ANDREI A. ORLOV

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Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
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Aural Apocalypticism and the Origins of Early Jewish Mysticism

Mohr Siebeck

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Alan Segal, in memoriam

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Preface

A number of scholars have come to my aid as this book was being written. Philip Alexander, Michael Cover, Charles Gieschen, Larry Hurtado, Jack Kilcrease, and Peter Schäfer have read early drafts of the monograph and made many significant suggestions. I am especially grateful to my research assistant, Hans Moscicke, who worked very hard through different versions of the manuscript to help improve the text in both style and substance. Hans' meticulous editing has saved me from numerous errors.

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Sincere thanks are also due to Henning Ziebritzki and the editorial team of Mohr Siebeck for their help, patience, and professionalism during the preparation of the book for publication.

I dedicate this book to the memory of Alan Segal, a scholar who pioneered many scholarly debates mentioned in this study.

Andrei Orlov
Milwaukee
Feast of the Ascension 2017

Abbreviations

ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AB	Anchor Bible
AGAJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament: Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ArBib	Aramaic Bible
ArbT	Arbeiten zur Theologie
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BSJS	Brill's Series in Jewish Studies
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CRAI	Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
EA	*Etudes Asiatiques*
ECDSS	Eerdmans Commentary on the Dead Sea Scrolls
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FJB	*Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge*
GAP	Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICS	*Illinois Classical Studies*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period*
JSJSS	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period. Supplement Series
JSJT	*Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*
JSOR	*Journal of the Society of Oriental Research*
JSOTSS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series

JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
JSQ	*Jewish Studies Quarterly*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
NHMS	Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
PVTG	Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece
REJ	*Revue des études juives*
RevQ	*Revue de Qumrân*
RSR	*Recherches de Science Religieuse*
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SJ	Studia Judaica
SJJTP	Supplements to the Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJS	Studia Judaeoslavica
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SO	Sources Orientales
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
TCS	Text-Critical Studies
TED	Translations of Early Documents
ThZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
YJS	Yale Judaica Series
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ŹM	Źródła i monografie

Introduction

David Halperin, in his seminal study, *The Faces of the Chariot*, which was written almost thirty years ago, noted that "the problems associated with Metatron are among the most complicated in early Jewish angelology."[1] Indeed, this celestial character, whose attributes paradoxically accommodate various angelic and divine features, remains one of the greatest enigmas for experts of early Jewish mysticism. It is possible that numerous portrayals of this mediatorial figure, reflected in various Jewish corpora, serve as witnesses to different conceptual molds of these early Jewish mystical speculations. Therefore, it has long been noted that the genealogy and origin of this angelic figure appear to be fashioned differently in various rabbinic and Hekhalot testimonies. Some passages from the Babylonian Talmud seem to lay more emphasis on Metatron's role as a celestial figure, similar to the Angel of YHWH from the biblical accounts or Yahoel of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. In contrast, *Sefer Hekhalot* ties Metatron's pedigree to a story about the elevation of a human being, as he is depicted there as the heavenly counterpart to the patriarch Enoch. Gershom Scholem has already differentiated these two basic aspects of Metatron's lore, which, in his opinion, were eventually fused together in rabbinic and Hekhalot materials. These aspects include the Enochic lore and the lore connected with the exalted figures of Yahoel and Michael. Scholem reasoned that …

… one aspect identifies Metatron with Yahoel[2] or Michael and knows nothing of his transfiguration from a human being into an angel. The talmudic passages concerned with Metatron are of this type. The other aspect identifies Metatron with the figure of Enoch as he is depicted in apocalyptic literature, and permeated that aggadic and targumic literature which, although not necessarily of a later date than Talmud, was outside of it. When the

[1] D. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision* (TSAJ, 16; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988) 420.

[2] Scholem noted that the first writer who seems to have suspected the identity of Metatron and Yahoel was George Herbert Box in his introduction to the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1954) 366. Box argued that "the angel who conducts Abraham on his celestial journey is the archangel Yahoel, who plays an all-important role. As is pointed out in the notes, he fulfills the functions elsewhere assigned to Michael and Metatron. Just as Metatron bears the Tetragrammaton (cf. Exod 23:21, 'My Name is in him'). … like Enoch, who was also transformed into Metatron, Yahoel acts as celestial guide." G. H. Box and J. I. Landsman, *The Apocalypse of Abraham. Edited, with a Translation from the Slavonic Text and Notes* (TED, 1.10; London, New York: Macmillan, 1918) xxv.

