"<sup>262</sup> right "on the day of her death."<sup>263</sup> She conceived the child, "being sterile" and "without having slept with her husband."<sup>264</sup> The book told that "Nir the priest had not slept with her from the day that the Lord had appointed him in front of the face of

<sup>258</sup> Andersen, 92.

<sup>259</sup> Rubinstein, 5.

<sup>260</sup> Нира сына Ламехова второго, Vaillant, 72.

<sup>261</sup> Софонимъ.

<sup>262</sup> во время старости, Vaillant, 74.

<sup>263</sup> и в день смерти, Vaillant, 74.

<sup>264</sup> Certain parallels with the birth of Jesus were discussed by scholars. Andersen concludes that "it is certainly not an imitation of the account of Jesus' birth found in Matthew and Luke... No Christian could have developed such a blasphemy." Andersen, 97.

the people."<sup>265</sup> Sophonim hid herself during all the days of her pregnancy. Finally, when she was at the day of birth, Nir remembered his wife and called her to himself in the temple. She came to him and he saw that she was pregnant. Nir, filled with shame, wanted to cast her from him, but she died at his feet. Melchisedek was born from Sophonim's corpse. When Nir and Noah came in to bury Sophonim they saw the child sitting beside the corpse, and "having his clothing on him." According to the book they were terrified because "the child was fully developed physically."<sup>266</sup> The child "spoke with his lips and he blessed the Lord."<sup>267</sup>

An important point of the story is the fact that the newborn child was marked by the sign of priesthood. The story tells that "the badge of priesthood was on his chest, and it was glorious in appearance."<sup>268</sup> Nir and Noah dressed the child in the garments of priesthood and they gave him the holy bread and he ate it. They decided to hide him, fearing that the people would have him put to death. Finally the Lord commanded His archangel Gabriel (in the

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<sup>265</sup> Нир ерѣи не спа с нею шт дни нмже постави Господь в лице люден,  
Vaillant, 74.

<sup>266</sup> штрок свершенъ тѣломъ, Vaillant, 78.

<sup>267</sup> глаголаше оуты сконми и благословаше Господа, Vaillant, 78.

<sup>268</sup> И се печать свѣтительства на прѣсѣх его и славенъ взоромъ, Vaillant,  
78.



long recension, Michael) to take the child and place him to be nursed<sup>269</sup> in "the paradise Eden"<sup>270</sup> so that he might become the high priest after the Flood. Final passages of the short recension describe the ascent of Melchisedek on the wings of Gabriel, who placed him in the paradise Eden.<sup>271</sup>

It is important to mention that our retelling of the story is based on the material of the short recension. The long one has a more extended form with a certain Christian flavor.<sup>272</sup> One of the

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<sup>269</sup>This preservation of Melchisedek as protection against the unrighteousness of the world gives additional parallel to the Qumranic term קִשְׁטָא פִּרְדֵּס - "paradise of righteousness" which we mentioned early. See G. Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition, 16.

<sup>270</sup> В РАИ ѢДЕМАИ, Vaillant, 82. This expression and whole story about taking Melchisedek into Pardes by Gabriel on his wings could be another interesting detail of Merkabah narrative of 2 Enoch. See G. Scholem's detailed analysis of the Merkabah technical term "pardes" in the context of Paul's passage in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 in Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition, 14-19.

<sup>271</sup> И ВЪЗЪ ГАВРИИ ШТРОКА МЕЛХИСЕДЕКА В НОЦЬ ТОУ НА КРИЛЪ ЕВОН И ПОЛОЖИ В РАИ ѢДЕМЪСТЕМЪ, Vaillant, 82-84.

<sup>272</sup> The possible connection between the Melchisedek legend and the literature of the New Testament was discussed by some scholars. S. Pines mentioned that the account of Melchisedek in some respects is reminiscent of the Epistle to the Hebrews. See Pines, 74. On the contrary, Andersen rejects any possible parallels to the New Testament. He says that "in spite of evident biblical style, there is no point at which it can be shown to depend on the text of the New Testament... There is not a distinctively Christian idea in the book... apart from similarities to Jude and 2 Peter, which are a distinct problem, 2 Enoch comes closer in language and ideas to Matthew

most impressive Christian interpolations in the Melchisedek legend of the long recension is the statement that "...he will be the head of the 13 priests who existed before. And afterward, in the last generation, there will be another Melchisedek, the first of 12 priests. And the last will be the head of all, a great archpriest, *the Word and Power of God*, who will perform miracles, greater and more glorious than all the previous ones..."<sup>273</sup> However, in spite of these temptations, our observations will be strictly connected with the material of the short recension.

