Andrei A. Orlov, (2017) *The Greatest Mirror. Heavenly Counterparts in the Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, New York: State University of New York Press. XVII, 300 p.

The theme investigated in the book of Andrei Orlov is the origin, emergence, and evolution of the image of the divine “twin” (heavenly double, counterpart) of a patriarch, prophet, religious teacher or visionary in Jewish pseudepigrapha, early Christianity, and Manicheism.

For a long time, researchers believed that the idea of the counterpart was borrowed into the Jewish Apocrypha from the side of the Greco-Roman or Iranian traditions. But the author, like a number of modern scholars, believes that this doctrine was the result of the independent development of Jewish religious doctrine, reflected in pseudepigrapha and other writings of this period.

The author set out to show that the heavenly counterpart traditions in the pseudepigrapha suggest the existence of a special group, the so-called angels of the Presence, who help the seer unite with his (her) heavenly counterpart.

The first chapter contains a study of Enochic pseudepigrapha: the earliest sections of the 1 (Ethiopic) Book of Enoch, the 2 (Slavonic) Book of Enoch, 3 Enoch and the *Hekhalot* literature, in comparison with some relevant Christian, Gnostic, Mandaean, Manichaean, and rabbinic accounts.

The concept of the heavenly double is closely connected with central topics of the Enochic books – the realities of the heavens and opportunities to breach the boundaries between earthly and heavenly worlds. The author considers different celestial counterparts of the seer and the influence of the Son of Man traditions, of other apocalyptic mediatorial figures like Yahoel, the archangel Michael, angel of the Presence (Face) or “Youth”, on the Enochic cycle. A special section in the chapter considers the symbolism of heavenly garments. The concept of “Youth” as the counterpart Jesus in the New Testament is remarkable.

The author concludes that the Enochic heavenly counterpart traditions do not stem from Greco-Roman concepts of otherworldly doubles, but are based on “internal” Jewish developments and represent reinterpretations of the biblical theophanic traditions.

The second chapter deals with the heavenly counterpart traditions in the pseudepigrapha related to Moses – the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian and the *Book of Jubilees*. Orlov thoroughly studies the symbolism of different details in these writings (e.g. the face, the hand, the motive of standing).

The assumption is proved in this chapter that in the course of his (her) identification with the heavenly counterpart the seer becomes a “reflection” or a “mirror” of the divine Face. Such speculations do not represent later rabbinic inventions but have ancient roots in Second Temple Jewish lore. The concept

of the divine Face as the mirror of revelation might also be present by Philo and in some early Christian materials.

According to the author's conclusions, the features of biblical theophanies and the Enochic motives play an essential role in formation of the concept of Moses's heavenly counterpart.

The third chapter is dedicated to the pseudepigraphical accounts developed around the central figure of patriarch Jacob – the *Prayer of Joseph* and the *Ladder of Jacob*; in particular, the concepts of the image and the spirit as heavenly identities of the patriarch Jacob and the afterlives of these traditions in Talmud, Targumim, and Midrashim.

There are striking parallels to the concept of the celestial alter ego in ancient Greek literature and philosophy. It has been suggested that the Platonic or some other Greek philosophical currents might influence some heterodox Christian ideas of the heavenly "image" reflected in the waters of the lower world. The author finds such ideas in Manichaeism, Mandaeism, and Early Christianity (the *Acts of Thomas*, *Macarian Homilies*, the *Shepherd of Hermas* etc.). Special attention is paid to the doctrine of the Twin in Manichaeism and to the image of the Tree of Life as a mediator connecting the upper and lower realms.

This study demonstrates that, although a Greco-Roman influence on the traditions of the heavenly doubles cannot be ruled out, the early biblical traditions played a crucial role for these traditions not only in the pseudepigrapha but also in the later Christian and Manichaean lore regarding heavenly counterparts.

The main theme of the fourth chapter is the development of the heavenly counterpart traditions in the *Joseph and Aseneth*. The peculiarity of this pseud-epigraphon is that where both male and female protagonists are endowed with celestial identities, and that the Aseneth's acquisition of the counterpart occurs on earth. The author investigates such motives as the restoration of the primordial male/female unity, the symbolism of the nourishment and of the bridal chamber, the transformation of the seer's face in the watery mirror. The author comes to a conclusion that the development of these ideas goes back mostly to the biblical traditions.

The general conclusion of the monograph is following: the various traditions of the heavenly alter ego found in the Jewish pseudepigrapha (an image, a spirit, a mirror, a shadow, a face, a "youth," and an angel of the Presence) are closely connected with theophanic imagery manifested in the biblical accounts. Moreover, the heavenly counterpart traditions attested in the Jewish pseudepigrapha are an important stage in the developments of these biblical theophanic currents. They play a formative role not only in shaping the later

rabbinic and *Hekhalot* speculations about the heavenly identities of the exalted patriarchs and prophets, but also in the development of such conceptions in the early Christian apocrypha, Manichaeism, and Mandaism.

I would also like to mention extensive notes and a thorough critical analysis of previous studies on these problems. At the same time, it is necessary to make some critical remarks.

If the seer “has seen the Face of God” (p. 17 ff.), it does not mean yet that he was transformed to a heavenly being. In general, Enoch’s transformation in the 2nd book cannot be identified with the presence of a heavenly double. And the heavenly scribe cannot be fully referred to this category.

Also the scene of *Testament of Isaac* cited by the author does not prove at all that the archangel Michael serves as angelic double of Abraham (pp. 17–19). In general, the angelologization of a bible character is not the same as the presence of the heavenly double. Metatron in 3 Enoch is rather an *angelus interpres* of Rabbi Ishmael, than his counterpart.

It is unconvincing, to identify the angel Vereveil in 2 Enoch 22–23 with Uriel (pp. 24, 53). The phonetics is absolutely different: as the Slavonic version of the book was translated from Greek, the name should be restored as *Berebeēl. Cf. also the name of the same angel-scribe Mefriēl in the Coptic *Encomium to the Four Living Creatures*.

It is hardly possible to translate gr. ὦ ξέμε as “my friend” (p. 43). The meanings of the word are *guest, stranger, foreigner* (Liddell-Scott-Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford, 1996, p. 1017). In the quoted episode from *Ezechiel the Tragedian*, it is rather about the replacement of an inhabitant of heaven with a man, than about the counterpart.

The Gnostic and Manichaean speculations about the counterpart as a reflection of God’s Face in the waters can go back to the Genesis 1:1 “the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters”.

Perhaps, it is necessary to speak not only about the Greek influence but also about a typological proximity: the doctrine of the personal deity, *daimon* or guardian angel of the person is a component of many religious and philosophical systems.

But these details do not belittle the advantages of the monograph. This book is a valuable, serious work which can be recommended to both specialists and anyone interested in these topics.

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