Book of Hekhalot, or *3 Enoch*, was composed, the two aspects had already become intertwined.[3]

Scholem's hypothesis concerning two conceptual streams – one tied to the seventh antediluvian patriarch and the other to the great angels – inspired generations of scholars who, again and again, attempted to grasp various aspects of the Metatron figure.[4] It inspired me as well during my doctoral studies when I traced the formative influence of early Enochic materials in shaping Metatron's profile in certain early Jewish apocalyptic and mystical texts, especially in *2 Enoch* and *Sefer Hekhalot*. In that study, published more than ten years ago,[5] I did not have the chance to explore another important aspect, which, in Scholem's opinion, was instrumental in shaping an important stream of the "pre-existent" Metatron lore, namely, the formative influence of the Yahoel tradition. Following the publication of *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* in 2005, I spent more than ten years studying the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, where Yahoel's figure appears in its full conceptual complexity. That work provides me with important groundwork, allowing me now to approach the second conceptual trend in the evolution of Metatron lore, the trend connected with the figure of Yahoel.

In recent decades, there have been several important studies that attempted to affirm Scholem's ground-breaking insights concerning the formative influences of Yahoel's profile on Metatron's figure. These studies discern several important similarities between these two characters in their respective traditions. Analyzing connections between the two angelic figures, Nathaniel Deutsch suggested that

> … there are a number of important parallels between Yahoel and Metatron. Yahoel's relationship with Abraham in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is analogous to Metatron's relationship with R. Ishmael in the Hekhalot tract *3 Enoch*. Both figures serve as heavenly guides,

[3] G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, [1960] 1965) 51. Similarly, Hugo Odeberg argued that "the most important element or complex of elements which gave life and endurance to the conception in question [of Metatron in later Jewish mysticism] was the notion of the 'Angel of YHWH, who bears the divine Name' and the 'Angel of the Face, the Divine Presence,' called Yaoel, Yehoel, Yoel, the highest of angels, the divine name representing the Godhead." H. Odeberg, *3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch* (New York: KTAV, 1973) 144.

[4] Some other scholars, including Philip Alexander and Christopher Rowland have since attempted to uphold Scholem's position. Rowland observes that "in Jewish apocalyptic literature there was the development of beliefs about an exalted angelic figure who shared the attributes and characteristics of God himself, e. g. the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 10 and 17 f. In this apocalypse the angel Jaoel, like the angel Metatron is said to have the name of God dwelling in him (*b. Sanh*. 37b and *Heb. Enoch* 12) and is described with terminology more usually reserved for God himself." C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 338. See also P. Alexander, "The Historical Settings of the Hebrew Book of Enoch," *JJS* 28 (1977) 161.

[5] A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* (TSAJ, 107; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

protectors, and agents of revelation. Like Metatron, Yahoel is linked with the high priesthood, in this case, via the turban (cf. Exod 28:4) which Yahoel wears. Finally, as emphasized by Scholem, both Metatron and Yahoel were known by the epithet "The Lesser YHWH," a name which also found its way into Gnostic and Mandaean literature. The explicit identification of Metatron with the Angel of the Lord in Exod 23 appears in *3 Enoch* 12, where Metatron declares that God "called me the Lesser YHWH in the presence of His heavenly household; as it is written (Exod 23:21), 'For My name is in him.'" From the available evidence, it appears that Yahoel and Metatron developed separately but, at some point, Metatron "absorbed the originally independent angel Yahoel."[6]

It has also been noticed that in various Jewish materials even the name "Yahoel" became fashioned as one of Metatron's names. As Ithamar Gruenwald points out, "Yahoel" appears as one of Metatron's names not only in the list of his seventy names but also in the Aramaic incantation bowls.[7] In his study of Jewish onomatological traditions, Jarl Fossum also affirms the formative influence of Yahoel on the character of Metatron, stating that "it is obvious that Yahoel is the prototype of Metatron."[8] Finally, in his recent study, *Ben: Sonship and Jewish Mysticism,* Moshe Idel offers a detailed analysis of some conceptual parallels between the Yahoel and the Metatron traditions.[9]

Although distinguished students of early Jewish mysticism have been routinely pointing to some connections between Yahoel and Metatron, there has not been any in-depth comparative study of the two figures and their respective ideological contexts. The main obstacle here, in my opinion, is that the bulk of the Yahoel tradition has been preserved in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, a Jewish pseudepigraphon that has survived solely in its Slavonic translation. The same can be said of *2 Enoch*, another neglected witness that traces the Enochic origins of Metatron lore, whose primary obstacle of study is also the Slavonic language, which most scholars have categorized as "esoteric."

Yet, an in-depth exploration of the character of Yahoel can provide several important keys not only for understanding the origins and evolution of the Metatron tradition, but also for understanding the conceptual shaping of various streams of early Jewish mysticism, including the different molds of Hekhalot mysticism.

Although much ink has been spilled in emphasizing general similarities between Yahoel and Metatron in an attempt to demonstrate the formative influences of Yahoel on the figure of Metatron, considerably less attention has been

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[6] N. Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate. Angelic Vice Regency in Late Antiquity* (BSJS, 22; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 36. Deutsch also points out that in *3 Enoch* 48D:1 Metatron is actually called by the name Yahoel. Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate*, 36–37.

