

Chapter 3

Roles and Titles of Enoch-Metatron in *Sefer Hekhalot* and Other Materials

In the beginning of this section dedicated to Metatron's imagery, one important position pertaining to the origin of the Metatron tradition must be mentioned. In their analysis of the possible prototypes behind this tradition, scholars observe that the Enochic tradition clearly does not represent the single living stream from which Metatron's symbolism possibly originated. Students of early Jewish mysticism point to other possible sources in shaping the imagery of this exalted angelic character. These other sources include, along with the patriarch Enoch, various figures of Jewish lore, for example, Michael,¹ Yahoel,² Melchisedek,³ and others.⁴ The current

¹ Because of similar titles and roles, Philip Alexander has drawn the connection between Metatron and the archangel Michael. As an explanation for these similarities, Alexander suggests that Metatron and Michael were one and the same angel bearing an esoteric and a common name: Michael was the common name and Metatron was the esoteric, magical name. However, at some point the connection between Metatron and Michael was obscured, and a new independent archangel with many of Michael's powers came into being. In Alexander's opinion "the connection may not have been entirely lost, for we find that in some late texts the identity of the two angels is asserted: see e.g. *Sefer Zerubbabel...*" Alexander, "3 Enoch," 243–244; idem, "The Historical Settings of the Hebrew Book of Enoch," 162. In *Sefer Zerubbabel* Michael is identified as Metatron. M. Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," in: *Rabbinic Fantasies: Imaginative Narratives from Classical Hebrew Literature* (eds. D. Stern and M. J. Mirsky; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990) 71–81, esp. 73.

² Scholars previously noted that Metatron's story appears to absorb the legends about the angel Yahoel. Gruenwald points to the fact that the name Yahoel occurs as one of Metatron's names not only in the list of the seventy names of Metatron but also in the Aramaic incantation bowls. See Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkabah Mysticism*, 196. On Yahoel's figure see also Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 142ff.

³ See the pioneering research on the Melchisedek tradition(s) as a possible background of Metatron's imagery, in J. R. Davila, "Melchizedek, The 'Youth,' and Jesus," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrews in 2001* (ed. J. R. Davila; STDJ 46; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 248–274.

⁴ Hugo Odeberg's early hypothesis that the identification of Metatron with Enoch represented a decisive formative pattern in the Metatron tradition was criticized by a number of distinguished students of Jewish mystical traditions, including M. Gaster, G. Scholem, S. Lieberman, J. Greenfield and others. These scholars noted that the concept of

investigation supports this view and will demonstrate that even in the Enochic tradition Metatron's imagery was gradually developed as a result of its interaction with various external characters prominent in the pseudepigraphic mediatorial traditions. The fact that the Enochic tradition is not solely responsible for the shaping of the image of Metatron can be seen in rabbinic and Hekhalot materials, the majority of which do not directly identify this angel with the seventh antediluvian patriarch. This situation sets parameters and priorities for this present chapter on the Metatron lore, which will rely first on the materials that unambiguously identify this principal angel with Enoch and, then, on other rabbinic and Hekhalot evidence where this explicit identification was not made.

This analysis will mainly focus on *3 Enoch*, a Merkabah text also known as *Sefer Hekhalot* (the Book of [the Heavenly] Palaces), where the connection between Enoch and Metatron is made explicit.⁵ *3 Enoch* occupies a special place in the corpus of the Hekhalot writings in light of its unique form, content, and the identity of the main character.⁶ It should be noted that the role of *Sefer Hekhalot* in the history of Jewish mysticism, as

Metatron cannot be explained solely by the reference to the early Enochic lore because Metatron has taken many of the titles and the functions that are reminiscent of those that the archangel Michael, Yahoel and other elevated personalities possess in early Jewish traditions. Despite the critique of Odeberg's position, the possible influence of the Enochic tradition on the Metatron imagery has never been abandoned by the new approaches, mainly in the view of the evidence preserved in *Sefer Hekhalot*. For example, Scholem repeatedly referred to several streams of the Metatron tradition, one of which, in his opinion, was clearly connected with early Enochic developments. Scholars however often construe this "Enochic" stream as a later development that "joined" the Metatron tradition after its initial formative stage.

⁵ The question of the literary integrity of *Sefer Hekhalot* is a complicated issue. Philip Alexander argues for the existence of the "core" of the text which in his opinion includes chapters 3–15/16 and the latter additions to this "core." He observes that "an inspection of the textual tradition shows that chapters 3–15/16, which describe the elevation of Enoch, circulated as an independent tract...and it is intrinsically probable that these chapters formed the core round which the longer recensions grew." Alexander, "The Historical Settings of the Hebrew Book of Enoch," 156–7. Peter Schäfer criticizes Alexander's analysis of the composition of *3 Enoch* and his hypothesis of the "core" of the text. Schäfer argues that textual evidence shows that this part of *3 Enoch* was divorced from its context only in the course of the medieval transmission of the text. (See P. Schäfer, et al., *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*, 1.LI). Rejecting Alexander's literary-scientific model of the theory of layers as dubious, Schäfer demonstrates that the currently available manuscript tradition, the beginning of the macroform of *3 Enoch* with §1 and the end far beyond §§19/20, witnessed by the older manuscripts (Geniza-Fragment, Florenz, Casanatense, Zürich, Vatican, München 40) is so constant that it appears difficult to recognize a "more original" stage of the text in §§ 4–19/20. P. Schäfer, "Handschriften zur Hekhalot-Literatur," in: Schäfer, *Hekhalot Studien*, 228.

⁶ The detailed discussion of the literary character of *3 Enoch* and its possible transmission history extends beyond the boundaries of the current investigation.

well as its position in relation to the rest of the corpus of Hekhalot writings, still awaits a complete assessment. Scholars have routinely noted that the various traditions found in *3 Enoch* represent a later stage of development than those attested in other Hekhalot writings.⁷ Yet the unique structure of this work,⁸ the lack of Merkabah hymns⁹ and adjuration patterns¹⁰ prominent in other Hekhalot works, its peculiar angelology,¹¹ and most importantly the persistent identification of Metatron with the patriarch Enoch might indicate that this work belongs to the peculiar mold of Merkabah mysticism which stemmed from the early Enochic lore. Unfortunately, the aforementioned features of *Sefer Hekhalot* have not yet received comprehensive treatment from students of early Jewish mysticism, although several useful studies have already been undertaken.¹² It is hoped that this investigation of *2 Enoch*, its connection with the Merkabah tradition in general and with *Sefer Hekhalot* in particular, will provide some further contribution in this area.

Now this study should return to its main subject, namely, the question of the roles and titles of Enoch-Metatron. The *prima facie* assessment of the text indicates that *Sefer Hekhalot* contains two clusters of roles and titles of

⁷ See, for example, Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 178ff.

⁸ Joseph Dan has argued that *Sefer Hekhalot* “is the only one among the treatises of the Hekhalot literature whose beginning is like that of the Midrash, i.e., with a verse being quoted and the work going on to interpret the verse. Generally we do not find many expository principles in this literature.” Dan, *The Ancient Jewish Mysticism*, 110.

⁹ Philip Alexander has recognized the absence of Merkabah hymns in *3 Enoch*, which are a common feature in Merkabah texts such as *Hekalot Rabbati* and *Ma'aseh Merkabah* and has shown that the only heavenly hymns in *3 Enoch* are traditional and biblical. Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 245.

¹⁰ Peter Schäfer observes that “the formal language of the adjuration formulas is very specific and manifold and witnessed in almost all [Hekhalot] macroforms (seldom in *Hekhalot Zutarti* and not at all in *3 Enoch*).” Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 144.

¹¹ Scholars stress the distinctive angelology of *Sefer Hekhalot*. Peter Schäfer notes the emphasis on angelology as a peculiar feature of the work. He observes that “in no other [Hekhalot] microform are the angels the central theme as in *3 Enoch*. Only here is a systematized angelology (whereby an attempt is made to combine various systems) and a comprehensive hierarchy to be found.” Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 144. Ithamar Gruenwald’s research emphasizes the uniqueness of the angelological imagery of *3 Enoch* where most of the angels perform cosmological duties, and their names derive from the Hebrew names of the objects and phenomena in Nature over the function of which they are appointed. In Gruenwald’s opinion, this cosmological orientation of *3 Enoch*’s angelology points to a connection with the early Enochic lore, since “this type of angelology is known from the apocalyptic Enoch literature and it should be distinguished from yet another type of angelology – magical angelology – which can be found in *Sefer Ha-Razim* and in the Magical Papyri.” Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 204.