#### Rabbinic Sources: Methuselah, Noah and Shem

As we remember, Melchisedek's narrative in the book is connected with the name of Noah, the legendary pre-deluge patriarch. We can find in the book not only Noah but also his grandfather, Methuselah, and his father, Lamech. The midrashim of these descendants of Enoch occupied the last five chapters of the text. Right after Enoch's ascension to the highest heaven, when the angels grasped him and carried him to the Lord where he "made him stand in front of his face for eternity" (ch. 67), the firstborn son of

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than to any other part of the New Testament; but it doesn't resemble Revelation, as might be expected." Andersen, 95. Further, Andersen concludes that "it is more likely that Matthew and 2 Enoch have a similar milieu than that a later Christian author of 2 Enoch was influenced by only one book of the New Testament." Andersen, 95.

Enoch, Methuselah, and his brothers, "the sons of Enoch," constructed an altar at the place where Enoch had been taken up (ch. 68). In chapter 69 the Lord appeared to Methuselah in a night vision and appointed him as the priest before the people. Verses 11-16 of this chapter describe the first animal sacrifice of Methuselah on the altar. Chapter 70 shows the last days of Methuselah on the earth before his death. The Lord again appeared to him in a night vision and commanded him to pass his priesthood duties to the second son of his son Lamech - Nir.<sup>274</sup> The text does not explain why the Lord wanted to pass the priesthood to Nir, instead of Lamech himself or Noah - his firstborn son. The text just mentions that the people answered on that request, "Let it be so for us, and let the word of the Lord be just as he said to you." Further the book tells that Methuselah invested Nir with the vestments of priesthood in front of the face of all people and "made him stand at the head of altar."<sup>275</sup>

As we can see, 2 Enoch pictures Melchisedek as the continuation of the priestly line from Methuselah, son of Enoch (in the short recension Methusalom or Mefusalom), directly to the second son of Lamech, Nir (*brother of Noah*), and then to

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<sup>273</sup> Andersen, 208.

<sup>274</sup> ВЗЛОКН ННРА СЫНА СЫНОУ ТВОЕМУ ЛАМЕХОУ ВТОРАГО И ШБЛЕЦН В РНЗЫ СВОА СВАЩЕННЫА, Vaillant, 68.

<sup>275</sup> Andersen, 197-203.

Melchisedek. 2 Enoch therefore considers Melchisedek as the grandson of Lamech. This understanding of Melchisedek as the continuation of the priestly line of descendants of Enoch has interesting parallels in rabbinic literature.

In the Babylonian Talmud (Tractate Nedarim 32b) we find the following passage:

Said Rabbi Zechariah in the name of Rabbi Ishmael: God wanted to derive the priestly line from Shem (son of Noah), as it said (Gen. 14:18), "He was priest of God Most High." But God derived (the priestly line) from Abraham, when Shem placed the blessings of Abraham before the praise of God, as it said (Gen. 14:19), "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High..." Said Abraham to him: "Does one place the blessing of a servant before that of his master?" Immediately (the priesthood) was given to Abraham; as it is said (Ps. 110:1), "The Lord says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.'" And after this is written (verse 4): "The lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek.'" This means: on account of what Melchisedek had said. And that is why it is written (Gen.

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14:18): "He was priest of God Most High." He was priest; but his descendants were not priests.<sup>276</sup>

This identification of Melchisedek with Shem, son of Noah, descendant of Methuselah and Lamech by Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha (who lived in the early part of the second century) was very popular in rabbinical literature. According to Fred Horton we can find the origins of the tradition from a very early time; the identification of Melchisedek with Shem is to be found in the Targums (some references in Neofiti 1 and Pseudo-Jonathan,<sup>277</sup> while it is missing in Onkelos).<sup>278</sup> Horton retells traditional rabbinical calculations which proved the possibility of the meeting of Shem (Melchisedek) and Abraham after the defeat of the kings (Gen. 14:17). According to these calculations,

...if one reads Gen. xi carefully, one discovers that according to the genealogy of vss. 10ff. Shem had 210 years of life left to him at the time of the birth of Abraham. This result is gained from the information that Shem lived 500 years after the birth of his son Arpachshad (Gen. xi. 10) and from the ages given for the descendants of Shem when they beget their first sons...Not only was Shem alive at the time of the birth of Abraham, he

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<sup>276</sup> BT, Nedarim 32b.

<sup>277</sup> Targum Neofiti 1 on Gen. 14, 18: "And Melchisedek king of Jerusalem- that is the great Shem- brought bread and wine, for he was a priest and exercised the sovereign priesthood before the Most High God." Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: "And Melchisedek, who is Shem, the son of Noah, went out to meet Abraham."

