

Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity

The Reception of Enochic Literature



CAMBRIDGE

Annette Yoshiko Reed

FALLEN ANGELS AND THE HISTORY OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

This book considers the early history of Jewish–Christian relations through a focus on traditions about the fallen angels. In the *Book of the Watchers*, an Enochic apocalypse from the third century BCE, the “sons of God” of Gen 6:1–4 are accused of corrupting humankind through their teachings of metalworking, cosmetology, magic, and divination. By tracing the transformations of this motif in Second Temple, Rabbinic, and early medieval Judaism and early, late antique, and Byzantine Christianity, this book sheds light on the history of interpretation of Genesis, the changing status of Enochic literature, and the place of parabiblical texts and traditions in the interchange between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. In the process, it explores issues such as the role of text-selection in the delineation of community boundaries and the development of early Jewish and Christian ideas about the origins of evil on the earth.

Annette Yoshiko Reed is presently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at McMaster University, where she teaches courses on the Hebrew Bible, early Judaism, and early Christianity. Her publications span the fields of Biblical Studies, Jewish Studies, and Patristics, and include articles in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, *Vigiliae Christianae*, and *Journal of Early Christian Studies*. She has coedited two volumes, *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (with Adam H. Becker, 2003) and *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions* (with Ra’anan S. Boustan; Cambridge University Press, 2004). She is presently working on a book about “Jewish-Christianity” and the diversity of late antique Judaism.

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*To my father, Dr. Steven R. Reed,
who taught me how (and why) to think.*



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Preface

This book is a revision of my dissertation, which was written in the Department of Religion at Princeton University under the supervision of Martha Himmelfarb, Peter Schäfer, and John G. Gager. I cannot imagine a more stimulating intellectual environment in which to study, nor kinder people with whom to work. I offer them my warmest thanks for their support and inspiration, academic and otherwise. The dissertation and book also benefited much from feedback from, and conversations with, Adam H. Becker, Ra’anan Boustan, Peter Brown, Patricia Crone, Fritz Graf, Elaine Pagels, John C. Reeves, and Burt Visotzky. For their comments and advice, I am grateful to Kirsti Copeland, David Frankfurter, Paula Fredriksen, Bob Kraft, Eileen Schuller, Michael E. Stone, and Peter Widdicombe. Funding for the dissertation on which this book is based was provided by the Center for the Study of Religion at Princeton University. Earlier versions of several chapters were presented at the Center’s Religion and Culture workshop as well as at the conference *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Imagined Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions* and in the Early Jewish–Christian Relations and Pseudepigrapha sections of the Society of Biblical Literature’s annual meetings. Extended versions of some of the arguments in Chapters 1, 2, 5, and 7 have been published in different forms in earlier articles: “From Asael and Šemiḥazah to Uzzah, Azzah, and Azael: 3 Enoch 5 (§§7–8) and the Jewish Reception-History of 1 Enoch” (*Jewish Studies Quarterly* 8 [2001]: 1–32); “The Textual Identity, Literary History, and Social Setting of 1 Enoch: Reflections on George Nickelsburg’s Commentary on 1 Enoch 1–36; 81–108.” (*Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 5 [2003]: 279–96); “The Trickery of the Fallen Angels and the Demonic Mimesis of the Divine: Etiology, Demonology, and Polemics in the Writings of Justin Martyr” (*Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12 [2004]: 141–71); and “Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 1 Enoch 6–16”

(*Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 47–66).

I would also like to express my appreciation to colleagues, students, and staff in the Department of Religious Studies at McMaster University – not least for fostering such an intellectually stimulating and supportive academic context that I was able to complete extensive revisions during my first year of full-time teaching. A grant from McMaster’s Arts Research Board, moreover, provided support for the preparation of the manuscript and indexes, and I am grateful to Christopher Cubitt, Marko Geslani, Jeremy Penner, Lily Vuong, and Susan Wendel, for their help. Warm thanks, as well, to Jonathan Geen for his aid during the final stage of reviewing proofs. Lastly, on behalf of myself and Cambridge University Press, I would like to thank the Koret Foundation Publication Program for their generosity in awarding this book a subvention to help defray the costs of publication.