¹² Odeberg, *3 Enoch*; Alexander, “3 Enoch;” Mopsik, *Le livre hébreu d’Hénoch*; Schäfer, et al., *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur I* (TSAJ 46; Tübingen, 1995).

its main character. The first cluster of roles/titles of Metatron appears to be connected with those already known from the previous analysis of early Enochic traditions. These offices, in fact, represent the continuation and, in many ways, consummation of the roles of the seventh antediluvian hero. In reference to these conceptual developments, Crispin Fletcher-Louis observes that “3 *Enoch*’s account of the transformation of Enoch into the principal angel Metatron represents something of the climax of earlier Enoch traditions.”¹³ My further analysis will refer to this already investigated cluster of offices and appellations as the “old” roles and titles. This cluster embraces the activities of Metatron in such offices as the heavenly scribe, the expert in the divine secrets, the heavenly high priest, and the mediator. All these roles can be seen as the development of the familiar conceptual counterparts found in early Enochic and Mesopotamian traditions about the seventh antediluvian hero. This inquiry will demonstrate that, despite the recognizable similarities to these early prototypes, the roles and titles found in the Metatron tradition represent in some cases a substantial reshaping and development of the earlier Enochic sources.

The second cluster of roles and titles of Metatron under investigation will embrace those that do not occur in *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, and Qumran Enochic materials. This research will demonstrate that in the Merkabah tradition, Enoch-Metatron appears in several new roles previously unknown in these early Enochic materials. This group of Metatron’s appellations and offices, in contrast to the old roles and titles, will be designated as the “new” roles and titles. It should be emphasized that the distinction between new and old roles and titles is made solely from the perspective of the Enochic tradition, since other pseudepigraphic mediatorial traditions do not always attest to this division.

The offices appearing in this new cluster are related to such appellations of Metatron as the “Youth,” the “Prince of the World,” the “Measurer/Measure of the Lord,” the “Prince of the Divine Presence,” the “Prince of the Torah,” and the “Lesser YHWH.” It is possible that some of these designations might have already originated in premishnaic Judaism under the influence of the various mediatorial traditions in which Michael, Yahoel, Adam, Moses, Noah, Melchisedek, and other characters were depicted as elevated figures. This investigation of *2 Enoch*’s theological deliberations will help us to trace the roots of some of these new conceptual developments. At this preliminary stage of the research, four hypotheses can be offered to explain possible factors responsible for the origin and development of the new roles and titles of Metatron.

¹³ Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*, 156. See also M. Himmelfarb, “The Experience of the Visionary and Genre in the Ascension of Isaiah 6–11 and the Apocalypse of Paul,” in: *Early Christian Apocalypticism: Genre and Social Setting* (ed. A. Y. Collins; Semeia 36; Decatur, GA: Scholars, 1986) 97–111, esp. 102.

First, the marked absence of new roles and titles from *I Enoch*, *Jubilees*, and the *Book of Giants* does not exclude the possibility that the Enochic tradition could represent a potential formative source for the evolution of these conceptual developments. These roles and titles could have originated inside the Enochic tradition(s) after the early Second Temple Enochic booklets had already been written. The conceptual currents found in the latest material connected with *I (Ethiopic) Enoch*, the *Book of the Similitudes*, where Enoch was identified with several exalted titles such as the son of man, messiah, and others, support this view. Although none of the new roles and titles under investigation can be found in the *Similitudes*, the tendencies towards the development of the new exalted profile of the seventh patriarch is possibly observable in this text. Second, the new roles and titles of Metatron might have originated from other early Jewish mediatorial traditions and texts in which Michael, Yahoel, Adam, Moses, Melchisedek, and Uriel were portrayed as elevated figures. Third, one also cannot exclude that some new roles and titles of Metatron might have originated much later within the rabbinic and Hekhalot developments on their own, independent of any earlier traditions. Fourth, the new roles and titles could have developed as a combination of any of the aforementioned factors.

These four possibilities will now be closely examined in my analysis of the new titles. The hypothesis that multiple streams of tradition are responsible for the origin of the various roles and titles of Metatron is not new and has been discussed in previous scholarship. For example, the classical study by Gershom Scholem differentiates between two basic aspects of Metatron's lore which, in Scholem's opinion, were combined and fused together in the rabbinic and Hekhalot literature. These aspects include the Enochic lore and the lore connected with the exalted figures of Yahoel and Michael. Scholem writes that

one aspect identifies Metatron with Jahoel or Michael and knows nothing of his transfiguration from a human being into an angel. The talmudic passages concerned with Metatron are of this type. The other aspect identifies Metatron with the figure of Enoch as he is depicted in apocalyptic literature, and permeated that aggadic and targumic literature which, although not necessarily of a later date than Talmud, was outside of it. When the *Book of Hekhaloth*, or *3 Enoch*, was composed, the two aspects had already become intertwined.¹⁴

This present discussion, it is hoped, will help further identify and clarify the various streams responsible for the shaping of the Metatron imagery.

Several cautionary remarks about the limits of this investigation must be put forward. It is impossible within the limited scope of this study to give an exhaustive treatment of all the textual evidence for the titles of Metatron in

¹⁴ Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 51.

rabbinic literature.¹⁵ David Halperin observes that “the problems associated

¹⁵ On Metatron’s figure, especially his roles and titles, see D. Abrams, “The Boundaries of Divine Ontology: The Inclusion and Exclusion of Metatron in the Godhead,” *HTR* 87 (1994) 291–321; P. S. Alexander, “The Historical Setting of the Hebrew Book of Enoch,” *JJS* 28–29 (1977–1978) 156–180; idem, “3 (Hebrew Apocalypse) of Enoch,” *OTP*, 1.223–315; H. Bietenhard, *Die himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Spätjudentum* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1951) 143–160; M. Black, “The Origin of the Name Metatron,” *VT* 1 (1951) 217–219; M.S. Cohen, *The Shi‘ur Qomah: Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism*; J. Dan, “The Seventy Names of Metatron,” in: J. Dan, *Jewish Mysticism. Late Antiquity* (2 vols.; Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1998) 1.229–34; idem, *The Ancient Jewish Mysticism* (Tel-Aviv: MOD Books, 1993) 108–124; J. R. Davila, “Of Methodology, Monotheism and Metatron,” *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (eds. C. C. Newman, J. R. Davila, G. S. Lewis; SJSJ, 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 3–18; idem, “Melchizedek, the ‘Youth,’ and Jesus,” in: *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrews in 2001* (ed. J. R. Davila; STDJ 46; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 248–74; W. Fauth, “Tatrosjah-totrosjah und Metatron in der jüdischen Merkabah-Mystik,” *JSJ* 22 (1991) 40–87; Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*, 156; Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 420ff; M. Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995) 191–194; I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1980) 195–206; M. Himmelfarb, “A Report on Enoch in Rabbinic Literature,” *SBLSP* (1978) 259–69; C. Kaplan, “The Angel of Peace, Uriel-Metatron,” *Anglican Theological Review* 13 (1931) 306–313; M. Idel, “Enoch is Metatron,” *Immanuel* 24/25 (1990) 220–240; idem, *The Mystical Experience of Abraham Abulafia* (tr. J. Chipman; Albany: SUNY, 1988) 117–19; S. Lieberman, שְׁקִיטָא (Jerusalem, 1939) 11–16; idem, “Metatron, the Meaning of his Name and his Functions,” Appendix to Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 235–241; R. Margaliot, מַלְאָכֵי עֵלְיֹן (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1964) 73–108; Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, 125–35; G. F. Moore, “Intermediaries in Jewish Theology: Memra, Shekinah, Metatron,” *HTR* 15 (1922) 41–85; C. Mopsik, *Le Livre hébreu d’Hénoch ou Livre des palais* (Paris: Verdier, 1989) 28ff; C. R. A. Morray-Jones, “Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition,” *JJS* 43 (1992) 1–31, esp.7–11; A. Murtonen, “The Figure of Metatron,” *VT* 3 (1953) 409–411; H. Odeberg, “Föreställningarna om Metatron i äldre judisk mystic,” *Kyrkohistorisk Årsskrift* 27 (1927) 1–20; idem, *3 Enoch, or the Hebrew Book of Enoch*, 79–146; idem, “Enoch,” *TDNT* 2.556–560; A. Orlov, “The Origin of the Name ‘Metatron’ and the Text of 2 (Slavonic Apocalypse) of Enoch,” *JSP* 21 (2000) 19–26; Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 29–32; G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkavah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, 43–55; idem, *Kabbalah*, 377–381; idem, *Major Trends*, 43–55; idem, “Metatron,” *EJ* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971) 11.1443–1446; idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 214–15; A. Segal, *Two Powers*, 60–73; G.G. Stroumsa, “Form(s) of God: Some Notes on Metatron and Christ,” *HTR* 76 (1983) 269–288; L.T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology* (WUNT 2/70; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1995) 71ff; I. Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* (3 vols.; London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1989) 2.626–632; G. Vajda, “Pour le dossier de Metatron,” in: *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History Presented to A. Altmann* (eds. S. Stein and R. Loewe; University of Alabama Press, 1979) 345–354; E.E. Urbach, *The Sages, Their Concepts and Beliefs* (2 vols.; tr. I. Abrahams; Jerusalem, 1975) 1.138–139; 2.743–744; E. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish*

with Metatron are among the most complicated in early Jewish angelology.”¹⁶ This presentation of the titles must therefore be viewed only as a preliminary introduction to some of the major titles of this important angelic character. In view of the Enochic perspective of this project, the research will center on the evidence for the titles of Enoch-Metatron attested in *Sefer Hekhalot*, since this Merkabah text explicitly identifies Metatron with Enoch and furnishes a great variety of traditions pertaining to this connection.