[7] I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (2nd ed.; AGAJU, 90; Leiden: Brill, 2014) 222–223.

[8] J. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord. Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism* (WUNT, 36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985) 321.

[9] M. Idel, *Ben: Sonship and Jewish Mysticism* (London: Continuum, 2007).

given to discerning the differences between the "aural" features of Metatron's profile associated with Yahoel lore and other non-aural aspects of the Metatron lore that might have their roots in the "visual" Enochic mold of Jewish apocalypticism. Proper attention to these different theophanic characteristics, sometimes barely discernible in Metatron's profile, might reveal some distant memories of Yahoel and Enoch as iconic representatives of two distinctive ideologies, one connected with the ideology of the Name and the other with the ideology of the Form. As Scholem has already observed, any analysis of the distinctive features of these two formative aspects is greatly impeded by the fact that, in most surviving specimens of the Metatron tradition, these two aspects of the original trends, aural and visual, are already muddled and intertwined. Both aspects – the auditory and visual – have clearly been "contaminated" by mutual influences at the very early stages, perhaps even at the apocalyptic stage of their developments, in which the iconic heroes often attempted to emulate attributes of the rival theophanic paradigm. As we will witness later in our study, already in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* Yahoel will be portrayed with the theophanic attributes of the ocularcentric trend, while the early Metatron developments found in *2 Enoch*[10] will attempt to depict Enoch in some aural roles, including the office of the choirmaster.

In view of such complexities, tracing the evolutions of both trends in the Metatron lore must necessarily include meticulous exploration of the corresponding ideological contexts, later as well as earlier. In this respect, one of the tasks of this study will be the exploration not only of the ideological proclivities of Hekhalot materials, wherein Metatron's mediatorial profile came arguably to its conceptual fore, but also a thorough investigation of the peculiar apocalyptic mold found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, from which Yahoel's figure appears in full blown conceptual complexity.

The comparative analysis of the imagery found in an early Jewish apocalyptic text, which was preserved by Eastern Orthodox Christians in its Slavonic translation,[11] and the traditions attested in some Hekhalot macroforms circulating

[10] *2 Enoch* was probably written in the first century C. E., before the destruction of the Second Jerusalem Temple. On the date of *2 Enoch,* see R. H. Charles, and W. R. Morfill, *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896) xxvi; R. H. Charles and N. Forbes, "The Book of the Secrets of Enoch," in: *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (2 vols.; ed. R. H. Charles; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913) 2.429; J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976) 114; C. Böttrich, *Das slavische Henochbuch* (JSHRZ, 5; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus, 1995) 813; Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, 323–328; idem, "The Sacerdotal Traditions of 2 Enoch and the Date of the Text," in: *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* (eds. A. Orlov, G. Boccaccini, J. Zurawski; SJS, 4; Leiden: Brill, 2012) 103–116.

[11] The general scholarly consensus holds that the *Apocalypse of Abraham* was composed after 70 CE and before the end of the second century CE. Priestly concerns that loom large in the text appear to correspond to the conceptual tenets of the Palestinian priestly environment. The depiction of the destruction of the Temple in chapter 27 and the peculiar interest in the idea of the

in later Jewish rabbinic and mystical circles,[12] inevitably raise the question of the possible channels of transmission between these different ideological and cultural milieus. This issue, without a doubt, represents a most difficult challenge for students of early Jewish mysticism, as it had already been encountered by Gershom Scholem, who faced the great difficulty of attempting to provide historical links between apocalyptic traditions and later molds of Jewish mystical tradition, including Hekhalot literature. Peter Schäfer has reflected on these limitations of Scholem's research, noting that "he does not make an attempt to prove the historical connection between the alleged Merkavah speculations

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celestial sanctuary represented by the divine Chariot hint to the fact that the earthly sanctuary was no longer standing. Another significant chronological marker is established by the second century work – the *Clementine Recognitions* 32–33 which provides one of the earliest external references for the dating of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. The extant text of the Apocalypse of Abraham is known only in East Slavic manuscripts. Six of them, dated from the 14th to 17th centuries, contain a relatively full text of the pseudepigraphon. Most of them are incorporated into the so-called *Palaea Interpretata* (*Tolkovaja Paleja*), a historiographical compendium in which canonical biblical stories are mixed with non-canonical elaborations and interpretations. As has been already mentioned such integration represents the typical mode of existence of the Jewish pseudepigraphical texts and fragments in the Slavic milieu when they were usually transmitted as part of the larger historiographical, moral, hagiographical, liturgical, and other collections that contained both ideologically marginal and mainstream materials. Thus, in the *Palaea Interpretata*, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is conflated with other Abrahamic traditions and supplemented with Christian anti-Jewish polemical exegesis. On the date and provenance of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, see G. H. Box and J. I. Landsman, *The Apocalypse of Abraham. Edited, with a Translation from the Slavonic Text and Notes* (TED, 1.10; London, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918) xv–xix; B. Philonenko-Sayar and M. Philonenko, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham. Introduction, texte slave, traduction et notes* (Semitica, 31; Paris: Librairie Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1981) 34–35; R. Rubinkiewicz, "Apocalypse of Abraham," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985) 1.681–705 at 683; idem, Rubinkiewicz, *L'Apocalypse d'Abraham en vieux slave. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et commentaire* (ŹM, 129; Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1987) 70–73; A. Kulik, "K datirovke 'Otkrovenija Avraama,'" in: *In Memoriam of Ja. S. Lur'e* (eds. N. M. Botvinnik and Je.I. Vaneeva; St. Petersburg: Fenix, 1997) 189–95; idem, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha. Toward the Original of the Apocalypse of Abraham* (SBLTCS, 3; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 2–3.