<sup>278</sup> Fred Horton, The Melchizedek Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 114.

also outlived Abraham by 35 years. According to Gen. xxv. 7 the days of Abraham's life numbered 175 years, but we have seen that Shem lived 210 years after the birth of Abraham, leaving us with a difference of 35 years. We may also observe, following the same method, that every one of the descendants of Shem mentioned in Gen. xi lived until after the birth of Abraham, and Shelah and Eber actually outlived Abraham.<sup>279</sup>

Horton also draws our attention to the fact that the blessing of Shem in Genesis ix. 26 has distinct parallels with the blessing which Melchisedek gives to Abraham. In his opinion both blessings have some similarities from "a formcritical standpoint." It might be a reason why in Targumic and Rabbinical traditions Melchisedek and Shem were identified.

Another piece of rabbinic evidence about the identification of Melchisedek with Shem can be found in Midrash Rabbah. Genesis Rabbah gives a very interesting interpretation to the fear of Abram after his meeting with Melchisedek. It says:

Fear not, Abram. Whom did he fear? Rabbi Berekiah said: He feared Shem (whose descendants, viz. Chedorlaomer and his sons, Abraham had slain<sup>280</sup>), as it is written, 'The isles saw, and feared' (Isa. xli, 5): just as islands stand out in the sea, so were

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<sup>279</sup> Horton, 115-116.

<sup>280</sup> Rashi in his commentary on Genesis 14:18 tells that the kings mentioned in v. 1 were all of Semitic descent, for Elam is mentioned as one of the sons of Shem (x. 22) and it may be assumed that all the kings who were allied with Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, were of the same stock as himself. See in Chumash with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Rashi's commentary (Jerusalem: Fedheim Publishers, 5745), vol. 1, 58.

Abraham and Shem outstanding in the world.' And feared': Each one feared the other. The former (Abraham) feared the latter, thinking, perhaps he nurses resentment against me for slaying his sons. And the latter (Shem) feared the former, thinking, Perhaps he nurses resentment against me for begetting wicked offspring.<sup>281</sup>

This passage shows that not only Melchisedek was Shem but the four kings of the Elamite opposition were sons of Shem.

It is interesting to note several important similarities between this rabbinic material and Melchisedek's portion of 2 Enoch.

a. 2 Enoch as well as rabbinic sources tried to put the genealogy of Melchisedek into the Semitic context of Enoch's descendants. They tried to give to this abstract and ahistorical character of Genesis a certain historical location and place him in the context of the pre-Deluge generation.

b. Both traditions are interested in the descriptions of the priestly functions of Enoch's family. 2 Enoch has a lengthy account of Methuselah and Nir with elaborated descriptions of their priestly and sacrificial duties and practices. As A. Rubinstein notes, "it is hard to escape the impression that the purpose of the account is to build up the priestly antecedents of Melchisedek." The main point of the passage from the tractate Nedarim as well as from the Midrash

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<sup>281</sup> Midrash Rabbah (London: Soncino Press, 1961), vol. 1, 365.

Rabbah is the building up of the priestly antecedents of Melchisedek (Shem) in the context of the transmission of this priestly line to Abraham.

c. Both traditions are also interested in taking away the priestly line from Enoch's historical descendants. Nedarin 32b stressed about Shem - "*He* was priest; but *his descendants* were not priests." This tractate of the Talmud explains the reason of this disgrace:

In the beginning God wanted to make the priests descend from Shem (that is to say Melchisedek), except that he (Melchisedek) behaved irreverently, in his benedictions he mentioned Abraham before mentioning God: 'May Abraham be blessed by the supreme being to whom belongs the heaven and the earth, and may the supreme God be blessed.' And because he noticed this mistake, God made the priesthood pass from Melchisedek to Abraham, as it is written: the Eternal said to my master (Abraham): 'stay at my right hand until I have reduced your enemies to serve you at the altar steps'; and then it is said: 'the Lord swore and his oath remains unchangeable: you are priest forever according to the order of Melchisedek.'<sup>282</sup>

Melchisedek's final translation to heaven in the end of 2 Enoch also shows discontinuation of the historical priestly line of Enoch's relatives. In the text the Lord says: "Melchisedek will be my priest to all priests,<sup>283</sup> and I will sanctify him and I will change him into a

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<sup>282</sup> BT, Nedarim.