To my parents, Steven R. and Michiko Reed, and to my husband, Dove C. Sussman, I owe greater debts than words can express.

Annette Yoshiko Reed

Hamilton, Ontario, November 1, 2004

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations of other sources follow P. H. Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody, Mass., 1999) and H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (trans. M. Bockmuehl; Minneapolis, 1996).

1. SUBDOCUMENTS AND MANUSCRIPTS OF 1 ENOCH

- BW *Book of the Watchers* (1 En. 1–36).
Sim. *Similitudes of Enoch* (1 En. 37–71).
AB *Astronomical Book* (1 En. 71–82).
BD *Book of Dreams* (1 En. 83–90).
EE *Epistle of Enoch* (1 En. 91–105/6/7).
“AW” “Apocalypse of Weeks” (1 En. 93:1–10; 91:11–17).
“AA” “Animal Apocalypse” (1 En. 85–90).
Gr^{Pan} Codex Panopolitanus; M. Black and A. Denis, eds. *Apocalypsis Henochi Graece: Fragmenta Pseudepigraphorum* (Leiden, 1970) 19–36.
Gr^{CB} Chester Beatty–Michigan Papyrus XII; Black and Denis, *Apocalypsis*, 37–44.
Gr^{Syn} Excerpts of BW in Sync. [see below]
Gr^{Vat} Codex Vaticanus Gr. 1809; Black and Denis, *Apocalypsis*, 36–37.

2. TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARIES OF 1 ENOCH

- Black, *Commentary*. M. Black, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch: A New English Edition* (Leiden, 1985).

- Charles, *Commentary*. R. H. Charles, ed. and trans., *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch* (Oxford, 1912).
- Fleming and Radermacher, *Henoch* J. Flemming and L. Radermacher, eds. and trans., *Das Buch Henoch, herausgegeben im Auftrage der Kirchenväter-commission der Königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Leipzig, 1901).
- Knibb, *Commentary*. M. A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments*. 2 vols. (Oxford, 1978).
- Milik, *Commentary*. J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford, 1976).
- Nickelsburg, *Commentary*. G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, chapters 1–36, 81–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, 2001).
- Tiller, *Commentary* P. A. Tiller, *A Commentary on the Animal Apocalypse of 1 Enoch* (SBLEJL 4; Atlanta, 1993).

3. EDITIONS AND COLLECTIONS OF OTHER MAJOR PRIMARY SOURCES

- AMB J. Naveh and S. Shaked, eds., *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem, 1985).
- APOT R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*. 2 vols. (Oxford, 1913).
- Ber.Rabbati *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati*, ed. H. Albeck (Jerusalem, 1983).
- BHM A. Jellinek, ed., *Bet ha-midrash*, 5 vols. (Jerusalem, 1967).
- B-M A. E. Brooke and N. McLean, eds., *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Text of Codex Vaticanus* (Cambridge, 1906–40).

- CMC *Cologne Mani Codex*; ed. A. Henrichs and L. Koenen, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex: Über das Werden seines Leibes* (Opladen, 1988).
- Gen.Rab. *Genesis Rabbah*; ed. H. Albeck and J. Theodor, *Bereshit Rabba mit Kritischem Apparat und Kommentar*. 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1965).
- Gött. *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum*; vol. I: *Genesis*, ed. J. W. Wevers (Göttingen, 1974).
- MSF J. Naveh and S. Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem, 1993).
- OTP J. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. (New York, 1983–85).
- PGM K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs, eds., *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, 2 vols. (2nd. ed.; Stuttgart, 1973–74).
- Stuckenbruck, BG L. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran* (Tübingen, 1997).
- Sync. George Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica*; ed. A. A. Mosshammer (Leipzig, 1984); trans., W. A. Adler and P. Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation* (Oxford, 2002).
- Yerahmeel *Chronicle of Yerahmeel*; trans. M. Gaster, *The Chronicle of Jerahmeel* (New York, 1971).