[12] In relation to the formation of the Hekhalot corpus as a distinct class of texts, Raʿanan Boustan observes that "this loose body of texts, written primarily in Hebrew and Aramaic with a smattering of foreign loan words, took shape gradually during Late Antiquity and early Middle Ages (c. 300–900), and continued to be adapted and reworked by Jewish scribes and scholars throughout the Middle Ages and into the early Modern period (c. 900–1500). While Heikhalot literature does contain some material that dates to the 'classic' rabbinic period (c. 200–500 CE), this literature seems to have emerged *as a distinct class of texts* only at a relatively late date, most likely after 600 CE and perhaps well into the early Islamic period." R. S. Boustan, "The Study of Heikhalot Literature: Between Mystical Experience and Textual Artifact," *Currents in Biblical Research* 6.1 (2007) 130–160 at 130–131. Boustan further notes that "Heikhalot literature – and its constituent parts – cannot simply be divided into stable 'books' or 'works,' but must be studied within the shifting redactional contexts reflected in the manuscript tradition. In particular, the dynamic relationships among single units of tradition as well as the relationships of those units to the larger whole should be considered. In light of this complex transmission-history, scholars have not always been able to agree on a single definition of what constitutes a Heikhalot text or on how the corpus might best be delimited." Boustan, "The Study of Heikhalot Literature," 139.

of the 'old apocalyptics' and the Mishnah teachers of rabbinic Judaism or the Merkavah mystics presented in the Hekhalot literature."[13] Schäfer's own reexamination of the early sources, undertaken recently in his seminal work, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism,* also demonstrates the difficulty of reconstructing a linear development from the earlier apocalyptic sources to the Hekhalot literature, given the current range of available sources. At the end of his study, Schäfer laments that "the variety of sources, motifs, and emphases clearly does not allow for such a harmonious and ultimately simplistic view … the romantic quest for 'origins' has turned out to be a futile and methodologically misguided exercise."[14]

The reconstruction of the putative lines of transmission by which early apocalyptic texts and traditions might have reached the later rabbinic and Hekhalot milieus is even more challenging in the case of the so-called Slavonic pseudepigrapha, the corpus of early Jewish writings, preserved in Slavonic language, to which the *Apocalypse of Abraham* belongs. This unique body of pseudepigraphical evidence, with its enigmatic origins and vague transmission history, has left no clear traces of provenance, even in the Byzantine environment, which is the traditional literary pool of most religious documents circulating in Slavonic.

Yet, the pressing scientific demand for clarifying the historical connections and possible networks of transmission between various Jewish corpora, including channels connecting early Jewish apocalyptic writings and Hekhalot macroforms, in itself creates a perilous mousetrap when contemporary scholars, bound by prevailing conventions and methodologies, are forced to devise putative trajectories in order to justify links between look-alike traditions found in various corpora separated by centuries. Often, attempts of such reconstructions, which lack crucial historical evidence represented by real documents, are bound to generate meager surrogates which mock complexities of real historical and literary developments. Such speculative endeavors often rest on a naïve view that all required literary and historical "links" must be necessarily present among the extant literary data available to contemporary scholars. And if such literary and historical artifacts for some reason are absent, their absence indicates the discontinuity between respective corpora or ideological movements. This scholarly perspective often ignores the obvious fact that almost all surviving ancient literary sources that are available to modern readers, went through a process of rigorous censorship by dominant Jewish and Christian orthodoxies, who often preserved only documents and traditions that were in agreement with their mainstream ideologies. Reflecting on the nature of extant ancient textual data, Michael Stone reminds us that the prevailing Jewish and Christian

[13] P. Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 11.
[14] Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, 354.

orthodoxies "filtered" the textual corpus in order to reinforce their claims and positions. In such a "filtered" transmission, the surviving texts are primarily those that were visible through the lens of orthodoxy, and these texts were often provided with the imprimatur of divine authority.[15] It can be assumed that in such a suppressive ideological environment, some crucial textual evidence, by which the earlier apocalyptic esoteric traditions reached Hekhalot or rabbinic authors, could be lost forever.