<sup>283</sup> Andersen notice that this detail is one more evidence against Christian authorship of 2 Enoch. He says that "the fantastic details about this priest conflict with Christian belief in Jesus as God's sole legitimate priest in heaven." Andersen, 96.



great people who will sanctify me....Melchisedek will be the head of the priests *in another generation*.<sup>284</sup> The reason for the translation of the priest Melchisedek to heaven from the earth is twofold: first - the Deluge. In the text the Lord tells to Gabriel: "Go down onto the earth to Nir the priest and take the child Melchisedek, who is with him, and place him in the Paradise of Eden for preservation. For the time is already approaching, and I will pour out all the water onto the earth, and everything that is on the earth will perish."<sup>285</sup>

The second reason for the removal of Melchisedek is the wickedness of the people of earth. In the book, Nir said to Gabriel : "When the people find out about the child, then they will seize him and kill him, because the heart of these people is deceitful in the front of the face of the Lord."<sup>286</sup>

d. Another important point which can be found in observations of the rabbinic and 2 Enoch sources is the fact that the text of Slavonic Enoch wants to build an alternative to the traditional rabbinic line from Methuselah's priestly vocation, which can be some type of parallel to the Noah-Shem line.

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<sup>284</sup> Andersen, 209.

<sup>285</sup> Andersen, 211.

<sup>286</sup> Andersen, 211.

We can see some sort of theological polemic by the author of 2 Enoch with traditional Judaic (Targumic, Rabbinical) positions. It shows that the traditional Judaic settings of the Oral Torah about Melchisedek as Shem were very important and authoritative for the audience of 2 Enoch even in the situation of their rejection.

#### Qumran Material: Again a Parallel with Noah

In the opinion of some scholars, Melchisedek's story in Slavonic Enoch recalls some parallels with the birth of Noah in the Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran.<sup>287</sup> In the Qumran text, Lamech is worried about the birth of Noah, his son. Lamech fears that his wife Bathenosh was unfaithful to him and "that conception was due to the Watchers and the Holy Ones...and to Giants..."<sup>288</sup> The story of the relationships between Lamech and Bathenosh in the Apocryphon is very similar to the story of the relationships between Nir and Sophonim. However there are some essential differences between the texts. In the Qumran text the wife of Lamech, answering his angry questions, tries to remind him of their intimacies - "O my lord,

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<sup>287</sup> Delcor, M. "Melchizedek from Genesis to the Qumran Texts and the Epistle to the Hebrews." Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman period 2 (1971), 129.

<sup>288</sup> Geza Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 252.

remember my pleasure...the lying together and my soul within its body."<sup>289</sup> She swears that the seed was indeed of Lamech: "I swear to you by the Holy Great One, the King of the heavens...that this seed is yours and that conception is from you. This fruit was planted by you...and by no stranger or Watcher or Son of Heaven."<sup>290</sup>

On the other hand, in 2 Enoch Sothonim did not explain the circumstances of the conception. She answered Nir: "O my lord! Behold, it is the time of my old age, and there was not in me any (ardor of) youth and I do not know how the indecency of my womb has been conceived."<sup>291</sup> However, some scholars draw our attention to the fact that both texts have similar features in this situation. Delcor shows that the phrase of *Noah* in the beginning of Apocryphon, "Here, then, I thought in my heart that the conception had been accomplished by Watchers, and... by Holy Ones" (col. II, 1), can be compared with those of *Noah* in 2 Enoch spoken at the time of the examination of Melchisedek: "This is of the Lord, my brother."<sup>292</sup>

Another feature of 2 Enoch which shows some possible connection between this text and the material of the Qumran sect is

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<sup>289</sup> Vermes, 253.

<sup>290</sup> Vermes, 253.

<sup>291</sup> Andersen, 205.

<sup>292</sup> Delcor, 129.

the issue of animal sacrifices. As we remember, the description of animal sacrifices occupies a very important place in the narrative of 2 Enoch. In chapter 59 Enoch before his second departure to the heaven carefully instructed Methuselah, his brothers - Regim, Ariim, Akhazukhan, Kharimion - and the elders of all the people how to perform animal sacrifices. He told them that "...he who brings a sacrifice of clean beasts, it is healing, he heals his soul. And he who brings a sacrifice of clean birds, it is healing, he heals his soul. And *everything which you have for food, bind it by four legs*<sup>293</sup>; *there is healing, he heals his soul. He who puts to death any animal without binding it, it is an evil custom; he acts lawlessly with his own soul.*"<sup>294</sup> Further the book tells that right after the appointment of Methuselah to the position of the priest he came up to the Lord's altar "with all the people in procession behind him and he stood in front of the altar with all the people...around the altar...and ...the elders of the people,... taking sheep and oxen...*tied (their) 4 legs together*, and placed (them) at the head of altar."<sup>295</sup> S. Pines draws attention to this interesting practice of tying up four legs together during animal sacrifices. He shows that there is a passage in the Mishna (treatise Tamid) which,

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<sup>293</sup> СВЯЖЕТЕ Е ПО ЧЕТЫРЕ НОГИ, Vaillant, 58.