FALLEN ANGELS AND THE HISTORY OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Introduction

THE BOOK OF GENESIS TELLS US PRECIOUS LITTLE ABOUT THE FIGURE of Enoch. In the course of presenting a genealogical list of those who lived before the Flood, it notes his Sethian ancestry via Jared (5:19) and his fathering of Methusaleh (5:21). We find only hints of his special status: the other men in the genealogy merely live, propagate, and die, but Genesis states twice that Enoch “walked with God” (5:22, 24). And rather than tell his death in straightforward terms, it recounts that “he was no more, for God took him” (5:24).

The brevity of the biblical comments stands in stark contrast with the wealth of traditions about Enoch in Judaism and Christianity.¹ As early as the Second Temple period (536 BCE to 70 CE), Enoch attracts intensive interest within Judaism.² He becomes a scribe, sage, and even scientist. As visionary, he is taken up to heaven and travels with angels to the ends of earth. As witness and prophet, he exhorts against sin, predicts Israel’s history, and even intercedes for wicked angels. Moreover, books begin to circulate under his name, purporting to record the visions and teachings that the antediluvian patriarch passed on to his progeny and bequeathed to the righteous of future generations.

The present study tells the story of one of the earliest and most influential of these books, namely, the *Book of the Watchers*. Focusing on its distinctive traditions about the Watchers, or fallen angels,³ I will trace the long and winding fate of this apocalypse from its composition around the third century BCE

¹ VanderKam, *Enoch*; idem, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs,” 88–100; Himmelfarb, “Report”; Adler, “Enoch”; Kraft, “Philo”; Alexander, “From Son of Adam.” For Manicheism and Islam, Reeves, *Heralds*, 39–42, 183–98; Alexander, “Jewish Tradition,” 11–30; Erder, “Origin.”

² See Ch. 2 n. 86.

³ “Watchers” [עִירָרִי] denotes a class of angels and can refer to both heavenly angels and their fallen counterparts; Dimant, “Fallen Angels,” 32–33; Davidson, *Angels*, 38–39. Used in the context of BW, it typically denotes fallen angels.

and its widespread influence among pre-Rabbinic Jews (including members of the Jesus Movement), to its rejection by the Rabbinic movement, adoption by early Christians, suppression by later church leaders, and eventual loss to the West. In the process, the reception-history of the *Book of the Watchers* provides a lens through which to examine broader issues, such as the early history of Jewish and Christian reflection on the Problem of Evil, the relationship between “biblical” exegesis and “parabiblical” literature, the social dynamics of canonization, and the place of noncanonical texts and traditions in the interaction between Judaism and Christianity.

1. THE “BOOK(S) OF ENOCH” AND THE *BOOK OF THE WATCHERS*

From the Middle Ages to early modern period, the early Enochic pseudepigrapha⁴ were largely lost to the West. To an even greater degree than in ages past, the mystery surrounding Enoch came to be associated with lost books and secret scrolls, wisdom suppressed and writings forgotten. Even as the books themselves were gone, the ancient allusions remained. It could not have escaped the attention of Christian Kabbalists that early Christian literature and Jewish mystical texts like the *Zohar* both mentioned “book(s) of Enoch”; Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) even professed to have bought such a book at a very high price, to the amusement of his more skeptical colleague, Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522).⁵ Likewise, occultists such as John Dee (1527–1608) sought direct access to the secrets revealed to Enoch, appealing to the precedent of this ancient visionary when claiming to have received angelic revelations of their own.⁶

Excerpts from the *Book of the Watchers* also survived in the chronographical literature of Syriac Christianity and Byzantium. When the Renaissance scholar Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609) first published portions of George Syncellus’ *Ecloga Chronographica* in 1606, some readers were struck by the passages that the ninth-century chronographer quotes “from the first book of Enoch concerning the Watchers.”⁷ Although dismissing its claim to antediluvian antiquity, scholars of the time soon recognized this “book of Enoch” as the source of the scattered allusions to Enoch’s prophecies about the fallen angels in the NT and early Christian literature.⁸

⁴ I use the terms “pseudepigraphon” and “pseudepigraphical” in a literary sense, to mean a text composed in the name of another.

⁵ Schmidt, “Traces,” 45–46.

⁶ Harkness, *John Dee’s Conversations*, esp. 166–67; Laycock, *Complete Enochian Dictionary*, esp. 14.

