THE EARLY TRADITIONS RELATED TO 1 ENOCH
FROM THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS:
AN OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

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Introduction

The purpose of the discussion to follow shall be to summarise and assess the evidence for the early Enochic traditions in Aramaic amongst the Dead Sea materials. As is well known, this tradition, commonly associated with a document that in modern times has been designated as “1 Enoch” or “Ethiopic Enoch”, is preserved in its fullest form in Ethiopic manuscripts, the earliest of which go only as far back as the fourteenth century CE.1 As such, 1 Enoch consists of seven main parts which, in turn, are comprised by a number of further compositions or independently composed units: (1) the Book of the Watchers (chs. 1–36), (2) Book of Parables (chs. 37–71), (3) the Astronomical Book (chs. 72–82), (4) the Book of Dream Visions (chs. 83–90, including the Animal Apocalypse at 85–90), (5) the Epistle of Enoch (chs. 91–105, including the Exhortation in 91:1–10 and the Apocalypse of Weeks in 93:1–10 and 91:11–17), (6) the Birth of Noah (chs. 106–107), and (7) Another Book that Enoch Wrote, a description of eschatological judgement and reward, respectively, on the wicked and the righteous (ch. 108).

Working backwards, we find that the 1 Enoch traditions are also attested in a number of Greek fragmentary materials, all of which predate the earliest Ethiopian manuscript witnesses.2 These include

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the following: (1) the Codex Panopolitanus from Akhmim (fifth-sixth century), which preserves a running text of the Book of the Watchers from 1:1–32:6a; (2) the Chronography of George Syncellus (early ninth century), which in three passages cites portions from the Book of the Watchers corresponding to 6:1–11:4, 8:4–10:14, and 15:8–16:1; (3) two fragments of Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 2069 (fourth century) which relate to 77:7–78:1 and 78:8 (Astronomical Book), on the one hand, and correspond to 85:10–86:2 and 87:1–3 (Book of Dream Visions), on the other; (4) Codex Vaticanus Gr. 1809 (eleventh century), a tachygraph that contains a text corresponding to the Animal Apocalypse in the Book of Dream Visions at 89:42–49; (5) a papyrus manuscript (fourth century) preserved in the Chester Beatty collection (four leaves) and at the University of Michigan (two leaves), preserving text from 97:6–107:3, that is, from Epistle of Enoch and Birth of Noah; and

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4 There is, in addition, a fourth passage in which the citation has no parallels to any known part of 1 Enoch. As is well known, J. T. Milik, The Books of Enoch. Aramaic Fragments from Qumrân Cave 4 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976) 317–8, surmised that this may have been a Greek fragment from the Book of Giants. For more presentations of the texts, see A. A. Mosshammer, Georgii Syncelli Ecloga Chronographica (Leipzig: Teubner, 1984) and W. Adler and P. Tufﬁn, The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation, Translated with Introduction and Notes (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002).

5 These fragments, located at the Sackler Library in Oxford, need to be restudied in light of Józef Milik’s claim that they did not originally belong to the same codex; see J. T. Milik, “Fragments grecs du livre d’Hénoch (P. Oxy. Xvii 2069),” Chronique d’Égypte 46 (1971) 321–43. If it were to turn out that they share a codicological context, then this would constitute evidence for the copying of the Astronomical Book and the Book of Dream Visions together in the Greek tradition. For the publication, see A. S. Hunt, “2069. Apocalyptic Fragment,” in The Oxyrhynchus Papyri. Part 17 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1927) 6–8.

6 For an edition with the photograph, see M. Gittelbauer, Die Überreste griechischer Tachygraphie im Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1809, (Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften philosophisch-historische Klasse 28/2; Wien: Gerold, 1878) 16, 32, 55–7, 92–3 + pl. XI.