<sup>294</sup> Andersen, 185

according to the most probable interpretation, states that each of the forelegs of the animal which was about to be sacrificed were tied to the corresponding hind leg and declares that the tying together of all the four legs was contrary to the tradition.<sup>296</sup> Pines gives one of the two explanations found in the Gemara of the Babli that this expression of disapproval was due to the fact that the customs of the heretics, minim, should not be imitated.<sup>297</sup> We can see that the practice of the tying together of all four legs had very strong sectarian meaning for the authors of Mishnaic sacrificial prescriptions. In his final conclusion Pines suggests that "it may have been an accepted rite of a sect, which repudiated the sacrificial customs prevailing in Jerusalem. It might be conjectured that this sect might have been the Essenes, whose sacrificial usage differed according to the one reading of the passage of Josephus<sup>298</sup> from those practiced at the Temple."<sup>299</sup>

It is important to keep in mind that these prescriptions in the text of 2 Enoch (especially Enoch's instruction of Methuselah, his brothers, and elders) have a strong halakic character almost identical in form and style with traditional halakot. The text says that "he

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<sup>295</sup> Andersen, 199.

<sup>296</sup> Pines, 74-75.

<sup>297</sup> Pines, 75.

<sup>298</sup> Jewish Antiquities XVIII, 18.

who puts to death any animal without binding it, it is an *evil law*<sup>300</sup> he acts *lawlessly* with his own soul." I assume that the passage is not just talking about certain normal prescriptions, but about the prescription of *the Law* as ultimate authority (the Torah). In Slavonic the word закон, which was used in the text beside its usual meaning as "a law," is the technical term for designation of Mosaic Law (the Torah).

#### Hebrew Proper Names in 2 Enoch

It is apparent that the most important evidence about the Jewish origins of Melchisedek's story in the Enochic material are connected with the ancestors of Enoch - Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Nir, and Sothonim. Nir and Sothonim are especially important and enigmatic characters of the story, because the information about them is absent in the Old Testament material. There are a number of opinions about possible Hebrew meanings of the names.

#### *Nir*

In the large corpus of Biblical and postbiblical Jewish literature, the Slavonic word Нир might relate to several possible Semitic terms

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<sup>299</sup> Pines, 75.

<sup>300</sup> злозаконне, Vaillant, 58. Andersen's translation of this term as "evil habit" is not correct.

with a similar phonetic structure. Paul Hanson in his article dedicated to the etymology of the Hebrew term נִיר in the Biblical narrative shows several possible meanings of the word.

First, most often "nir" was translated in the Bible as "light" or "lamp." Second, the Semitic word נִיר meaning "yoke" (from Assyr. niru - "yoke, servitude") is used in the Old Testament in the metaphorical sense of "dominion." Hanson lists several places in the Old Testament where David and his descendants would always have נִיר ("dominion") before YHWH in Jerusalem (I Kings 11:36; 15:4; II Kings 8:19; II Chron. 21:7).<sup>301</sup> The other three instances of nir in the Bible are connected with the meaning "to cultivate." It is interesting to note that נִיר in the sense of "cultivation" occupied a very important place in Mishnaic vocabulary. M. Jastrow listed several additional meanings of the term as "to break ground," "to clear," or "clearing, plugging over." Sometimes it even means "new broken land."<sup>302</sup>

We have only a few attempts to trace the meaning nir to some Semitic roots. One of the first of them is the hypothesis of Vaillant that Slavonic Нѣ equals Semitic נִר, and can be taken in its

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<sup>301</sup> Paul Hanson, "Song of Heshbon and David's NIR," The Harvard Theological Review 3 (1968): 310.

<sup>302</sup> Marcus Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature, vol. II, 909.

etymological sense as "light." He supports his opinion by the reference to Ethiopic Enoch (the passage which is very similar to the one we found in the Genesis Apocryphon), since Nir, the brother of Noah, is in 2 Enoch a "dedoublement" of Noah, the wonder-child described in chapter 106 of the Ethiopic Enoch.<sup>303</sup> Vaillant's argument probably refers to the "light - like appearance" of Noah in Ethiopic Enoch: "His eyes are like the rays of the sun, and his face glorious" (106:5). In my opinion the hypothesis has many weak points. Rubinstein shows the difficulty with this explanation, because the "dedoublement" of Noah in the Slavonic Enoch is found in the description of Melchisedek<sup>304</sup> (see also our discussion about Noah-Melchisedek's birth in Genesis Apocryphon). He also stressed that there is nothing miraculous about Nir in Slavonic Enoch and he (Nir) can best be described as a "sacerdotal drudge" (the phrase which Rubinstein borrows from A. B. Bruce). In his turn Rubinstein shows some remote possibility that the name of Nir was chosen with an eye to the figurative use of this term for the description of "dominion" by David's descendants.<sup>305</sup> He said that

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<sup>303</sup> Vaillant, p. xii.