These peculiarities regarding the circulation of religious texts and traditions in antiquity are especially important when we approach the so-called "esoteric" currents. In this respect, scholarly attempts to reconstruct the alleged trajectories of the esoteric trends, like, for example, the development of Enoch-Metatron or Yahoel-Metatron traditions – trends which will later be explored in detail – prove to be even more challenging and problematic. It is well known that the origins and development of such esoteric traditions often took place on the fringes of the "orthodoxies" of various religious traditions – Jewish, Christian, and Muslim – being continuously suppressed and persecuted by the orthodox adherents of these religious movements. Yet, in our modern reconstruction of the literary channels of these esoteric trends, scholars must now inevitably rely on the extant evidence preserved by the very "guardians of the faith" responsible for suppressing these conceptual trends. Given these circumstances, it is more natural to assume that the vast majority of intermediate artifacts, which represent "missing links" between various stages of esoteric trends, would rather perish in the purges of prevailing "orthodoxy" than survive such ordeals. And even surviving esoteric compositions, such as the *Apocalypse of Abraham* or *3 Enoch* – writings that create the illusion of having miraculously escaped the iron grasps of "orthodoxy" – still reveal, at close scrutiny, their hidden "mainstream" polemical agendas, which allowed these esoteric texts to survive in the field of prevailing restrictive ideologies. Thus, the protective value of the Slavonic pseudepigrapha was their alleged hagiographical significance, wherein compositions such as the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *2 Enoch*, and the *Ladder of Jacob* were viewed by their orthodox transmitters as the lives of the protological

[15] Stone rightly observes that "the selection of the source material transmitted by both the Jewish and Christian traditions was determined by the particular varieties of Judaism and Christianity that became 'orthodox,' or in other words, that became dominant and survived. … Now, once these later orthodoxies were established, of necessity they viewed the earlier ages through the prism or spectacles of their own self-perception. They cherished only such sources and such information relating to the earlier ages that agreed with their understanding of their past and of themselves. They had no 'distance' from their own traditions. So, Judaism and Christianity preserved and transmitted Second Temple period writings not because they were acceptable in the Second Temple period itself (though some of them may well have been) but because they were acceptable to the forms of Christianity and of Judaism that became dominant, sometimes considerably after the Second Temple period." M. E. Stone, *Ancient Judaism: New Visions and Views* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011) 5–6.

saints, which allow these esoteric works to survive in the mainstream Christian environment. In the case of the esoteric lore perpetuated in *3 Enoch*, the protective layer that secured its survival and perpetuation was the polemical agenda of prevailing orthodoxies, which utilized the ancient hero of esoteric lore as the epitome of the rival theophanic paradigm.[16]

In light of this situation, there is a real possibility that a reconstruction of the transmission of these esoteric traditions, from early apocalyptic writings to later Jewish rabbinic and Hekhalot corpora, may never be successfully accomplished. This is due to the fact that the possible channels, in the form of actual documentation and other literary artifacts, were effectively eliminated by proponents of the prevailing religious ideologies.

[16] Stone points to such perpetuation of the heterodox materials in "orthodox" milieus for polemical purposes. He remarks: "[F]irst, let us consider in further detail the impact of the 'spectacles of orthodoxy' on the survival and perceptions of the data. This may be discerned at a number of levels, and it impacted different types of data in different ways. As we said, religious writings were preserved and transmitted from antiquity because those forms of Christianity and Judaism that became dominant cherished them, or at least regarded them as acceptable. Other writings may have been lost either because they were rejected or due to other quite different (even random) causes. However, when a transmitted tradition preserves writings over time, this shows that they are acceptable to and accepted by that tradition. Generally, 'unorthodox' works were not preserved; although some ancient religious groups kept material they regarded as unacceptable, predominantly for polemical purposes, i. e., in order to controvert it. In Late Antiquity, writings containing unacceptable views were often paraphrased or excerpted verbatim, and the polemical context in which they survived clearly reveals attitudes towards them." Stone, *Ancient Judaism*, 7.

CHAPTER I

Antecedents and Influences

Aural Ideology in the Hebrew Bible

In many biblical theophanies, the deity appears in an anthropomorphic shape. Scholars often argue that such anthropomorphic symbolism comes to its most forceful expression in the Israelite priestly ideology, known to us as the Priestly source, wherein God is depicted in "the most tangible corporeal similitudes."[1] Elliot Wolfson remarks that "a critical factor in determining the biblical (and, by extension, subsequent Jewish) attitude toward the visualization of God concerns the question of the morphological resemblance between the human body and the divine."[2] In the biblical priestly traditions, the deity is understood to have created humanity in his own image (Gen 1:27) and is therefore frequently described as possessing a human-like form.[3] Scholars have shown that the anthropomorphism of the priestly authors appears to be intimately connected with the temple as the place of divine habitation: the deity who owns a human form needs to reside in a house or tabernacle.[4] Moshe Weinfeld argues that the anthropomorphic position was not entirely an invention of the Priestly tradi-

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[1] M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 191.

