OVERSHADOWED BY ENOCH'S GREATNESS:
"TWO TABLETS" TRADITIONS FROM THE
BOOK OF GIANTS TO PALAEA HISTORICA

BY

ANDREI A. ORLOV
Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI

Introduction

In *Jewish Antiquities* Josephus unveils a certain tradition according to which the descendants of Seth...

...discovered the science of the heavenly bodies and their orderly array. Moreover, to prevent their discoveries from being lost to mankind and perishing before they become known—Adam having predicted a destruction of the universe, at one time by a violent fire and at another by a mighty deluge of water—they erected two pillars, one of brick and the other of stone, and inscribed these discoveries on both; so that, if the pillar of brick disappeared in the deluge, that of stone would remain to teach men what was graven thereon and to inform them that they had also erected one of brick.¹

In previous studies, several scholars have noted that although Josephus refers to Seth and his progeny, some features of the "two stelae" story allude to peculiar roles and situations which Jewish lore traditionally associates with the seventh antediluvian patriarch Enoch. One of these features includes the fact that Josephus credited Seth's descend- nants with the discovery of "the science of the heavenly bodies and their orderly array." Scholars have noted that this role from ancient time was traditionally ascribed to Enoch,² who in various Enochic


© Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 2001 Journal for the Study of Judaism, XXXII, 2
Another important detail in Josephus’ account is that the “two stelae” passage appears in *Jewish Antiquities* immediately before the story about the Giants. In 1:73 Josephus tells that “many angels of God now consorted with women and beget sons who were overbearing and disdainful of every virtue, such confidence had they in their strength; in fact the deeds that tradition ascribes to them resemble the audacious exploits told by the Greeks of the giants.” J. VanderKam remarks that the author of *Jewish Antiquities* does not connect this “Enochic-sounding” tale with the seventh patriarch; “rather, he makes Noah preach to them—unsuccessfully.” He further suggests that “it is not impossible that Josephus took his information from a source such as *1 Enoch* 6-11, which mentions Noah but not Enoch.” It appears that the suggestions of scholars about the connection between the “two stelae” narrative and some Enochic materials are valid and deserve further investigation.