<sup>304</sup> Rubinstein, 17.

<sup>305</sup> See Hanson's article.



...it is not impossible that an oral exegesis of the Melchisedek legend in the Slavonic Enoch somehow connected Melchisedek and Nir with Davidic descent, though the fact that Nir is only said to have adopted Melchisedek is an obvious difficulty. Nir (=Ner) could hardly have been suggested by the name of Abner's father (I Sam. xiv: 30, etc.) or Saul's grandfather (I Ch. viii: 23), neither of whom was in any way a distinguished personage.<sup>306</sup>

In my opinion one more possible explanation of the name Nir can be suggested. I want to connect this interpretation with the meaning of Nir as "clearing, breaking ground or earth." In the book the destiny of Nir is connected with "clearing of the Earth." The Lord told him that He is planning "to send down a great destruction on to the earth." Nir is the last priest before the great destruction of the Flood. At the very end of 2 Enoch, Nir says: "For I know indeed that this race will end in confusion, and everyone will perish, except that Noah, my brother, will be preserved in that generation for procreation." Nir is indeed the man who beheld the future "clearing, breaking down" of the earth, therefore it is possible that his name reflects this coming situation.

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<sup>306</sup> Rubinstein, 18.

*Sothonim\_*

In scholarly literature I have found only one attempt to give any interpretation to the name of Nir's wife from 2 Enoch. This interpretation belongs to A. Rubinstein. He tried to connect this proper name with the facts of the biography of Sothonim. In his opinion,

Sothonim who had been described earlier as old and on the point of death falls dead at Nir's feet and while Nir is away, having gone to inform Noah of Sothonim's death, the infant Melchisedek emerges from her body. Now it seems highly probable that the author of this story had in mind the story of Benjamin's birth in Gen. 35:18. Rachel travailed, it will be remembered, and had hard labor and 'as her soul was in departing, for she died,...she called his name Ben-oni..., i.e. the son of my sorrow.<sup>307</sup>

In his opinion this suggests that the name Sothonim may well mean "the end of afflictions," "the end of sorrows" - in Hebrew, סוף אונים -

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<sup>307</sup> Rubinstein, 18.

symbolic of Sothonim's release from the feelings of shame and sorrow during her pregnancy and her dispute with Nir.<sup>308</sup>

In conclusion of this exegetical section I want to draw our attention to a possible parallel between the name of Nir as "breaking the earth" and the name of Sothonim as "the end of sorrow." Both names have a deep connection with the chronological apocalyptic settings of Melchisedek's narrative of 2 Enoch. It is possible that these eschatological terms can echo certain similar motifs in eschatological peshirim of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

### Some Conclusions

The fragmentary character of our observations about Melchisedek's legend do not permit us to present the complete picture of possible cultural, historical, or theological provenance of Melchisedek's story in 2 Enoch. However, some conclusions can be made on this stage of the research. They are mainly connected with the problem of the hypothetical community behind the Melchisedek narrative.

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<sup>308</sup> Rubinstein, 18.

First, the Melchisedek material of 2 Enoch probably was composed in the Jewish community which respected the authority of the Oral Torah (the opinion about Enoch's ancestors as predecessors of Melchisedek).

Second, probably, this Jewish community had certain liturgical and theological differences (sectarian biases) from the mainstream of traditional Judaism.

Third, it is possible that one of these differences included a specific attitude to the official priestly line which existed in that time in Judaism (Jerusalem). This was the main reason for the substitution of the scheme Nir-Melchisedek for the official Noah-Shem priestly scheme as a legitimate background for the new sectarian priestly authority.

Fourth, apparently, the community of 2 Enoch repudiated the sacrificial customs prevailing in traditional Judaism (Jerusalem) (the tying together of all the four legs of the animals during the sacrifices).

Fifth, liturgical (priesthood's line, sacrifices) and exegetical (Noah, Melchisedek) features of the Melchisedek portion of 2 Enoch have certain distant similarities with the ideology and the practice of the Qumran community (an alternative priestly line, practice of

sacrifices, exegesis of Noah, and Melchisedek's story).