[2] E. R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994) 20

[3] L. Köhler and M. Weinfeld argue that the phrase, "in our image, after our likeness" precludes the anthropomorphic interpretation that the human being was created in the divine image. L. Köhler, "Die Grundstelle der Imago-Dei Lehre, Genesis i, 26," *ThZ* 4 (1948) 16ff; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 199. In relation to these conceptual developments, Wolfson notes that "it seems that the problem of God's visibility is invariably linked to the question of God's corporeality, which, in turn, is bound up with the matter of human likeness to God. … Although the official cult of ancient Israelite religion prohibited the making of images or icons of God, this basic need to figure or image God in human form found expression in other ways, including the prophetic visions of God as an anthropos, as well as the basic tenet of the similitude of man and divinity. The biblical conception is such that the anthropos is as much cast in the image of God as God is cast in the image of the anthropos. This is stated in the very account of the creation of the human being in the first chapter of Genesis (attributed to P) in the claim that Adam was created in the image of God." Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 20–21.

[4] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 191. Thus, Wolfson notes that "the anthropomorphic manifestation of the divine in ancient Israelite culture is connected with another major theme in the Hebrew Bible: the concern with the presence of God and his nearness. This concern was expressed cultically in terms of the Temple in Jerusalem that served as the set residence of the God of Israel." Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 17.

tion, but stemmed from early pre-exilic[5] sacral conceptions[6] regarding divine corporeal manifestations, influenced by Mesopotamian lore.[7] Scholars observe that the priestly understanding of the corporeal representation of the deity finds its clearest expression in the concept of the "Glory of God" (כבוד יהוה).[8] This concept is usually expressed in the Priestly tradition by means of the symbolism grounded in mythological corporeal imagery.[9] The visible manifestation of the deity establishes a peculiar "visual" or "ocularcentric" theophanic mode that becomes influential in some biblical and apocalyptic depictions of God.

One such portrayal of the divine *Kavod* is found in the first chapter of the book of Ezekiel, a "manifesto" of the priestly corporeal ideology. There, the *Kavod* is portrayed as an enthroned human form enveloped by fire.[10] The *Kavod* becomes a symbol of the theophanic ideology that presupposes visual apprehension of the divine presence. It has previously been noted that the "*Kavod* is used in Ezekiel as a central theological term in texts where visual contact with God is important."[11] Tryggve Mettinger notices that, in such ocularcentric ideology,

[5] Ian Wilson notes that "the Yahwistic and Elohistic sources, for example, in their accounts of the law-giving at Sinai in the Book of Exodus, are considered by many scholars to represent God as either descending to (J) or dwelling on (E) the mountain, while the Zion tradition, as found in some of the Psalms and in the pre-exilic prophets, portrays him as inhabiting the city of Jerusalem." I. Wilson, *Out of the Midst of the Fire: Divine Presence in Deuteronomy* (SBLDS, 151; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 3.

[6] Weinfeld notices that "the notion of God sitting enthroned upon the cherubim was prevalent in ancient Israel … the danger that accrues from approaching the Divinity are all alluded to in the early historiographic narratives." Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 192–3.

[7] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 199.

[8] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 200–201. Wolfson observes that "according to Ezekiel, the glory is the human form of God's manifestation and not a hypostasis distinct from God. To be sure, in other biblical contexts the *kavod* does not necessarily imply the human form of God. The particular usage of *kevod YHWH* (Presence of the Lord) is a characteristic feature of the Priestly stratum, where it serves as a *terminus technicus* to describe God's indwelling and nearness to Israel, which is manifest as a fiery brightness, splendor, and radiance that, due to the human incapacity to bear the sight of it, is usually enveloped in a thick cloud. In the case of Ezekiel, as well, the conception of the glory as a luminous body is apparent from the description of the enthroned figure as being surrounded with splendor from the waist up and with fire from the waist down, a motif found elsewhere in the Bible, with parallels in Sumerian and Babylonian materials. That this luminous *kavod*, however, had the capacity to be visualized as an anthropos is illustrated from the case of Ezekiel." Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 22.

[9] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 201.

[10] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 201.