⁷ Sync. 11.19: ἐκ τοῦ πρώτου βιβλίου Ἐνώχ περὶ τῶν ἐγρηγόρων; see n. 30.

⁸ See Adler, *Time*, 6–7.

Rumors about the continued preservation of Enochic literature in Ethiopia finally led, after several failures and false starts, to the Western rediscovery of the *Book of the Watchers* and other early Enochic pseudepigrapha in 1773, when three manuscripts containing *Maṣḥafa Henok Nabiyy* were brought to Europe by James Bruce.⁹ The publication and translation of this work – later dubbed *Ethiopic Enoch* or *1 Enoch* to distinguish it from an Enochic pseudepigraphon preserved in Slavonic (*2 Enoch*) – prompted further investigation into this intriguing book and its influence on early Christians,¹⁰ later facilitated by the discovery of a Greek manuscript containing *1 En.* 1:1–32:6 in 1886–1887.¹¹

Thanks largely to the pioneering research of R. H. Charles (1855–1931), it was established that *1 Enoch* is a collection of at least five separate writings and that Syncellus' quotations derive from the first one (thus dubbed the *Book of the Watchers*).¹² Speculations about the date, provenance, and original language of these books varied until the discovery of Aramaic fragments of *1 Enoch* among the Dead Sea Scrolls and their publication by J. T. Milik from 1951 to 1976.¹³ The distribution of material in the eleven fragments confirmed Charles' theory that *1 Enoch* is a collection of originally distinct documents. In addition, the paleographical evidence of the earliest fragments suggested that two of these documents, the *Astronomical Book* (*1 En.* 72–82) and the *Book of the Watchers* (*1 En.* 1–36), date from the third century BCE, making them our oldest known apocalypses and among our most ancient nonbiblical examples of Jewish literature.¹⁴

The recognition of the antiquity of the *Astronomical Book* and the *Book of the Watchers* has revolutionized scholarship on the apocalyptic literature. Although the *Astronomical Book* may be older, the *Book of the Watchers* has proved most helpful in illuminating the emergence and development of the genre. Scholars who focus on formal literary features have studied its descriptions of Enoch's ascent to heaven and his tours of heaven and earth,¹⁵ whereas those who seek to characterize an apocalyptic ideology have pointed to its interest in the Problem of Evil.¹⁶

⁹ Bodl 4, Bodl 5, and Paris 32. See further Flemming and Radermacher, *Henoch*, 2.

¹⁰ Charles, *Commentary*, xxvii–xxx.

¹¹ Codex Panopolitanus, also called the Akhmim MS or Gizeh Fragment.

¹² Charles, *Commentary*, xlvii–lii; Milik, *Commentary*, 22.

¹³ 4QEn^{a,b,c,d,e,f,g}, 4QEnastr^{a,b,c,d}; Milik, *Commentary*.

¹⁴ 4QEnastr^a and 4QEn^{a,b}. Milik, *Commentary*, 164–65, 273–74; Nickelsburg, *Commentary*, 7.

¹⁵ E.g., Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 1–9, 47–59; idem, “Towards the Morphology,” 1–19.

¹⁶ E.g., Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic*, 47–71, 82–87, 93–104; Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 19–22.

As modern research integrates the evidence of this apocalypse into our understanding of Second Temple Judaism, scholars have increasingly taken up the challenge of investigating the later reception-history of Enochic texts and traditions. An initial effort was made by Milik in the introduction to the *editio princeps* of the Aramaic fragments from Qumran.¹⁷ Although ambitious in scope and invaluable as a resource for further study, Milik's account of the *Nachleben* of the writings in *1 Enoch* suffered from his idiosyncratic ideas about the date and provenance of texts like the *Similitudes of Enoch* (*1 En.* 37–71), *2 Enoch*, and *3 Enoch*.¹⁸