The investigation of *3 Enoch* will also be supplemented by various testimonies pertaining to the roles and titles of Metatron found in targumic, mishnaic, talmudic, midrashic, and Hekhalot materials. All this scattered and sometimes puzzling evidence will be treated with equal consideration, since even the later medieval rabbinic compositions and collections might have preserved early evidence pertaining to the investigation. All scholars acknowledge that dating rabbinic macroforms is “notoriously slippery work.”¹⁷ It is even more difficult to make judgments about the antiquity of the individual motifs and themes contained in these sources.

In my presentation of the data pertaining to a particular role or title, I normally will start, where it is possible, with testimonies in *3 Enoch*, a text which explicitly identifies Metatron with Enoch – the identification pivotal for this research – and then proceed to other evidence as it relates to the conceptual development of a certain office or appellation.

Finally, it should be stressed that this presentation does not pretend to offer an exhaustive treatment of any particular role or title. The provided descriptions must therefore be viewed as preliminary and tentative sketches intended to help the reader become familiar with the possible offices and appellations of Enoch-Metatron in the rabbinic and Hekhalot materials so that the reader can then be prepared for the later textual analysis of the Slavonic apocalypse.

The Name “Metatron”

In the beginning of an investigation of Metatron symbolism, several theories about the possible etymological origins of the name “Metatron” must be presented. Despite the substantial scholarly efforts to uncover the etymology of this puzzling word, the name of this principal angel still poses

Mysticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 113, 334; idem, “Metatron and Shi‘ur Qomah in the Writings of Haside Ashkenaz,” in: *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism* (eds. K. E. Groezinger and J. Dan, Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995) 60–92.

¹⁶ Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 420.

¹⁷ Himmelfarb, “A Report on Enoch in Rabbinic Literature,” 259.

an enigma for students of Jewish mystical literature. No scholarly consensus exists about the origin of the name Metatron, which occurs in two forms in rabbinic literature one written with six letters, מטטרון, and the other with seven letters, מיטטרון. Scholars offer numerous hypotheses about the possible etymology of these Hebrew lexemes.¹⁸ At least nine scholarly positions deserve mention.

1. Some scholars propose that the name Metatron may be derived from מטרא, which can be rendered as “keeper of the watch,” a noun possibly derived from the root נטר, “to guard, to protect.”¹⁹ Hugo Odeberg points to the earliest instance of this derivation in *Shimmusha Rabbah* where Enoch was clothed with the splendor of light and made into a guardian of all the souls that ascend from earth.²⁰ This hypothesis is shared by Adolf Jellinek, who considers נטר as a possible etymological basis for Metatron,²¹ and Marcus Jastrow, who in his dictionary points to מטרא as a possible etymological progenitor of Metatron.²²

2. Another hypothesis suggests that the name may be derived from the merging of the two Greek words μετά and θρόνος, which in combination, μετάθρονος, can be translated as “one who serves behind the throne,” or “one who occupies the throne next to the Throne of Glory.” This hypothesis has been supported by a number of scholars, but has been rejected by Scholem, who observes that “there is no such word as *Metathronios* in Greek and it is extremely unlikely that Jews should have produced or invented such a Greek phrase.”²³ Scholem also indicates that in talmudic literature the word θρόνος is never used in place of its Hebrew equivalent.²⁴ He concludes that despite the attempts of some scholars to find additional proof of the etymology of the name Metatron as a combination of the Greek μετά and θρόνος, “this widely repeated etymology ... has no merit.”²⁵

3. A third etymological option is that the name may be derived from the Greek word σύνθρονος in the sense of “co-occupant of the divine

¹⁸ The following statement of Gershom Scholem can serve as an “optimistic” motto to any collection of the possible etymologies of the word “Metatron.” He observes that “the origin of the name Metatron is obscure, and it is doubtful whether an etymological explanation can be given. It is possible that the name was intended to be a secret and has no real meaning, perhaps stemming from subconscious meditation, or as a result of glossolalia.” Scholem, “Metatron,” *EJ*, 11.1445–1446.

¹⁹ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.125.

²⁰ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.126.

²¹ A. Jellinek, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala* (Leipzig: C.L. Fritzsche, 1852) 4.

²² Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, 767.

²³ Scholem, *Major Trends*, 69.

²⁴ Scholem, *Major Trends*, 69.

²⁵ Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 91.

Throne.”²⁶ Odeberg criticizes this etymology because “there is not a single instance in any known Jewish source of Metatron being represented as the co-occupant of the divine Throne.”²⁷ Saul Lieberman, however, in his examination of the etymologies of the name,²⁸ provides new reasons for accepting this option.²⁹

4. Another hypothesis proposes that the name may be associated with the Persian Mithras. Odeberg lists a number of parallels between Metatron and Mithras, highlighting their similar celestial functions. He suggests that the depiction of Mithras as the Guardian of the World, the Mediator for the Earth, the Prince of the World, and the Witness of all thoughts, words, and deeds recall similar titles and activities of Metatron.³⁰

5. The name may also be derived from the Latin *metator* (a leader, a guide, a measurer, or a messenger), which transliterated into Hebrew characters produces מְטִיטוֹר or מְטִיטוֹר. This etymology was supported by several famous Jewish medieval authorities, including Eleazar of Worms and Nachmanides.³¹ Scholem criticizes this hypothesis, arguing that “there is nothing in the authentic sayings about Metatron that justified the derivation of the name from *metator*.”³²

Despite Scholem’s skepticism, Philip Alexander has recently drawn attention to this etymology. Clarifying the origins of the term, he points to the Latin word *metator*, which occurs also in Greek as a loanword under the form *mitator*, and sometimes designates the officer in the Roman army whose mission was to be a forerunner, i.e., to go ahead of the column on the march in order to prepare a campsite.³³ In view of this designation, Alexander suggests that the appellation “may first have been given to the angel of the Lord who led the Israelites through the wilderness: that angel acted like a Roman army *metator*, guiding the Israelites on their way.”³⁴ He also proposes that it is quite possible that Enoch himself could be viewed by

²⁶ Philip Alexander points to a possible equivalent to *sunthronos*, the Greek term *metaturannos*, which can be translated as “the one next to the ruler.” Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 243.

²⁷ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.137.

²⁸ S. Lieberman, “Metatron, the Meaning of His Name and His Functions,” in: I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1980) 235–241.

²⁹ Peter Schäfer supports this hypothesis. He observes that “most probable is the etymology of Lieberman: Metatron = Greek metatronos = metathronos = synthronos; i.e. the small “minor god,” whose throne is beside that of the great “main God.” Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 29, n. 70.

³⁰ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.132.

³¹ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.127–128.

³² Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 43.

³³ Alexander, “From Son of Adam to a Second God,” 107; Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 243.

³⁴ Alexander, “From Son of Adam to a Second God,” 107. See also, Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, 1.139.

adepts as *metator* or forerunner since he was the one who showed them “how they could escape from the wilderness of this world into the promised land of heaven.”³⁵ Alexander stresses the fact that *metator* is clearly attested as a loanword in Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic gives additional strength to this etymology.³⁶

6. Still another possible etymological source for the name “Metatron” is the Greek μέτρον, “a measure.” Adolf Jellinek may well be the first scholar to suggest μέτρον as an alternative explanation of Metatron, on the assumption that Metatron was identical with Horos.³⁷ In his recent article Gedaliahu Stroumsa provides some new convincing reasons for the acceptance of this etymology. These reasons focus on the fact that Metatron not only carried God’s name but also measured the Deity and was thus viewed as God’s *Shi’ur Qomah* (the measurement of the divine Body).³⁸ Stroumsa argues that “renewed attention should be given to μέτρον and/or *metator* (a conflation of the two terms should not be excluded) as a possible etymology of Metatron.”³⁹ Matthew Black, in a short article devoted to the origin of the name Metatron, expounds upon an additional facet of this etymology. Black traces the origin of the word “metatron” to a previously unnoticed piece of evidence found in Philo’s *QG*, extant in Armenian, where among other titles of the Logos, the term *praemetitor* can be found. Black suggests that *praemetitor* could be connected with the term μετρητής, the Greek equivalent of the Latin *metator*, “measurer,” applied to the Logos.⁴⁰

7. Joseph Dan has recently proposed that the name “Metatron” may be connected with the function of this angel as the bearer of God’s name. In Metatron’s lore this principal angel is often named as the “lesser YHWH,” that is, the lesser manifestation of the divine Name. Dan takes the “him” in Exodus 23:21, “because my name is within him,” as referring to Metatron,⁴¹ suggesting that “he has within himself God’s ineffable name, which gives him his power.”⁴² Dan further proposes that, in view of the phrase “my

³⁵ Alexander, “From Son of Adam to a Second God,” 107.