[11] T. N. D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth. Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (ConBOT, 18; Lund: Wallin & Dalholm, 1982) 106. Mettinger asserts that "Ezekiel's choice of the word *kavod* was dictated by the earlier use of the term in the theophanic tradition. It was here those connotations were preserved which underlie the usage in the Priestly traditions. Ezekiel's visions of the divine majesty exhibit the striking combination of *kavod* with the throne, and this combination epitomizes, with emblematic density, the whole theology of Ezekiel's visions." Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 123.

the *Kavod* "is conceived of as referring to the complete manifestation of divine majesty, both to the chariot-throne and to God himself."[12]

The topological and angelological settings of the inner sanctum of the earthly sanctuary imitate this portentous arrangement of the heavenly throne room hinted at in Ezekiel 1. Reflecting on this parallelism, Weinfeld points out that, "within the inner recesses of the tabernacle, removed and veiled from the human eye, sits the deity ensconced between the two cherubim, and at his feet rests the ark, his footstool."[13] Concealment of the deity's form does not here contradict, but rather paradoxically reaffirms the tenets of the visual anthropomorphic paradigm. As Weinfeld intuits, in such a theophanic understanding, "the divine seclusion must be respected. … Drawing nigh to the deity here signifies entrance into the actual sphere of the divine presence and for this reason is fraught with great physical danger."[14] These theophanic settings of the ocularcentric *Kavod* paradigm will become an important blueprint for apocalyptic visions reflected in early Enochic accounts, including Enoch's ascents to the heavenly throne room in *1 Enoch* 14 and *1 Enoch* 71.

While containing forceful anthropomorphic ideologies, the Hebrew Bible also attests to polemical narratives that contest corporeal depictions of the deity and offers a different conception of the divine presence. Scholars have long noted a sharp opposition of the book of Deuteronomy and the so-called "Deuteronomic school" to early anthropomorphic developments. Weinfeld argues that "the Deuteronomic conception of the cult is … vastly different from that reflected in the other Pentateuchal sources; it represents a turning point in the evolution of the religious faith of Israel."[15]

The precise reasons for such a paradigm shift cannot be determined with certainty. Ian Wilson notes that scholars usually trace the introduction of such an ideology to particular historical events, such as "the centralization of the cult, the loss of the ark from the northern kingdom, or the destruction of the temple."[16]

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[12] Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 107.

[13] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 191. Reflecting on the symbolism of the divine Seat, Wolfson observes that "we come, then, to the fundamental paradox: there was no fixed iconic representation of the deity upon the throne, but it was precisely this institution that provided the context for visualization of the divine Presence. This basic insight was understood by the phenomenologist Gerardus van der Leeuw, who wrote, 'The ark of Jahveh, for instance, was an empty throne of God.' … This of course does not involve any 'purely spiritual' worship of God, but merely that the deity should assume his place on the empty throne at his epiphany." Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 18.

[14] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 192.

[15] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 190.

[16] Wilson, *Out of the Midst of the Fire*, 6–7. It is possible that the Deuteronomic paradigm shift was relying on already existing auricular developments. Elliot Wolfson notes that "while the epistemic privileging of hearing over seeing in relation to God is attested in various biblical writers, including many of the classical prophets, the aversion to iconic representation of the deity can be

The Deuteronomic school is widely thought to have initiated the polemic against the ocularcentric anthropomorphic conceptions of the deity, which the prophets Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah subsequently adopted.[17] Seeking to dislodge ancient anthropomorphisms, the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic school promulgated the anti-corporeal "aural" ideology[18] of the divine Name[19] with its conception of the earthly sanctuary[20] as the exclusive dwelling abode of God's Name.[21] Gerhard von Rad argues that the Deuteronomic formula, "to cause his Name to dwell" (לשכן שמו), advocates a new understanding of the deity, challenging the popular ancient belief that God actually dwells within the sanctuary.[22] In this Deuteronomistic ideology, apparitions of the de-

traced most particularly to the Deuteronomist author who stressed that the essential and exclusive medium of revelation was the divine voice and not a visible form. … Whatever the 'original' rationale for the prohibition on the iconic representation of God in ancient Israelite culture, whether theological or socio-political, it seems likely that the Deuteronomist restriction on the visualization of God is a later interpretation of an already existing proscription." Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 14.

[17] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 198. In relation to the developments found in Deutero-Isaiah, Wolfson notes that "a significant element in the biblical tradition, as we have seen in the case of the Deuteronomist, opposes physical anthropomorphism, emphasizing the verbal/auditory over the iconic/visual. Positing that God addresses human beings through speech does not affect the claim to divine transcendence, that is, the utter incomparability of God to anything created, humanity included. The most extreme formulation of such a demythologizing trend occurs in Deutero-Isaiah: 'To whom, then, can you liken God, what form (*demut*) compares to Him?' (Isa 40:18; cf. 40:25, 46:5). In this verse one can perceive, as has been pointed out by Moshe Weinfeld, a direct polemic against the Priestly tradition that man is created in God's image. This tradition implies two things: first that God has an image (*demut*), and, second, that in virtue of that image in which Adam was created there is a basic similarity or likeness between human and divine. The verse in Deutero-Isaiah attacks both of these presumptions: since no image can be attributed to God it cannot be said that the human being is created in God's image. From this vantage point there is an unbridgeable and irreducible gap separating Creator and creature." Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 24–25.