Nevertheless, it remains that Milik is one of the few scholars who have attempted to trace the reception-history of these texts fully in both Judaism and Christianity.¹⁹ Like their early modern counterparts, most scholars have focused on the influence of early Enochic texts and traditions on Christianity, while limiting their consideration of Judaism mainly to the pre-Christian period. Inquiries into the *Nachleben* of the *Book of the Watchers* have mostly centered on the quotation of *1 En.* 1:9 in the NT Epistle of Jude and the allusions to *1 En.* 6–16 in Jude, *1 Peter*, and *2 Peter*. From that point forward, the focus has fallen on the fate of these early Jewish texts in the church. Building on H. J. Lawlor's 1897 article on "Early Citations from the Book of Enoch," scholars such as James VanderKam, William Adler, Birger Pearson, and Sebastian Brock have discussed the use of "book(s) of Enoch" by late antique and early medieval Christians, ranging from proto-orthodox Church Fathers to Alexandrian, Syriac, and Byzantine chronographers.²⁰ In light of the authoritative status of *1 Enoch* in the Ethiopian church, there has also been much research on the prehistory of this specific collection.²¹

By contrast, the Jewish *Nachleben* of the Enochic literature has remained largely unexplored. Prior to the discoveries at Qumran, Gershom Scholem

¹⁷ Milik, *Commentary*, 70–138.

¹⁸ Milik, *Commentary*, 89–100, 107–16, 125–35, and critiques in Knibb, "Date"; Greenfield and Stone, "Enochic Pentateuch," 51–52, 55–60; idem, "Books and Traditions," 98–103; Black, *Commentary*, 181–93; VanderKam, *From Revelation* 359–61.

¹⁹ In her 1978 dissertation on the fallen angels, Dimant included evidence from Second Temple Judaism and later midrashic and medicinal literature alongside some early Christian texts; apart from early Jewish literature, however, her concern lay less in the reception-history of Enochic writings than on the different versions of the underlying "legend." In Nickelsburg's recent commentary, the treatment of Rabbinic Judaism and the Hekhalot literature make up less than a single page (*Commentary*, 81), in contrast to more than twenty dedicated to the Christian transformation of Enochic traditions (pp. 82–108).

²⁰ VanderKam, "1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs"; Adler, *Time*, esp. 82–90, 119–21, 176–82; Brock, "Fragment"; Pearson, "Enoch."

²¹ E.g. Knibb, "Christian Adoption."

highlighted the affinities between *1 Enoch* and later Merkavah mysticism (i.e., chariot mysticism), treating both as products of the same esoteric stream of Judaism.²² Scholars such as Ithmar Gruenwald further explored the possible connections between early Jewish apocalypses and the late antique Jewish traditions in the Hekhalot literature, making special reference to Enoch's heavenly ascent and Throne-vision in the *Book of the Watchers* (*1 En.* 14). Yet, aside from the appeal to phenomenological parallels and the recourse to "secret" (and, hence, unrecoverable and invisible) channels of transmission,²³ there have been few efforts to deal with the *Nachleben* of early Enochic texts and traditions in post-70 Judaism.

Despite ample evidence for their influence, there has yet to be a synthesis that considers developments in Second Temple, Rabbinic, and early medieval Judaism alongside early, late antique, and Byzantine Christianity. Towards this goal, this study will trace the reception-history of the *Book of the Watchers* from its composition in the third century BCE until the early Middle Ages, by focusing on its distinctive treatment of the fallen angels as corrupting teachers of humankind.

2. ANGELIC DESCENT, ILLICIT INSTRUCTION, AND THE ORIGINS OF EVIL

While describing the proliferation of human wickedness that prompted God to cleanse the earth with the Flood, Genesis recounts:

When humans began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God [בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים] saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took wives from them as they chose. . . . The *Nephilim* were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the *Gibborim* of old, men of renown. (Gen 6:1–4)²⁴

The *Book of the Watchers* provides our earliest extant evidence for the exegesis and expansion of this tantalizing terse passage.²⁵ Before recounting Enoch's heavenly ascent and otherworldly journeys, the apocalypse describes

²² Scholem, *Major Trends*, 43–45.

²³ Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*, esp. 45.

²⁴ The origins and meaning of Gen 6:1–4 fall outside the purview of our inquiry; see Hendel, "Of Demigods," 13–26; Soggin, "Sons," 135–36; Kilmer, "Mesopotamian," 39–44. Translations from biblical literature here and throughout follow JPS.

