My task is to respond to a paper by Andrei Orlov, which seeks to date a text, 2 Enoch, on the basis of the sacerdotal traditions in the work. This text comes to us in a composite set of strata dealing with Enoch’s ascent to heaven (2 Enoch 1–36), a testament of Enoch (37–68), and a priestly succession narrative dealing with Melchizedek (69–73). However, the text also comes before us for consideration at what may be a transitional time in its study, compounding the issue of strata to be excavated. Even the act of giving this work a title demands that we stop and reflect. As Gabriele Boccaccini observed in his opening remarks to the Seminar, with the discovery of a Coptic version of the work, it may no longer be correct to label it the Slavonic Book of Enoch. The situation is somewhat similar to the discovery of the Aramaic Enoch manuscripts at Qumran. While the title, the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, has not completely disappeared, we do have a new or more precise sense of provenance as well as a greater complexity in determining how a multilingual collection should be edited. It has yet to be determined how the discovery of a Coptic version will shape the study of 2 Enoch.

In naming the book, an alternative to a linguistic approach would be the numerical or sequential approach, as in 1 Enoch, 2 Enoch, and 3 Enoch. In the same opening speech Boccaccini likewise took a step that potentially could complicate a sequential or numerical approach to titling the Enoch literature by asking whether the Book of the Parables of Enoch and 2 Enoch are competing texts. The question is interesting given the

1 See Joost L. Hagen’s contribution to the present volume. The fragments come from chapters 36–42, a transitional passage between the first two of the three major parts of 2 Enoch, and are likely to be dated between the eighth and the tenth centuries. The fragments represent the shorter recension as known from the Slavonic version.

2 For a comprehensive account of the approaches to this problem, see G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 18–21.
similar cosmological and mystical elements of both works, not to men-
tion the heavenly or angelic role of Enoch implied in each. But if the two
texts are competing texts, rather than sequential texts, can we speak in
sequential terms of First Enoch and Second Enoch? And what would such
a juxtaposition do to the delicate questions of dating both works? The
issue of title may ultimately be decided on a fairly arbitrary basis, as are
many questions in the study of the Pseudepigrapha. The question of date,
however, cannot be so arbitrarily decided.

In general, the question of dating is often taken as almost a trivial
pursuit in and of itself, until we recall that the existence of the Enoch
Seminar depends in part upon the discovery of the Aramaic fragments of
1 Enoch among the earliest layers of the Dead Sea Scrolls, leading scholars
to date the Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1–36) prior to the composition
of Daniel as found in the Hebrew Bible and to treat it as a pivotal text in
the history of Judaism. In addition, the absence of another major section,
the Book of the Parables (1 Enoch 37–71), from the Qumran manuscripts of
1 Enoch, led to a battle among scholars over the date of that section of
the Ethiopic version of the book, with implications both for the study
of Judaism in the Hellenistic and Roman periods and for understanding
Jesus in the gospels.\(^3\) Finally, the question of the sequential dating of the
works of Jewish literature in relation to their intellectual or ideological
components is part of an important methodological approach to the study
of Jewish literature by some members of this Seminar.\(^4\) The issue of dating
the Enoch literature is not trivial but essential to the development of our
understanding of this body of literature. This essay is an attempt to push
the question of dating beyond putting a time and date stamp on a work
to asking what it means to date a pseudepigraphical writing.

In the debate over the dating of 2 Enoch, Orlov goes to the heart of
the matter at the beginning of his paper. He observes that over the last
century 2 Enoch has been included in the standard editions of the Pseude-
pigrapha as an example of early Jewish literature, while along the way
scholars have issued cautions concerning the uncertainty of its date and
provenance. For Orlov, the matter comes to a head in Francis Andersen’s

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\(^3\) See my account of this debate in D. W. Suter, “Enoch in Sheol: Updating the Dating
of the Book of the Parables,” in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of

\(^4\) Note Boccaccini’s discussion of writing the intellectual history of early Jewish litera-
ture in *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rap-
dids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002).