³⁶ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 243.

³⁷ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.134.

³⁸ Stroumsa, “Form(s) of God: Some Notes on Metatron and Christ,” 287.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁴⁰ M. Black, “The Origin of the Name Metatron,” *VT* 1 (1951) 218.

⁴¹ *b. Sanh.* 38b: “Once a *Min* said to R. Idith: It is written, *And unto Moses He said, Come up to the Lord*. But surely it should have stated, *Come up unto me!* – It was Metatron [who said that], he replied, whose name is similar to that of his Master, for it is written, *For my name is in him.*” The phrase is also used in *3 Enoch* 12:5 (*Synopse* §15) in the context of the explanation of Metatron’s title the “lesser YHWH”: “He [God] sets it [crown] upon my head and he called me, ‘The lesser YHWH’ in the presence of his whole household in the height, as it is written, ‘My name is in him.’” Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 265.

⁴² Dan, *The Ancient Jewish Mysticism*, 109.

name is within him,” the name Metatron might be construed as related to the four letters of the divine Name.⁴³ He observes that “it appears that the reference here is to the letters *tetra*, i.e., the number four in Greek, a four-letter word in the middle of the name Metatron.”⁴⁴ Dan, however, cautiously points out that this etymology cannot be explored sufficiently for verification.

8. In the introduction to his recent French translation of *3 Enoch*, Charles Mopsik suggests that the etymology of the name “Metatron” can be linked to the biblical Enoch story and might derive from the Greek terminology found in the Septuagint rendering of Gen 5:24, “Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him.” Mopsik observes that in the Septuagint version of Gen 5:24 and Sirach 44:16, the Hebrew verb לקח (“to take”) is rendered by the Greek verbs μετέθηκεν or μετετέθη.⁴⁵ He argues that the most significant part of the term “Metatron” (מטטרון) is the first three consonants of this word, namely, *MTT* (מטט), since the suffix *RON* (רון) is a technical addition which represents a common feature of the various angelic names in Jewish angelological writings. Mopsik concludes that it is possible that the three consonants for the most meaningful part of the name Metatron, מטט, are transliterating in one form or another the Greek μετετέθη. Keeping in mind these linguistic parallels, Mopsik suggests that the name “Metatron” could designate “the one who has been translated” and thus would be in direct relation to the Enoch story and his translation to heaven.⁴⁶

9. One also cannot dismiss the possibility that the name “Metatron” may have no etymological parallels. Several scholars observe that this name does not necessarily have an etymology since, for example, it “could be gibberish, like the magical names *Adiriron* and *Dapdapiron*, with which the Hekhalot-Merkabah texts abound.”⁴⁷

In conclusion it should be noted that the text of the Slavonic apocalypse also appears to contain a testimony pertaining to the name Metatron. This evidence, however, will be examined in detail later in the section of this study dealing with the analysis of *2 Enoch* materials.

⁴³ In respect to this etymology, it is noteworthy that one Aramaic incantation bowl identifies Metatron with God. Alexander observes that “the possibility should even be considered that Metatron is used on this bowl as a divine name.” Alexander, “The Historical Setting of the Hebrew Book of Enoch,” 167. For a detailed discussion of this inscription see Cohen, *Liturgy and Theurgy*, 159; Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 358–9.

⁴⁴ Dan, *The Ancient Jewish Mysticism*, 109–110.

⁴⁵ C. Mopsik, *Le Livre hébreu d’Hénoch ou Livre des palais* (Paris: Verdier, 1989) 48.

⁴⁶ Mopsik, *Le Livre hébreu d’Hénoch ou Livre des palais*, 48.

⁴⁷ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 1.243; idem, “The Historical Settings of the Hebrew Book of Enoch,” 162.

“Old” Roles and Titles

Metatron as the Scribe

The prominent scribal office of the seventh antediluvian hero was not forgotten in the later rabbinic and Hekhalot developments and reappeared in its new Merkabah form as an important duty of the new hero, the supreme angel Metatron. One of the possible⁴⁸ early attestations to the scribal career of Enoch-Metatron can be found in the Targums, where the patriarch’s name is mentioned in connection with the scribal duties of the principal angel. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Genesis 5:24 reads: “Enoch worshiped in truth before the Lord, and behold he was not with the inhabitants of the earth because he was taken away and he ascended to the firmament at the command of the Lord, and he was called Metatron, the Great Scribe (סַפְּרָא רַבָּא).”⁴⁹

It is intriguing that the passage from the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* uses the new scribal title of the exalted patriarch, which was unknown in early Enochic literature. Although the targumic text does not unfold the details of the scribal duties of Metatron, another narrative attested in the talmudic materials provides additional details elaborating this office. The narrative is found in the Babylonian Talmud, where the second-century rabbi Elisha ben Abuya, also known as Aḥer, was granted permission to see Metatron sitting and writing down the merits of Israel.

The passage found in *b. Ḥag. 15a* reads:

Aḥer mutilated the shoots. Of him Scripture says: Suffer not thy mouth to bring thy flesh into guilt. What does it refer to? – He saw that permission was granted to Metatron to sit and write down the merits of Israel. Said he: It is taught as a tradition that on high there is no sitting and no emulation, and no back, and no weariness. Perhaps, – God forbid! – there are two divinities! [Thereupon] they led Metatron forth, and punished him with sixty fiery lashes, saying to him: Why didst thou not rise before him when thou didst see him? Permission was [then] given to him to strike out the merits of Aḥer. A Bath Kol went forth and said: Return, ye backsliding children – except Aḥer. [Thereupon] he said: Since I have been driven forth from yonder world, let me go forth and enjoy this world. So Aḥer went forth into evil courses.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Scholars observe that the identification of Enoch with Metatron in this passage could be a late addition since it does not appear in other Palestinian Targums. See Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkabah Mysticism*, 197.

⁴⁹ *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis* (tr. M. Maher, M.S.C.; The Aramaic Bible 1B; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 36.

⁵⁰ I. Epstein, *Soncino Hebrew-English Talmud. Hagigah 12b*. The tale in almost identical form is also attested in *Merkavah Rabbah (Synopsis §672)*: “... Elisha ben

The significant feature of this talmudic tale is that the scribal functions of Metatron are connected here with his duty to write down the merits of Israel. This conflation of Metatron's scribal role with the duty of a recorder (or eraser in the case of Aḥer) of human merits recalls the composite nature of Enoch's scribal office which, as one may remember, necessarily encompasses the function of the witness of the divine judgment. What is of special interest to this study is whether the talmudic passage is really connected with the previous Enochic lore about the scribal functions of the seventh patriarch.

Scholem, who normally holds the position that talmudic passages attest to the tradition of the preexistent Metatron and do not associate Metatron with the seventh antediluvian patriarch, in this case cautiously leaves room for the possibility of such connection. He suggests that

the passage in *Hagigah* 15a ... may refer to the tradition about the ascension of Enoch, to whom a similar function is indeed ascribed in the *Book of Jubilees* 4:23: "We conducted him into the Garden of Eden in majesty and honor, and behold there he writes down the condemnation and judgment of the world, and all the wickedness of the children of man." The two functions supplement each other.⁵¹

Despite his cautious affirmation of the possible connection between the scribal offices of Enoch and Metatron in *b. Hag. 15a*, Scholem's position in this respect remains ambiguous. He adds that "the parallel proves less than it seems to prove"⁵² since both the Jewish pseudepigrapha and the Hekhalot writings know several angelic scribes.⁵³ It appears that Scholem's hesitation⁵⁴ to unambiguously identify Metatron with Enoch in the talmudic

Abuyah cut off the shoots. Concerning him Scripture says: Do not allow your mouth etc. They said: When Elisha descended to the Chariot he saw Metatron, to whom permission had been given to sit (לִישֵׁב) and write down (לִכְתּוֹב) the merits of Israel one hour a day. He said: the sages taught: above there is no standing, and no sitting, no jealousy and no rivalry, and no duplicity (עוֹרָרִי) and no affliction. He meditated: perhaps there are two powers in heaven? Immediately He took Metatron outside of the celestial curtain, and you struck him with sixty fiery blows, and He gave permission to Metatron to burn the merits of Elisha." Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 246.

