Books associated with Enoch are frequently mentioned, often in passing, in the surviving literatures of early Judaism and early Christianity, and it is not always possible to determine whether the references or allusions are to works that have survived under the name of Enoch (especially in the library called “1 Enoch” or the “2 Enoch” materials). This investigation attempts to explore the several “Enoch” references in the surviving witnesses to the “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.” An appendix listing the occurrences (with variations) of the terms ἔγνω (I know) and ἀνέγνω (I read) and related passages is provided as well.

1. The Text-critical (Recension-critical) Problems

The two most extensive “recensional” type differences reflected in the surviving manuscripts of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs are between the text represented in Greek MS b (= de Jonge “fam 1” and included in Charles’ “beta” group) and that in Greek MSS chij (near the end of de Jonge’s “fam 2” stemma, basic to the “alpha” text of Charles). This presentation focuses on an evaluation of the evidence from MS b (sometimes joined by the incomplete witness k), relative to the variants contained in the different manuscript groupings represented by glmdArmenian, efaSlavonic, cn, hj.3

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1 This paper was originally presented at the SBL 1993 Pseudepigrapha Symposium, Washington DC, and has not appeared in hardcopy publication before this.


3 See comparative stemma charts by Charles and de Jonge.
2. The Problem of the “Storyline”

Since the work (or anthology?) called “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs” purports to be the words of each aged patriarch to his children/successors, it assumes a situation prior to Moses and the development of what has come to be known as Jewish “scriptures.” It talks a great deal about “words/teachings” (λόγοι—logoi) and “law” (νομός—nomos) and “commandments” (ἐντολαί—entolai), but seldom in relation to written formats. When it does refer to written authority, it almost always identifies such either with Enoch (usually as the or a “book” of) or with the “tablets” (ἐν πλαξὶ—en plaxi, presumably understood to be in the heavens, as some MSS explicitly state). It also uses “letter” (γράμμα—gramma) language on a few occasions to speak about literacy and education, including the ability to “read” (ἀναγιγνώσκειν—anagignōskein, in most witnesses) the law of God (TLevi 13.2 [omitted in MSS chij]—in a poetic chapter that Kee thinks “intrusive”).

3. References to the (Heavenly) “Tablets”

TLevi 5.4° Καὶ συνετέλεσα τῷ καιρῷ ἑκείνῳ τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἐμμώρ, καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν ταῖς πλαξὶ τῶν οὐρανῶν—Levi’s angelic guide instructs him to avenge Dinah, whereupon Levi comments “and at that time I dispatched (sunetelesa) the sons of Hemmor, as it is written in the tablets [MS g has “deeds” (πράξεσι—praxesi)] of the heavens [MSS chij have “of the fathers,” perhaps reflecting confusion in reading abbreviated words”—the potentially embarrassing story of Simeon and Levi deceitfully slaughtering Hamor and his supporters is told in Gen 34.25ff.

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4 See the similar “testamentary” pattern in Genesis 49, where Jacob addresses each of his sons, the patriarchs, before he dies.

5 Howard Kee, OTP 1.792. See also TReuben 4.1 “be occupied with learning” (ἐν γράμμασι—en grammasi). For some related details, see the Appendix.

6 This passage is lacking in the extracts preserved by MS k.

7 In the development of abbreviations used especially in Christian texts, both “heavens” (OUNWN) and “fathers” (PRWN) usually occurred, overlined; similarly “of men” (ANWN), which also occurs in variant forms of this formula, usually would have been abbreviated. A similar sort of variation may be found in parallel passages from the Apocalypse of Sedrach and Greek Apocalypse of Esdras (“race of men” [ANWN], “race of Christians” [XRNWN?]).