²⁵ The relationship between *1 En.* 6–16 and Gen 6:1–4 is, of course, much more than a matter of exegesis; see Ch. 1.

the descent of angelic Watchers from heaven, their impure relations with human women, and the bloodthirsty violence of their progeny. Throughout these chapters, the biblically based theme of sexual mingling is interwoven with an extrabiblical tradition that levels a far more dire accusation against Asael and other Watchers: according to the *Book of the Watchers*, their revelation of secret knowledge caused “all manner of wickedness” to be adopted by humankind, thereby accounting for the antediluvian proliferation of sin.²⁶

The motif of illicit angelic instruction is central to the *Book of the Watchers*, shaping its unique approach to issues such as the origins of evil and the limits of human knowledge. Insofar as this motif represents a distinctive feature of the apocalypse, it also provides an heuristic focus for research into its reception-history. Jewish and Christian references to the fallen angels abound, but the tradition that their teachings corrupted humankind is relatively rare. In contrast to the Watchers’ sexual misdeeds, their pedagogical transgressions are not readily derived from Genesis. Unlike traditions about their binding and imprisonment, this motif occurs rarely in other pre-Rabbinic texts.²⁷ Moreover, even despite the popularity of the *Book of the Watchers* in the first centuries after its composition, the instruction motif is absent or suppressed in almost all Second Temple Jewish sources and in the NT. As we shall see, even authors who are otherwise dependent on this apocalypse seem reticent to accept its assertion that sinfulness has a supernatural origin, arising neither from a primeval act of human disobedience, nor from an evil inclination in the human heart, but from a breach of heavenly harmony.

An investigation of this motif has the potential to illumine the history of interpretation of Gen 6:1–4 as well as the history of the transmission and reception of early Enochic texts and traditions. Accordingly, this study surveys the occurrences of this motif in Jewish sources, ranging from the *Book of the Watchers* to medieval midrashic collections, and in Christian sources, ranging from the *Apologies* of Justin Martyr to Syncellus’ *Ecloga Chronographica*. For each source, I will attempt to determine the relationship to the *Book of the Watchers* on internal literary grounds and also with reference to external evidence for its circulation in specific groups, communities, and geographical locales. By triangulating different types of evidence, I will chart the various channels through which the *Book of the Watchers* was transmitted, both before

²⁶ On BW’s relationship to Gen 2–3, see Ch. 1.

²⁷ To my knowledge, the motif occurs in only two other texts composed before the second century CE: *Jubilees* and the *Similitudes*; see Ch. 3.

and after its exclusion, first from the biblical canon of the Rabbis, and later from the OT of the Western Christian orthodoxy.

The *Book of the Watchers* provides an ideal subject for such an inquiry. We possess codicological evidence from more than one stage and language of its transmission as well as from different geographical areas and religious communities. The discoveries at Qumran yielded at least five separate manuscripts that contain fragments of the Aramaic original, ranging in date from the middle of the second century BCE to the first century CE.²⁸ Not only do these fragments help us to recover the original text, but they provide us with invaluable evidence for the social settings of its early reception. Even as the evidence of later Enochic pseudepigrapha (e.g., *2 Enoch*, *Similitudes*) attests the *Book of the Watchers*' circulation in other settings, the Qumran fragments allow us to locate the use of this book within the life of a specific community of Jews in the Second Temple period.

In addition, two witnesses preserve parts of the *Book of the Watchers* in Greek translation. Erik Larson has persuasively argued that this and other Enochic writings were translated into Greek by Jews in the first century BCE.²⁹ Both of our extant witnesses, however, are of Christian provenance. Not only do our Greek witnesses preserve almost all of the *Book of the Watchers*, with duplications both within and between them,³⁰ but they evince a surprisingly lively interest in Enoch and the fallen angels among different Christian groups in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. An Egyptian manuscript from the fifth or sixth century CE, Codex Panopolitanus, contains two incomplete manuscripts of the *Book of the Watchers*, bound together with apocryphal Petrine writings (also incomplete). Like the Chester Beatty–Michigan Papyrus XII, which contains the *Epistle of Enoch*, Pseudo-Ezekielian writings, and passages from Melito of Sardis, this manuscript attests the practice of collecting Enochic books together with material of Christian authorship. These manuscripts thus provide important material and contextual evidence for the Christian reception-history of this work. As Michael Knibb notes, “the fact that extracts