⁵¹ Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 51.

⁵² Alexander's attitude to the evidence from *b. Hag. 15a* appears to be less cautious than Scholem's position. He observes that "it is not clear when Metatron absorbed the Enoch tradition. In an attributed stratum of the *Babli* (*b. Hag. 15a*) it is stated that 'permission was granted to Metatron to sit and to write down the merits of Israel.' This scribing role of Metatron may have been taken over from the Enoch traditions which portray Enoch as the heavenly scribe (*Jub* 4:23; *Ps-J Gen.* 5:24)...." Alexander, "The Historical Settings of the Hebrew Book of Enoch," 164.

⁵³ Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 51.

⁵⁴ It is noteworthy that, in contrast to Scholem, who argued that the passage of the *Babli* refers to the primordial Metatron tradition, Christopher Rowland draws the reader's attention to a number of striking similarities with the early Enochic texts by drawing attention to 2 *Enoch*. He stresses that "there is early evidence to suggest that the heavenly

passage is based in part on his choice of the pseudepigraphic sources about the patriarch's scribal duties, which he limits to the evidence found in *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*. He does not refer to another significant Second Temple testimony, the one in the Slavonic apocalypse. If the tradition about Enoch's scribal activities found in *2 Enoch* entered the discussion, one would notice some additional details in the description of Enoch's scribal activities that further link the early Enochic accounts with the Metatron tradition from *b. Hag. 15a*.⁵⁵ The pertinent passage from the Babylonian Talmud states that "... permission was granted to Metatron to sit and write down the merits of Israel. Said he: It is taught as a tradition that on high there is no sitting (לֹא שִׁיבָה) and no emulation, and no back, and no weariness...."⁵⁶ The important detail of this account is that the scribal duties of Metatron are combined with the motif of his having a seat in heaven. Metatron's situation represents an exception to the rule that no one but God can sit in heaven. The talmudic passage grants this extraordinary permission to sit in heaven to Metatron because of his scribal duties, so he can sit and write the merits of Israel. The whole story of Aḥer's apostasy revolves around this motif of the enthroned angelic scribe, who serves as the ultimate stumbling block for Elisha b. Abuyah, leading him to the heretical conclusion about two "powers" (ב' רְשׁוּיֹת) in heaven.⁵⁷ In view of the materials found in *2 Enoch*, this unique motif of the angelic scribe who has a seat in heaven can provide additional proof that the Metatron tradition from *b. Hag. 15a* is linked to early Enochic lore and that this angelic scribe is in fact the translated patriarch.

While the accounts of Enoch's scribal activities attested in *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, and the *Book of Giants* do not refer to Enoch's possession of any seat in heaven, the tradition attested in the Slavonic apocalypse does so explicitly.⁵⁸ *2 Enoch 23:4* depicts the angel Vereveil who commands Enoch to sit down. "You sit down;⁵⁹ write everything...." The patriarch is then depicted as obeying this angelic command and taking his seat on high. It is noteworthy that the possession of a seat here, similarly to *b. Hag. 15a*, is directly linked to the hero's scribal duties performed over an extended period of time, since in *2 Enoch 23:6* Enoch conveys to his listeners: "And I

scribe who wrote down the merits of individuals was well established in Judaism and was closely linked with the legends which developed about Enoch." Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 338.

⁵⁵ C. Rowland notes that, similarly to *b. Hag. 15a*, *2 Enoch 22–24* also attests to the tradition in which Enoch sits at God's left hand. See Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 496, n. 59.

⁵⁶ *b. Hag. 15a*.

⁵⁷ *b. Hag. 15a*.

⁵⁸ The tablet from Nineveh, however, refers to Enmeduranki's enthronement in the assembly of the gods.

⁵⁹ Slav. *сиди*. Sokolov, *Slavjanskaja Kniga Enoha Pravednogo*, 1.90.

sat down (сидѣхъ)⁶⁰ for a second period of 30 days and 30 nights, and I wrote accurately.”⁶¹

One notices that the evidence from *2 Enoch* provides a new interpretive framework for understanding the tradition found in *b. Hag. 15a* and helps remove the doubts expressed by Scholem that the *Hagigah's* depiction might not be connected with the tradition about the scribal duties of Enoch.

I must now attend to another relevant testimony found in *Synopse* §20. It is curious that in *Synopse* §20 (*3 Enoch* 16) Enoch-Metatron, similarly to the *Hagigah's* passage, is also depicted as having a seat/throne in heaven. Although in the *Sefer Hekhalot* selection Enoch-Metatron is not directly identified as a celestial scribe⁶² but rather as a celestial judge, the enthronement scene of the *Hagigah's* passage transferred to the Enochic context of this Merkabah text might implicitly allude to his scribal office, since in early Enochic materials the patriarch's scribal duties are often linked with his prominent place in the economy of the divine judgment. It does not seem coincidental that in *Synopse* §20 Enoch-Metatron's role as a heavenly scribe is now replaced by his role as an assistant of the Deity in divine judgment, the two functions that are closely connected in the previous Enochic lore. The passage gives the following depiction:

At first I sat upon a great throne at the door of the seventh palace, and I judged (וַדַּנְתִּי) all the denizens of the heights on the authority of the Holy One, blessed be he ... when I sat in the heavenly court (יָשַׁב בִּישִׁיבָה שֶׁל מַעְלָה). The princes of kingdoms stood beside me, to my right and to my left, by authority of the Holy One, blessed be he. But when Aḥer came to behold the vision of the chariot and set eyes upon me, he was afraid and trembled before me. His soul was alarmed to the point of leaving him, because of his fear, dread, and terror of me, when he saw me seated upon a throne like a king, with ministering angels standing beside me as servants and all the princes of kingdoms crowned with crowns surrounding me.⁶³

Philip Alexander notes that the talmudic version of the story found in *b. Hag. 15a* probably has priority over the one attested in *Synopse* §20.⁶⁴ This means that the latter evidence about the angel's role as a judge has its background in the tradition about the scribal office of Enoch-Metatron. In this context Christopher Rowland observes that the role of Enoch-Metatron as a heavenly witness represented in *Synopse* §20 (*3 Enoch* 16) is connected with his office as a scribe in *b. Hag. 15a* and early Enochic lore. He concludes that

⁶⁰ Sokolov, *Slavjanskaja Kniga Enoha Pravednogo*, 1.90.

⁶¹ Andersen, “2 Enoch,” 141.

⁶² Himmelfarb, “A Report on Enoch in Rabbinic Literature,” 261.

⁶³ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 1.268; Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 10–11.

⁶⁴ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 268.

in Hebrew Enoch⁶⁵ Metatron is a judge in the heavenly court, whereas in B⁶⁶ he is merely the heavenly scribe who records the merits of Israel. The different pictures of Metatron reflect the different versions of the Enoch-tradition.⁶⁷ Enoch's position as a scribe and a heavenly witness belong to the oldest part of the tradition (*Jubilees* 4:23; the *Testament of Abraham* Recension B 11; *1 Enoch* 12; *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Gen. 5.24). On the other hand, we have evidence of Enoch as a supremely more exalted figure.... In B, however, it seems that Metatron sits close to God recording the merits of Israel.⁶⁸

At the completion of this section one notes that the hero's transition to the new role as a judge presiding in the heavenly court in *Synopse* §20 appears to be predetermined by the distinctive characteristics of the Metatron tradition reflected in *Sefer Hekhalot*. In view of the highly elevated image of Metatron in this macroform, it is understandable why the tradition preserved in *Sefer Hekhalot* 16 (§20) attempts to depict Enoch-Metatron as a celestial judge overseeing the heavenly tribunal rather than simply as a legal scribe writing the merits of Israel. Such a description would not fit into the whole picture of the new celestial profile of Metatron, who now assumes such spectacular roles as the second deity and the lesser manifestation of the divine name.

Metatron as the Expert in Secrets

Synopse §14 (*3 Enoch* 11) attests to the omniscience of Metatron's knowledge and his immeasurable competence in esoteric lore. In this Hekhalot tract the supreme angel unveils to R. Ishmael that he, Metatron, is the one to whom God revealed "all the mysteries of wisdom, all the depths of the perfect Torah and all the thoughts of men's hearts."⁶⁹ The text leaves the impression that the fullness of the disclosure of the ultimate secrets to this angel can be comparable only to the knowledge of the Deity itself, since according to Metatron, all the mysteries of the world and all the orders (secrets)⁷⁰ of creation are revealed before him "as they stand revealed before the Creator"⁷¹ himself.

One learns from *Sefer Hekhalot* that the angel's initiation into the ultimate secrets and mysteries of the universe allows him to discern the outer and inner nature of things: the mysteries of creation as well as the

⁶⁵ *3 Enoch* 16.

