CHAPTER TWO

THE BOOK OF ENOCH OR BOOKS OF ENOCH?
THE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE FOR 1 ENOCH

I

The Aramaic text of the Astronomical Book began, so far as is known, with a calendar of the phases of the moon in which the movements of the moon are synchronized with those of the sun. The calendar is attested by the fragments of two of the four manuscripts of the Astronomical Book (4Q208, 4Q209 [4QEnastra ar, 4QEnastrb ar]), but whereas the fragments of 4Q208 belong only to the synchronistic calendar, some of the fragments of 4Q209 correspond to parts of chapters 76–79 and 82 of the Ethiopic version. The synchronistic calendar does not appear in the Ethiopic, although it is perhaps summarized in 73:4–8 and 74:3–9, but on the other hand, the fragments of 4Q208 and 4Q209 do not contain any material that might have formed an introduction to the synchronistic calendar. Józef Milik suggested that the oldest form of the Astronomical Book might be represented by 4Q208, which dates from the end of the third or the beginning of the second century B.C.E., and might have consisted only of a broad introduction, approximately equivalent to chapter 72 of the Ethiopic, and of the synchronistic calendar. But, in the light of the evidence of 4Q208, it might further be wondered whether the synchronistic calendar originally had any connection at all with the figure of Enoch and with the Enochic


3 Milik, Books of Enoch, 273.
corpus.\(^4\) Be these speculations as they may, it is clear that the differences between the Ethiopic version of the *Astronomical Book* and the original Aramaic text cannot, at least in respect of the synchronistic calendar, be explained as the outcome of the kind of changes that occur when texts are translated, but rather are the result of the activity of an editor; the Ethiopic version of this material—and presumably the Greek underlying it—represents a new edition, not just a translation.\(^5\)

There are other passages in the *Book of Enoch* where in a similar way it appears that the relationship between the Ethiopic and the Aramaic cannot be explained as the outcome of changes that might naturally have occurred through the translation of the text from Aramaic to Greek, and from Greek to Ethiopic, or of changes that might have occurred during the transmission of the text(s). For example, although the Aramaic text of 92:1 has only survived in fragmentary form in 4Q212 (4QEn\(^8\) ar) 1 ii 22–5, it is clear that the Ethiopic is quite different.\(^6\) Again, it is widely recognized that the final part of the *Apocalypse of Weeks* (91:11–17) was displaced in the Ethiopic version for editorial reasons. In consequence the Ethiopic version of 91:11 has been expanded in comparison with 4Q212 1 iv 14 to smooth over the juxtaposition in the Ethiopic of 91:1–10 and 91:11–17.\(^7\) To mention one other example in the *Epistle*, the long series of rhetorical questions that, on the evidence of 4Q212 1 v, originally stood in the Aramaic text before the equivalent of chapter 94 has been reduced to almost a third in the Ethiopic version (93:11–14).\(^8\)

The *Book of the Watchers* provides a further example of a passage in which the relationship between the Ethiopic and the Aramaic is hardly to be explained simply as the outcome of the translation and

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\(^4\) The synchronistic calendar is so different in character from the other material in the *Astronomical Book* that this in itself raises the question of the nature of the relationship between the calendar and the rest of the *Astronomical Book*. In addition the name of Enoch does not appear in any of the fragments of the calendar, although this could be simply the result of chance.


\(^8\) Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 247, 270.