²⁸ 4QEn^{a,b,c,d,e}. Milik, *Commentary*, 139–243; Knibb, *Commentary*, 6–15; Nickelsburg, “Books of Enoch at Qumran,” 100–3; idem, *Commentary*, 9–11. In March 2004, Esther and Hanan Eshel identified yet another Aramaic MS of BW from Qumran, a fragmentary papyrus preserving *1 En.* 8:4–9:3 and dating from 50–25 BCE. Further information will be published in “Six New Fragments from Qumran,” forthcoming in DJD vol. 11.

²⁹ Larson, “Translation,” 198–203; Knibb, “Christian Adoption,” 401; see Ch. 3. Enochic pseudepigrapha may have also circulated in Latin translation, but the evidence is, as Nickelsburg rightly concludes, “slim and far from compelling” (*Commentary*, 14); see Ch. 4 n. 105, 109.

³⁰ *1 En.* 1:1–32:6 in Gr^{Pan}, duplicating 19:3–21:9; *1 En.* 6:1–10:15, 15:8–16:2, 26:9–27:7 in Gr^{Syn} (Sync. 11.19–13.19, 24.10–27.7), duplicating 9:1–5.

from the Enochic corpus were copied with other Christian works shows that they were thought to be consonant with Christian beliefs and were part of the Christian tradition.³¹

In addition, as noted above, the Byzantine chronographer Syncellus preserves lengthy quotations from the *Book of the Watchers*. Although he warns the reader that this work is spurious, he nevertheless preserves it, as a traditional proof-text in the chronographical discussion of early human history. His quotations from the *Book of the Watchers* shed light on its use in yet another setting, in which doubts about its authenticity were outweighed by its value for supplementing the information about primeval times in the Hebrew Bible and Hellenistic historiography.³²

We also have numerous manuscripts of the Ge'ez (ancient Ethiopic) translation of the *Book of the Watchers*. In contrast to the Greek version, this translation was made by Christians for Christians. The Ge'ez version reflects the use of Greek sources and alone preserves the entirety of the *Book of the Watchers*.³³ This apocalypse here comprises the first thirty-six chapters of a larger compilation of Enochic pseudepigrapha, called *Maṣḥafa Henok Nabiyy* in the Ethiopian Church and *1 Enoch* within modern Western scholarship.³⁴ Although our earliest catalogued Ge'ez manuscripts date from the 15th century, the translation has its origins in the period between the adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Aksumite Kingdom in Ethiopia in the mid-fourth century CE and the decline of the Aksumite power in the sixth.³⁵ The fact that the rendering of Enochic writings into Ge'ez was part of a larger, state-sponsored project of scriptural translation may hint at their continued authority in other, geographically proximate Christian circles even at a time when Enochic pseudepigrapha were being excluded from the biblical canons created by ecclesiarchs in the Roman Empire.

There are also a number of references to the *Book of the Watchers* in Jewish and Christian literature, as well as explicit comments about Enochic books and discussions about their authority and authenticity. Such statements cluster in

³¹ Knibb, "Christian Adoption," 402.

³² Adler and Tuffin, *Chronography*, liv–lv.

³³ VanderKam (*From Revelation*, 380–95) argues persuasively against Ullendorf (*Ethiopia*, 61–62) and Knibb (*Commentary*, 37–46), who suggest that Aramaic readings may have also influenced the present form of the text.

³⁴ Some MSS contain only *1 Enoch* (e.g., Berl; Bodl 4; BM Add. 24185; Abb 99; Paris 32; Garrett MS [Princeton Ethiopic 2]; Vat 71; Westenholtz MS; Ul). In others, it is copied with biblical books and/or with books such as *Jubilees* (e.g., BM 485); see Charles, *Commentary*, xxi–xxiv; Knibb, *Commentary*, 23–27.

³⁵ Ullendorf, *Ethiopia*, 55–56; Knibb, "Christian Adoption," 403; Nickelsburg, *Commentary*, 17.

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