⁶⁶ *b. Hag.* 15a.

⁶⁷ Or more precisely different, but closely connected roles of Enoch-Metatron.

⁶⁸ Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 336–7.

⁶⁹ Alexander, "3 Enoch," 264.

⁷⁰ Some manuscripts of *3 Enoch* use "mysteries" instead of "orders." See, Alexander, "3 Enoch," 264, note c.

⁷¹ Alexander, "3 Enoch," 264.

secrets of the human hearts. Metatron informs R. Ishmael that he has a unique capacity for foreknowledge which enables him to behold “deep secrets and wonderful mysteries. Before a man thinks in secret, I [Metatron] see his thought; before he acts, I see his act. There is nothing in heaven above or deep within the earth concealed from me.”⁷²

Several details in these descriptions of Enoch-Metatron’s expertise in the secrets recall similar conceptual developments already known in early Enochic and Enmeduranki traditions. First, the peculiar emphasis on the secrets associated with “the orders of creation” found in *3 Enoch* recalls the tablet from Nineveh in which the motifs of mysteries and secrets were specifically tied to cosmological and creational concepts. The preoccupation with the secrets of the orders of creation also recalls the early Enochic booklets – more specifically, the *Astronomical Book*, in which Uriel’s instructions in astronomical, cosmological, and meteorological lore also can be seen as pertaining to such orders. Finally, one must not forget *2 Enoch*, in which the secrets of creation stand at the center of the Lord’s revelations to the elevated Enoch. This parallel, however, will be explored in detail in other sections of this study.

3 Enoch’s emphasis on understanding the mysteries of the human heart is also discernible in the early Enochic lore, namely, in *2 Enoch* 50:1, when the seventh antediluvian patriarch reveals to his children that he is the one who is able to see the hidden deeds of each person as in a mirror: “I have set down the achievements of each person in the writings and no one can (hide himself) who is born on the earth, nor (can) his achievement be kept secret. I see everything, as if in a mirror.”⁷³

It is noteworthy that it is not just the content of the secrets, but also the manner of initiation into them that demonstrates remarkable similarities between *2* and *3 Enoch*. H. Odeberg was first to notice that the Enoch-Metatron initiation into the secrets in *3 Enoch* recalls the procedure described in *2 Enoch* – the patriarch was first initiated by angel(s) and after this by the Lord.⁷⁴ *Sefer Hekhalot* attests to the same two-step initiatory procedure when Enoch-Metatron is first initiated by the Prince of Wisdom and the Prince of Understanding and then by the Holy One himself.⁷⁵

In contrast to early Enochic materials which testify to Enoch’s expertise in secrets but do not employ any titles pertaining to this activity,⁷⁶ *Synopse*

⁷² Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 264.

⁷³ *2 Enoch* 50:1.

⁷⁴ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.55.

⁷⁵ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 264.

⁷⁶ In contrast to Enochic materials, Enmeduranki’s tradition defines the seventh antediluvian hero as the one guarding the secrets (*nāšir pirišti*) of the great gods. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic*, 188.

§73 (3 Enoch 48C:7) openly refers to the new title of Enoch-Metatron as the “knower of secrets,” יודע רזים:

and I called him by my name, the Lesser YHWH (יְיִ הַקָּטָן), Prince of the Divine Presence (שַׁר הַפְּנִיִּים), and knower of secrets (יְוֹדֵעַ רְזִים). Every secret I have revealed to him in love, every mystery I have made known to him in uprightness.⁷⁷

Another important feature of Metatron’s associations with secrets which differentiates Hekhalot materials from early Enochic testimonies is that Metatron, unlike the earlier Enoch, does not simply know or write down secrets, but embodies them, since some of the most profound mysteries are now literally written on him, or more specifically on his vestments, including his garments which recall the Deity’s own attire, the *Haluq* (חַלּוּקָה), and Metatron’s glorious crown decorated by the secret letters inscribed by the hand of God. *Synopse* §16 (3 Enoch 13) informs us that the Deity wrote on Metatron’s crown with his finger, as with a pen of flame:

the letters by which heaven and earth were created; the letters by which seas and rivers were created; the letters by which mountains and hills were created; the letters by which stars and constellations, lightning and wind, thunder and thunderclaps, snow and hail, hurricane and tempest were created; the letters by which all the necessities of the world and all the orders (סְדָרִים) [secrets]⁷⁸ of creation were created.⁷⁹

There is little doubt that the inscriptions on Metatron’s crown pertain to the ultimate secrets of the universe, i.e., to the mysteries of creation, an esoteric lore also possessed by the seventh antediluvian hero in the earlier Enochic and Enmeduranki traditions.⁸⁰ The tradition found in the later Zoharic materials informs us that the inscriptions on Metatron’s crown are indeed related to the ultimate secrets of heaven and earth.⁸¹ Thus the passage found in *Zohar Hadash*, 40a elaborates the motif of the sacred engravings:

⁷⁷ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 312; Schäfer et al, *Synopse*, 36–7.

⁷⁸ Some manuscripts of 3 Enoch use the term “secrets” (סְדָרִים) instead of “orders” (סְדָרִים). See Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 266; Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 8.

⁷⁹ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 265–266; Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 8–9.

⁸⁰ In his comments on the imagery of Metatron’s crown in 3 Enoch, Joseph Dan observes that “Metatron’s crown, as that of God, is not only a source of light for the worlds, but represents the principal power of the one who carries it: creation. The highest stage pictured here states that God Himself engraved on Metatron’s crown the letters with which the heaven and the earth and all their hosts were created. It thus follows that one who actually sees Metatron cannot but believe that he is standing before the one who carried out the actions with these letters, i.e., that the power inherent in them was utilized in the actual act of creation.” Dan, *The Ancient Jewish Mysticism*, 118.

⁸¹ Some scholars suggest that the link between Metatron and the secrets of creation might allude to his role as a demiurge or at least a participant in creation. Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate*, 44–45. Jarl Fossum suggests that the depiction of Metatron in *Sefer Hekhalot*, while not demiurgic, still alludes to the matrix of ideas out which the Gnostic concept of the demiurge has possibly risen. Fossum, *The Name of God*, 301. The beginning

Twelve celestial keys are entrusted to Metatron through the mystery of the holy name, four of which are the four separated secrets of the lights.... And this light, which rejoices the heart, provides the illumination of wisdom and discernment so that one may know and ponder. These are the four celestial keys, in which are contained all the other keys, and they have all been entrusted to this supreme head, Metatron, the great prince, all of them being within his Master's secrets, in the engravings of the mysteries of the holy, ineffable name.⁸²

Finally, several words must be said about the recipients of Metatron's secrets in *3 Enoch*. Among other merited visionaries, these beneficiaries now include Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha and Moses, both of whom received their revelations from Metatron during their journeys into the celestial realm where the angel assists them as their *angelus interpretis*.

In these new developments one detects a bridge with the hereditary pattern of esoteric transmission well known in Mesopotamian and Enochic materials, the latter of which emphasized the prominent role of the patriarch's children, including Methuselah, as the chosen vessels of the seer's disclosures. Although some talmudic and Hekhalot passages depict Metatron as a celestial teacher of the deceased children, these instructions do not have a hereditary emphasis and are not connected in any way with the hero's instructions to his children as attested in Enmeduranki and Enochic traditions.

Metatron as the Mediator

The previous analysis of Enochic and Mesopotamian traditions referred on several occasions to the multifaceted nature of the mediatorial functions of the seventh antediluvian hero. It has been demonstrated that Enoch can be seen as a figure able to successfully mediate knowledge and judgment, acting not only as an intercessor and petitioner for the creatures of the lower realm, but also as a special envoy of the Deity responsible for bringing woes and condemnations to the sinful creatures of the earth. In Metatron's mediatorial activities, one can detect the recognizable features of this complex conceptual pattern.

Mediation of Knowledge

Odeberg's study stresses one of the significant facets of Metatron's mediating duties when it observes that in *3 Enoch* this angel can be seen "as the intermediary through whom the secret doctrine was brought down to

of Enoch-Metatron's possible demiurgical profile can be detected already in *2 Enoch*, a text which puts great emphasis on the secrets of creation.

⁸² Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2.644–5.

man.”⁸³ This role vividly recalls one of the offices of the seventh antediluvian hero attested in early Enochic and Enmeduranki traditions. As with the Enochic texts in which one of the mediatorial functions of the seventh antediluvian patriarch was his mediation of knowledge through conveying the celestial knowledge drawn from the heavenly tablets to his children and the people of the earth, Metatron also assumes the role of the messenger who brings the upper knowledge to the creatures of the lower realm. His role as the Sar Torah, the one who conveys the perfect knowledge of the Torah to chosen visionaries and helps them retain this knowledge, will be investigated in detail later in this study. This office of Metatron apparently remains at the center of his mediating activities pertaining to knowledge. In this role, Metatron functions not only as the one who assists in the acquisition of the celestial lore by helping Moses bring the knowledge of the Torah to the people, or assisting visionaries in their mastery of the secrets of the law, but also as a teacher, that is, the one who is obliged to instruct in scriptural matters the deceased children in the heavenly academy.