[18] Wilson notices that scholars usually derive the Name theology "from two sets of texts, namely references to YHWH's Name dwelling, or being in some other sense present, at the sanctuary (e. g. in Deut 12–26 and throughout the Deuteronomistic History) and those to YHWH himself dwelling or being in heaven (e. g. Deut 4:36; 26:15 and 1 Kings 8, in Solomon's prayer of dedication of the temple)." Wilson, *Out of the Midst of the Fire*, 3.

[19] For modern reconstructions of the ideology of the divine Name in Deuteronomy and other biblical materials, see S. Richter, *The Deuteronomic History and the Name Theology: lesakken semo sam in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (BZAW, 318; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002) 26–39.

[20] Similar to the *Kavod* paradigm, the *Shem* ideology is also permeated by distinctive sacerdotal concerns that will maintain their powerful grip on the onomatological imagery long after the destruction of the Second Jerusalem Temple. Wilson asserts that "despite the resulting Deuteronomistic emphasis on the transcendence of YHWH in the *Shem* ideology, the sanctuary retains its importance for the Israelite worshiper, since the presence there of the Name is seen as providing indirect access to that of the deity himself." Wilson, *Out of the Midst of the Fire*, 7.

[21] Mettinger observes that in the *Shem* theology "God himself is no longer present in the Temple, but only in heaven. However, he is represented in the Temple by his Name. …" Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth,* 124. See also Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 193.

[22] Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School,* 193. Von Rad observes that "in Deuteronomy, it [the name] may be established in a particular place, the conception is definite and within fixed limits; it verges closely upon a hypostasis. The Deuteronomic theologumenon of

ity are often depicted through the non-visual, aural symbolism of the divine Voice.[23] Mettinger asserts that, "by way of contrast, the Deuteronomistic theology is programmatically abstract: during the Sinai theophany, Israel perceived no form (*temuna*); she only heard the voice of her God (Deut 4:12, 15). The Deuteronomistic preoccupation with God's voice and words represents an auditive, non-visual theme."[24]

Yet, as with the visual *Kavod* tradition, in which the imagery of the earthly sanctuary imitates the symbolism of the heavenly Temple, the aural paradigm is not confined solely to the revisions of the earthly shrine,[25] but it also promotes a novel audial understanding of the heavenly Chariot and its divine Charioteer. As Mettinger observes, the concept of God advocated by the Deuteronomistic theology is strikingly abstract. "The throne concept has vanished and the anthropomorphic characteristics of God are on the way to oblivion. Thus the form of God plays no part in the Deuteronomic depiction of the Sinai theophany."[26]

It is noteworthy that, while the Deuteronomistic *Shem* ideology does not completely abandon terminology pertaining to the concept of the divine Glory (*Kavod*),[27] it markedly voids it of any corporeal motifs. In later specimens of this aural trend, the divine Form on the Chariot will be replaced by the imagery of the divine Voice coming from fire. We also encounter such developments in

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the name of Jahweh clearly holds a polemic element, or, to put it better, is a theological corrective. It is not Jahweh himself who is present at the shrine, but only his name as the guarantee of his will to save; to it and it only Israel has to hold fast as the sufficient form in which Jahweh reveals himself. Deuteronomy is replacing the old crude idea of Jahweh's presence and dwelling at the shrine by a theologically sublimated idea." G. von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (London: SCM Press, 1953) 38–39. In a similar vein, Ronald Clements postulates that "by the concept of the name of God the Deuteronomic authors have sought to avoid too crude a notion of the idea that God's presence could be located at the sanctuary. They have sought to emphasize the fact that God's true place of habitation could only be in heaven." R. E. Clements, *Deuteronomy* (Old Testament Guides; Sheffield: JSOT, 1989) 52.

[23] Wolfson points out that, "while the figural representation of the deity is deemed offensive or even blasphemous, the hearing of a voice is an acceptable form of anthropomorphic representation, for, phenomenologically speaking, the voice does not necessarily imply an externalized concrete shape that is bound by specific spatial dimensions. … The voice admits no spatial reference in the external world and is therefore presumed to be immediately present. … it is appropriate to speak of a voice of God rather than a visible form because the former implies a sense of phenomenological immediacy without necessitating spatial or worldly exteriority." Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, 14–15.

[24] Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 46.

[25] Wilson notes that "the presence of the Name at the cult-place is not regarded as an isolated phenomenon, but is linked to a whole complex of new ideas involving changes in the conception of the ark (from being YHWH's footstool or throne to being a mere container for the law) and of the temple (from being YHWH's dwelling-place and therefore a place of sacrifice to being a place of prayer)." Wilson, *Out of the Midst of the Fire*, 8.

[26] Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth*, 124.

[27] This tendency to re-interpret polemically the imagery of the rival paradigm is also observable in the *Kavod* tradition, which in its turn uses the symbolism of the divine Voice and other aspects of *Shem* symbolism.