Sixth, it is also evident that the ideological and theological settings of the document cannot be explained solely by referring to the Qumran materials because of the absence of the major Judaic symbols and themes (the Torah, Sinai, Moses, etc.) which occupied a central place in the ideology of the Qumranites.

### Hypothetical Community

To conclude our observations on the sectarian features of the narrative, it would be useful to trace the discovered characteristics of the hypothetical community of 2 Enoch to the ideologies of the sectarian Jewish communities<sup>309</sup> which existed in the time of our document. One of the hypothetical social bodies could be the community of so-called "Melchizedekians,"<sup>310</sup> which we can find in some catalogues of early Christian heresiologists. One of them,

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<sup>309</sup> A. F. J. Klijn and G. J. Reinink in their book give good introduction to the main heresiological sources about these sects. See A. Klijn and G. Reinink, Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973).

<sup>310</sup> According to my present knowledge the evident parallels between the Melchizedekians and the hypothetical community of 2 Enoch remained unnoticed by all scholars of the document. Probably this situation is due to the certain esoterism of the text of Epiphanius. So far it was completely translated only in Russian (in the 19th century) and in German (in the beginning of this century). All known English translations include only selected passages.

Ephiphanius of Salamis, in his description of the sect pictures the features of their ideology which in some points closely resembles the statements which are situated in the text of 2 Enoch.

1. From Epiphanius's Panarion we learn that "these people (the Melchizedekians) glorify the Melchizedek mentioned in the scriptures, considering him to be some great power. In their error they say that *he is above in the unnamable places....*"<sup>311</sup> We can see that in the ideology of the sect the figure of Melchisedek is placed in a Merkabah setting of his ascension to heaven, which does not have an actual scriptural background. In the Melchisedek section of 2 Enoch we can find a similar Merkabah setting about the elevation of Melchisedek on the wings of Gabriel to the highest places and his *preservation* in these abodes.<sup>312</sup> Later in the text of the Panarion through his refutation of the heresy Epiphanius provides additional information about the theme of the heavenly origins of Melchisedek. He says, "that the just man (Melchizedek) was holy, was God's priest, and was king of Salem is evident [From the Epistle to the Hebrews, A.O.], but he was not of *the order of heavenly beings*, nor did he

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<sup>311</sup> P. R. Amidon, The Panarion of St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis. Selected Passages. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 194, 55.1.2.

<sup>312</sup> Vaillant, 84.

*come down from heaven...*"<sup>313</sup>

2. Further the Panarion mentions that the Melchizedekians "also make for themselves *faked books* by which they deceive themselves..."<sup>314</sup> It should be noted that almost each sect had its own doctrinal books. Therefore this emphasis on the addiction of the Melchizedekians to some "faked" books may emphasize the existence of some books being the substitute for the traditional Scripture. The theme of the books other than the Scriptures occupies a prominent place in the narrative of 2 Enoch. The interesting fact is that the text of 2 Enoch does not mention the importance of the Torah or any other scriptures of the traditional Judaic canon, but constantly refers to Enoch's books as the major source of the knowledge about the Creator. Chapter 33 of the text describes the command of the Lord to Enoch "...deliver to them [Enoch's sons, A.O.] the books in your handwriting and they will read them and know their Creator. And they will understand this also how that there is no other Creator except myself...they will read them from generation to generation."<sup>315</sup> Further in chapter 35 the document stresses that the books are not just temporarily substitutes for the other future Scriptures, but that

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<sup>313</sup> The Panarion, 55.4.1., 195.

<sup>314</sup> The Panarion, 55.1.5., 194.

"they (the books) will be glorified in the end more than at the first."<sup>316</sup>

3. Other important evidence showing close parallels between the sect and the document is connected with the theme of the actual parents of Melchisedek. We know that the canonical Jewish scriptures (Genesis 14:17-20 and Psalm 110:4) do not mention physical parents of the character. However the author of Panarion writes in the section about the Melchizedekians that "some people in fact make mention of Melchisedek's *mother and father, although they are not spoken of in the canonical scriptures.*" This statement is very important if we will remember that the narrative of 2 Enoch developed the theme of Melchisedek's earthly father (Nir) and mother (Sothonim). In spite of the fact that Nir was not the real physical father of Melchisedek, in the text in his prayer to the Lord he says the following words: "for I have no descendants. So let this child take the place of my descendants and become *as my own son...*"<sup>317</sup>

4. Finally, the most important parallel can be found in the fact that according to the fourth-century text of Epiphanius, the

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<sup>315</sup> Andersen, 157.