It is noteworthy that, in contrast to the early Enochic traditions where the seventh antediluvian patriarch is often depicted as the terrestrial teacher, that is, the one who was instructing his own children on the earth in various matters including halakhic questions; Metatron’s teaching expertise is now extended to the celestial classroom.⁸⁴

b. Avod. Zar. 3b depicts Metatron as a teacher of the souls of those who died in their childhood:⁸⁵

What then does God do in the fourth quarter? – He sits and instructs the school children, as it is said, Whom shall one teach knowledge, and whom shall one make to understand the message? Them that are weaned from the milk. Who instructed them theretofore? – If you like, you may say Metatron, or it may be said that God did this as well as other things. And what does He do by night? – If you like you may say, the kind of thing He does by day; or it may be said that He rides a light cherub, and floats in eighteen thousand worlds; for it is said, The chariots of God are myriads, even thousands shinan.⁸⁶

Synopse §75 (3 *Enoch* 48C:12) attests to a similar tradition:

Metatron sits (יֹשֵׁב מִטְטָרָיוֹן) for three hours every day in the heaven above, and assembles all the souls of the dead that have died in their mother’s wombs, and of the babes that have died at their mothers’ breasts, and of the schoolchildren beneath the throne of glory, and sits them down around him in classes, in companies, and in

⁸³ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.84.

⁸⁴ Grelot, “La légende d’Hénoch dans les apocryphes et dans la Bible: Origine et signification,” 13ff.

⁸⁵ A similar tradition also can be found in the *Alphabet of R. Akiba*. See Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot*, 2.333–477.

⁸⁶ Epstein, *Soncino Hebrew-English Talmud. Abodah Zarah*, 3b.

groups, and teaches them Torah, and wisdom, and haggadah, and tradition, and he completes for them their study of the scroll of the Law, as it is written, “To whom shall one teach knowledge, whom shall one instruct in the tradition? Them that are weaned from the milk, them that are taken from the breasts.”⁸⁷

As in the previously analyzed passages from *b. Hag. 15a* and *Synopse §20 (3 Enoch 16)*, the narratives from *b. Avod. Zar.* and the additional chapter of *Sefer Hekhalot* are obviously interconnected. H. Odeberg notes that in both passages Isa 28:9 is used for scriptural support.⁸⁸ It is also significant that both passages again refer to Metatron as the one who has a seat in heaven, the feature which played a crucial role in both the explicit and implicit portrayals of his scribal duties in *b. Hag. 15a*, *Merkavah Rabbah (Synopse §672)*, and *3 Enoch 16 (Synopse §20)*. This feature may indicate that some talmudic evidence about Metatron might stem from the common tradition in which this angel was depicted as having a seat in heaven. This tradition could have roots in the early Enochic lore reflected in *2 Enoch*; there the patriarch was depicted as the one who has a seat in heaven.⁸⁹

It must be recognized that Metatron’s teaching of humans does not proceed as simple communication of information. Metatron, like the seventh antediluvian hero, teaches not just through his spoken or written word but also through the example of his extraordinary personal story. Crispin Fletcher-Louis notes that “the transformation of Enoch provides a paradigm⁹⁰ for the *Yorde Merkabah*: his angelization was the aspiration of all Hekhalot mystics.”⁹¹ Philip Alexander states that for the Merkabah mystic Metatron was a powerful “friend at court, ... the living proof that man could overcome angelic opposition and approach God.”⁹²

Mediation of the Divine Judgment

In the previous investigation of the mediatorial duties of the seventh antediluvian hero, this study noticed that Enoch appears to be simultaneously fulfilling two roles pertaining to the judgment: first, the role

⁸⁷ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 313; Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 36–37.

⁸⁸ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.83.

⁸⁹ *2 Enoch* 24:1(the longer recension): “And the Lord called me; and he said to me, ‘Enoch, sit to the left of me with Gabriel.’ And I did obeisance to the Lord.” Andersen, “2 Enoch,” 142.

⁹⁰ Peter Schäfer observes that “the only angel in *3 Enoch* and several layers of the other macroforms who constitutes an exception and is so close to God as to be dressed in similar clothes and sit on a similar throne is Metatron, the ‘lesser YHWH.’ This Metatron, however, is precisely not an angel like the others but the man Enoch transformed into an angel. Enoch-Metatron, as the prototype of the *yored merkavah*, shows that man can come very close to God, so close as to be almost similar to him, so that Aḥer-Elisha ben Avuyah can mistake him for God.” Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 149.

⁹¹ Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts*, 156.

⁹² Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 244.

of the intercessor or pleader, and second, the role of the announcer and witness of judgment. It was established that in his function as the intercessor Enoch was responsible for bringing petitions to the Deity from creatures of the lower realms. In contrast, in his office as the announcer and witness of the divine judgment the patriarch functions differently by assisting God in the announcement and execution of the judgment. These two dimensions of the same mission of the hero can also be detected in the Metatron tradition in which the patriarch's duties pertaining to judgment appear to be further developed and expanded into Metatron's roles of Redeemer and Judge.

Intercession

During my investigation of the Enochic roles found in the *Book of the Watchers* and the *Book of Giants*, I noticed that in these early texts the patriarch was often depicted as an intercessor before the Deity for various creatures of the lower realms. It is intriguing that in the rabbinic and Hekhalot materials, the universal character of Enoch-Metatron's intercessory function received a new "national" reinterpretation. Along with the customary emphasis on the omniscient character of Metatron, this new understanding also underlines his special role as the intercessor for Israel. Gershom Scholem observes that Metatron often "appears as the heavenly advocate defending Israel in the celestial court."⁹³

Thus, as may be recalled, in *b. Hag 15a* and *Merkavah Rabbah*, Metatron is granted special permission to sit and write down the merits of Israel. In *Lamentations Rabbah*, intr. 24, Metatron pleads before the Holy One when the Deity decides to remove his *Shekinah* from the temple on account of Israel's sins:

At that time the Holy One, blessed be He, wept and said, "Woe is Me! What have I done? I caused My Shechinah to dwell below on earth for the sake of Israel; but now that they have sinned, I have returned to My former habitation. Heaven forbid that I become a laughter to the nations and a byword to human beings!" At that time Metatron came, fell upon his face, and spake before the Holy One, blessed be He: "Sovereign of the Universe, let me weep, but do Thou not weep." He replied to him, "If thou lettest Me not weep now, I will repair to a place which thou hast not permission to enter, and will weep there," as it is said, But if ye will not hear it, My soul shall weep in secret for pride (Jer. 13:17).⁹⁴

The depiction of Metatron's prostration before God in this passage recalls the patriarch's obeisance during his transition into the celestial rank in *1* and *2 Enoch*. Here, however, the purpose of veneration is different since it is removed from its initiatory context and combined with the office of the intercessor or, more specifically, the pleader on behalf of Israel. Besides

⁹³ Scholem, "Metatron," *EJ*, 11.1445.

⁹⁴ *Midrash Rabbah*, 7.41.

Metatron's intercessory duties, *Lamentations Rabbah* also seems to point to his other, more exalted office, his role as the redeemer who is able to take the sinners' transgressions upon himself.

Joshua Abelson observes that Metatron appears⁹⁵ in this passage not only as the pleader for the interests of Israel, but also as the one taking upon himself the sorrow for Israel's sins.⁹⁶ Metatron's role of the redeemer will be examined a bit later. Here one must note that in some Hekhalot materials Metatron appears to be responsible for intercession not only for Israel as a nation, but also for individual Israelites as well. Thus in *Synopse* §3 when the angelic hosts oppose the elevation of R. Ishmael, Metatron intercedes on behalf of this visionary, introducing him as one from the nation of Israel:

Metatron replied: "He is of the nation of Israel, whom the Holy One, blessed be he, chose from the seventy nations to be his people...." At once they [angelic hosts] began to say, "This one is certainly worthy to behold the chariot, as it is written, Happy is the nation of whom this is true...."⁹⁷

It has already been mentioned that in *3 Enoch* Metatron is depicted not only as the intercessor but also as the redeemer who is able to take upon himself the sins of others.⁹⁸ It is not coincidental that Metatron's lore construes the redeeming functions of the angel in connection with Adam's transgression, depicting him as the eschatological counterpart of the protoplast who is able to atone for the fall of the first human. In *Sefer Hekhalot*, Metatron appears to be a divine being first incarnated in Adam and then in Enoch; the latter re-ascended to the protoplast's heavenly home and took his rightful place in the heights of the universe.⁹⁹ *Synopse* §72 reads: "The Holy One, blessed be he, said: I made him strong, I took him, I appointed him, namely Metatron my servant (עבדִי), who is unique among all the denizens of the heights.... I made him strong in the generation of the first man.... I took him – Enoch the son of Jared."¹⁰⁰ Philip Alexander observes that "Enoch thus becomes a redeemer figure – a second Adam through whom humanity is restored."¹⁰¹ This understanding of Metatron as the second Adam does not appear to be a

⁹⁵ It is intriguing that the address which Metatron uses in this text recalls *2 Enoch*, where in chapter 33 the Lord introduces Himself to the patriarch as the Sovereign of all creations who himself created everything "from the highest foundation to the lowest, and to the end." Andersen, "2 Enoch," 156.

