CHAPTER 3

The Aramaic Astronomical Book of Enoch
Reconsidered in the Light of 4Q318

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine particular elements in the Aramaic fragments of the
Astronomical Book of Enoch in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 4QAstronomical Enoch\textsuperscript{a–d}
(4Q208–4Q211)\textsuperscript{1} that may have a connection with 4QZodiac Calendar. Armin
Lange and Ulricke Mittman-Richert listed the texts together as a genre in a
classification of calendrical manuscripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls,\textsuperscript{2} the first time
that the texts had been catalogued collectively in a critical volume.

Before moving on to discuss the calendar in the Qumran material, this
chapter engages with the reception history of the astronomical sections
of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch (\textit{i Enoch}) one of the canonical books of the
Ethiopian Bible. Chapters 72–82 are known collectively, variously, as the \textit{Book

\textsuperscript{1} The critical edition of the astronomical fragments that are related to \textit{i Enoch} 72–82, is J.T. Milik,
\textit{The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4} (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976) [abbrev:
\textit{BE}]. He did not examine all the fragments and the volume has been superceded in breadth
by later scholarship. E.J.C. Tigchelaar and F. García Martínez produced the critical edition
of all the 4Q208–4Q209 fragments, "4QAstronomical Enoch\textsuperscript{a–b}," \textit{Qumran Cave 4:26. Cryptic
Texts and Miscellanea Pt 1.} (ed. S.J. Pfann, et al., \textit{DJD} 36; Oxford: Clarendon), 95–171. Frags
4QEnastr\textsuperscript{a} and 4QEnastr\textsuperscript{d} (4Q210 and 4Q211, respectively) were not published in \textit{DJD} 36. Until
recently Milik's \textit{BE} was the \textit{editio princeps} for these Aramaic fragments: 4Q210 (4QEnastr\textsuperscript{a}),
274, 284–88, 292–3, pls. 28, 30; 4Q211 (4QEnastr\textsuperscript{d}), \textit{BE}, 274, 296–297, pl. 29. All have now
been published in full in H. Drawnel, \textit{The Aramaic Astronomical Book (4Q208–4Q211) from
Qumran} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), it is not a principal edition. This study fol-
lows Drawnel's manuscript titles for the corpus: 4QAstronomical Enoch\textsuperscript{a–d} (4Q208–211).

\textsuperscript{2} A. Lange and U. Mittman-Richert, "Annotated List of the Texts from the Judaean Desert
Classified by Content and Genre," \textit{Texts from the Judaean Desert}, Emanuel Tov et al., eds.,
\textit{DJD} 39 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 135–6 (listed as: "4QEnastr \textit{i Enoch} 72–82); 4QEnastr\textsuperscript{a–d}
ar (4Q208–4Q211) and 4QZodiology and Brontology ar (4Q318) iv–viii 6"). The titles 4QEnastr\textsuperscript{a–d}
ar used in Milik, \textit{Books of Enoch} and Lange and Mittman-Richert (op. cit) were changed
by Tigchelaar and García Martínez in the critical edition of 4QAstronomical Enoch\textsuperscript{a–b}
of Luminaries, or the Ethiopic Astronomical Book of Enoch, or 1 En. 72–82. The Ethiopic Book of Enoch including the astronomical chapters, 1 En. 72–82, is believed to have been originally composed in Aramaic, then into Greek, before its translation into Ge'ez and Ethiopic. According to Milik's estimation various components of 1 En. 72–82 overlap loosely by about “30 per cent” with the astronomical Aramaic fragments from Qumran, 4QAstronomical Enoch a–d (4Q208–4Q211). The Aramaic manuscripts that comprise the self contained ‘synchronistic calendar,’ the main focus of this chapter, 4QAstronomical Enoch a (4Q208) and most of the manuscript remains of 4QAstronomical Enoch b (4Q209), do not exist anywhere in 1 Enoch and were unknown before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.


4 Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 1 Enoch: A New Translation, 13–14; J.C. VanderKam, 1 Enoch 2, 335–352; Matthew Black states that there was an Aramaic version in possibly more than one recension and possibly a Hebrew version of the Book of Enoch: “For all parts of the book, there is a general agreement that the Ethiopic is a tertiary version, a translation of a Greek Vorlage, itself rendering an Aramaic and/or Hebrew Grundschrift.” in Black, Book of Enoch, 3, 4; Black further states that the Ethiopic texts “go back ultimately to this Aramaic Enoch…” in M. Black, The ‘Astronomical’ Chapters of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch (72 to 82) with Additional Notes by Matthew Black, DkDVs 40:10 (1981) 34. No Hebrew fragments from any part of known the Book of Enoch or the previously unknown astronomical fragments (the ‘synchronistic calendar’) have been found.


6 Sacha Stern suggests that these manuscript fragments and “the other Qumran calendrical texts . . . , are no more than commentaries or exegetical expansions of the original book of Enoch.” S. Stern, Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar 2nd Century BCE–10th Century CE (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 6 (Stern’s italics). J. Ben-Dov argues