<sup>316</sup> Andersen, 159. This saying is a close parallel to the Qumranic descriptions of their sectarian "Torah."

<sup>317</sup> Andersen, 209.



Melchizedekians had the *practice of offering sacrifices* to the Lord in the name of Melchisedek. From Panarion we learn that "the sect we are considering offers its sacrifices in the name of Melchizedek. They say that he is the one who gives access to God, and through him sacrifice is to be offered to God, since he is *archon of justice*<sup>318</sup> and has been *appointed by God to that very office in heaven*,<sup>319</sup> a spiritual being ordained to God's priesthood.<sup>320</sup> It behooves us to sacrifice to him so that through him sacrifice may be offered for us and we may find life through him."<sup>321</sup> In this context it is important to remember that the sacrificial instructions and the description of sacrificial practices occupies the essential place in the narrative of 2 Enoch.

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<sup>318</sup> We have here an important Merkabah parallel - "archon of justice" in this context possibly refers to the heavenly title of Metatron as the "Prince of Divine Judgment." About the title see earlier in the Merkabah section.

<sup>319</sup> Another Merkabah parallel - technical terms "appointed by God" and "very office in heaven" probably related to Metatron's heavenly roles and appointments in the highest (very) heavenly offices. About these terms see chapter 2.

<sup>320</sup> The theme of Melchisedek's priesthood occupied a substantial part of the narrative of 2 Enoch. Beside the fact that he was born with "the badge of priesthood" the document says that "Melchisedek... will be my (the Lord's) priest to all priests" and "He will be the head of the priests in future generation." Andersen, 207-211.

<sup>321</sup> Panarion, 55.8.2., 196.

Finally I want to stress that we need to understand that Epiphanius gives us the description of the Melchizedekian sect after three centuries of Christianity when this community already had assimilated in different aspects with the Christian environment, but we still can see unique features of the beliefs of this group which remain quite different from Christian (the Book of Hebrews) and Judaic settings.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion I want to draw attention to one more possible explanation for the existence of "another Merkabah" in the tradition of Judaism. As we know, some early Merkabah settings had certain tendencies that were an essential part of Enochic literature. In the context of this situation the legitimization value of Enochic material could be questioned.

The studies of B. Z. Wacholder show that sectarian Jewish communities connected with the Enochic literary material (the Qumranites, etc.) have a very broad and sometimes different view from the traditional Judaistic understanding of the legitimate core of the tradition (the Torah). Their understanding in some aspects could help us release ourselves from normal stereotypes about the Torah as the Mosaic Law or the Pentateuch as a whole, which, in a certain measure, were created in later pharisaic and rabbinical circles. Wacholder's analysis of the Qumranic texts (especially the document named as 11Q Torah) shows that the specific employment of the term "Torah" and its applications to different materials, which do not

connect directly to the Pentateuch's material, can indicate the existence of texts which had the same legitimization value as the Mosaic Law. Wacholder stresses that "all indications are that the author called his book *Sefer Torah* or *Torah*, a title that implied an invidious comparison with the Mosaic Pentateuch."<sup>322</sup> This title in the author's opinion was intended to reinforce the book's claim not only for equality with its Mosaic counterpart, but for superiority to it.<sup>323</sup> It is useful also to remember that in the opinion of some scholars the corpus of five Enochic books at Qumran (so-called "Enochic Pentateuch")<sup>324</sup> forms some sort of the counterpart to traditional Mosaic Pentateuch. Wacholder also established a concrete link between the extant section of Enochic material inside and outside of Qumran library and the elements of Qumranic Torah.

In the light of these observations we can formulate the hypothesis that in early pre-rabbinical Judaism Merkabah settings could be developed in different directions, rather than in only two

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<sup>322</sup> Ben Zion Wacholder, The Dawn of Qumran. The Sectarian Torah and the Teacher of Righteousness (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1983), 31.

<sup>323</sup> Wacholder, 31-32.

<sup>324</sup> About the Enochic Pentateuch see: G. H. Dix, "The Enochic Pentateuch," Journal of Theological Studies 37 (1927): 29-42; Jonas Greenfield, "The Enochic Pentateuch and the Date of the Similitudes," Harvard Theological Review 70 (1977): 51-65.

traditional rabbinical streams connected with the book of Ezekiel and the book of Song of Songs. The literary basis of this alternative tradition could be connected with Enochic material and have therefore a different basis for legitimization which was not directly traced to familiar themes and symbols of traditional Mosaic Torah. A number of elements of the Merkabah narrative of 2 Slavonic Enoch will make sense after these assumptions.

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