PART I

STUDIES IN THE APOCALYPSE OF ABRAHAM
PRAXIS OF THE VOICE: THE DIVINE NAME TRADITIONS
IN THE APOCALYPSE OF ABRAHAM

Introduction

A large portion of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, a Jewish work known only in its Slavonic translation, deals with the celestial tour of the eponymous hero of the text. In the work’s elaborate account of the tour, which depicts Abraham’s initiation into the heavenly mysteries, an important detail often found in other apocalyptic texts is missing. The authors of the Slavonic work seem to deliberately eschew anthropomorphic depictions of the Deity that often mark climatic points in other early Jewish apocalyptic accounts. This reluctance in endorsing traditions of the divine Form appears to be quite unusual, given that other features of the pseudepigraphon exhibit explicit allusions to motifs and themes of the Merkabah tradition. Several distinguished scholars of early Jewish mysticism have previously noted that the *Apocalypse of Abraham* might represent one of the earliest specimens of Merkabah mysticism, the Jewish tradition in which the divine Form ideology arguably receives its most advanced articulation.¹ Yet despite many suggestive allusions in their depiction of the heavenly realities, the authors of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* appear very reluctant to endorse one of the most crucial tenets in the divine Chariot lore: the