⁹⁶ J. Abelson, *Jewish Mysticism* (London, G. Bell and Sons, 1913) 69.

⁹⁷ *3 Enoch* 2. Alexander, "3 Enoch," 257.

⁹⁸ Metatron's role as the redeemer and the possible origin of this concept in early Enochic literature will be investigated in detail later in this study.

⁹⁹ It appears that this theological motif of Enoch-Metatron's redeeming role is already developed in *2 Enoch* 64. This tradition will be discussed later.

¹⁰⁰ *3 Enoch* 48C:1. Alexander, "3 Enoch," 311. Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 36–37.

¹⁰¹ Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God: Transformation of the Biblical Enoch," 111.

late invention of the rabbinic and Hekhalot authors but can already be found in early Enochic materials, including 2 (*Slavonic*) *Enoch*. A detailed exploration of this conceptual development will be offered later in this study.

Bearing Testimony

It has been mentioned that early Jewish and Mesopotamian testimonies pertaining to the legal and scribal duties of the seventh antediluvian hero appear to find their logical counterpart in Metatron's role as a seated scribe and judge. Here, as with the early Enochic materials, the Merkabah tradition again attests to the composite nature of Enoch-Metatron offices. One recalls that in early Enochic traditions the patriarch is often depicted as a legal scribe who writes petitions on behalf of his clients, the fallen angels and their progeny. In the Hekhalot tradition, his status appears to be much higher, since there he is depicted not just as a legal scribe or a petitioner to the judge, but as the one who is elevated to the position of the judge who now has a seat in heaven. The shadows of the previous scribal role are still discernible in this new elevation throughout the references to his enthronement. Although Metatron presides over a celestial law court in *Synopse* §20,¹⁰² the key to the connection of this new office to his older scribal duties can be found in the earlier tradition attested in *b. Ḥag. 15a*, in which Metatron "was given permission to write down the merits of Israel."

It is also significant that in early Enochic materials the patriarch not only intercedes for the creatures, but also brings to them testimonies and warnings about the upcoming judgment from God. Moreover, his remarkable removal from earth can be viewed as a powerful testimony against the sins of the generation of the Flood.¹⁰³ The patriarch's mission as the witness of the divine judgment thus represents another significant dimension of Enoch's mediating role in the economy of the divine judgment. This dimension does not appear to be forgotten in the later rabbinic and Hekhalot materials about Enoch-Metatron.

Alexander observes that "*3 Enoch* makes considerable play of the idea that Enoch was taken up as a witness."¹⁰⁴ In *Synopse* §5 Metatron explains his removal from earth by saying to R. Ishmael that God took him in the midst of the generation of the Flood to be "a witness (עֵד) against them in

¹⁰² *3 Enoch* 16:7–11: "At the beginning I was sitting on the throne at the door of the seventh hall and I was judging the sons of heaven, the heavenly household, by the authority of the Holy One, blessed be He." Alexander, "3 Enoch," 268.

¹⁰³ *Jub* 4:23–24.

¹⁰⁴ Alexander, "From Son of Adam," 106, footnote 28.

the heavenly heights.”¹⁰⁵ A similar tradition is discernible also in *Synopse* §72, where Enoch-Metatron’s removal in the midst of the antediluvian turmoil is explained through his role as the witness: “I ‘took him’ – Enoch the son of Jared, from their midst, and brought him up with the sound of the trumpet and with shouting to the height, to be my witness (להיות לי לעד), together with the four creatures of the chariot, to the world to come.”¹⁰⁶

One must not forget, however, that Metatron’s role as the witness is not peculiar to *Sefer Hekhalot*. Scholars previously noted¹⁰⁷ that in the *Shi‘ur Qomah* materials, Metatron is portrayed as שר ארובה דאסהדרותא, the great prince of testimony.¹⁰⁸ Although the passage from *Sefer Haqomah* does not provide any specific details about Metatron’s role in the economy of the divine judgment, Ithamar Gruenwald links this title with the important role that Enoch-Metatron played in bearing testimony against the generation of the Flood.¹⁰⁹

It has already been noted that in his intercessory functions, Enoch-Metatron undergoes a definite evolution that results in his new role as the redeemer, a role which still is closely connected with the previous Enochic lore. A similar transition appears to be discernible in Enoch-Metatron’s office as the witness of the divine judgment.¹¹⁰ In this latter office, the evolution is apparent from the role of the judicial scribe responsible for recording human merits (and sins?) to the office of the heavenly judge enthroned at the doors of the seventh *hekhla*. *Synopse* §20 attests to this transition to the office of the celestial judicator:¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Christopher Rowland observes that this role of Metatron reflects the earlier Enochic traditions attested in *Jub* 4:23, *Testament of Abraham* B 11, *1 Enoch* 12, and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Gen 5:24. Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 337.

¹⁰⁶ *3 Enoch* 48C:2. Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 311. Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 36–37.

¹⁰⁷ Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 199; Cohen, *Liturgy and Theurgy*, 125.

¹⁰⁸ *Sefer Haqomah* 12–13 (Oxford MS. 1791) reads: “R. Aqiba said: I give testimony based on my testimony that Metatron said to me, [Metatron, who is] the great prince of testimony (שר ארובה דאסהדרותא)” Cohen, *Liturgy and Theurgy*, 189; idem, *The Shi‘ur Qomah: Texts and Recensions*, 127.

¹⁰⁹ Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 200.

¹¹⁰ Hugo Odeberg points to the transitional character of Metatron’s role as the witness. He observes that “...the reason or object of Enoch’s translation was the function prescribed for him of being a witness – in the world to come – to the sinfulness of his generation and the justice of the Holy One in eventually destroying the men of that generation through the Deluge ... but the characterization of the translated Enoch is not restricted to describing him as a celestial scribe-witness. The various honors and offices conferred upon him in chs. 7 seqs. set forth in successive stages, progressing towards a climax (in chs. 12 and 48C:7,8).” Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.80–81.

¹¹¹ In *Synopse* §73 (*3 Enoch* 48C:8) the story is repeated by God: “I have fixed his [Metatron] throne at the door of my palace, on the outside, so that he might sit and execute judgment over all my household in the height.” Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 312.

At first I sat upon a great throne at the door of the seventh palace, and I judged all the denizens of the heights on the authority of the Holy One, blessed be he.... I sat in the heavenly court. The princes of kingdoms stood beside me, to my right and to my left, by authority of the Holy One, blessed be he.¹¹²

As has been previously noted, this passage represents a later revision of the tradition found in *b. Hag* 15a in which Metatron is depicted as the scribe and the recorder of the merits of Israel. In view of the tradition preserved in the Babylonian Talmud, Metatron's transition from the position of the witness to the office of the judge does not appear to be coincidental. It can be seen as the smooth transition from the position of the legal scribe, a helper of the judge, the role in which Enoch appears in the *Testament of Abraham*, to the higher judicial position of the one who now presides in the court. Seen in this context, *b. Hag*. 15a and *Synopse* §20 represent one of the rare cases when the evolution of the hero's office(s) can be traced clearly and unambiguously in the succession of the texts. One can see that the transition to the new role affects first of all Metatron's profile. The career advancement from legal scribe to judge in *Synopse* §20 allows for the elimination of any references to the scribal function of Enoch-Metatron; these references are not appropriate for the new elevated profile of the appointed judge whose function is not to write down the merits and sins of the creatures but to deliver judgment upon them.¹¹³

The passage from *Synopse* §20 also shows that the transition to the new role affects not only the description of the main hero but also the social context of his new position. Since Metatron was promoted from the position of a servant to one who now himself needs servants, *Sefer Hekhalot* depicts this new social environment represented by the princes of the kingdoms who are standing behind the newly appointed judge ready to execute his decisions. In light of these new conceptual changes, it is logical that such servants are absent in the earlier description of Metatron found in the *Hagigah Babli*.

Mediation of God's Presence and Authority

Sefer Hekhalot often emphasizes the exclusivity of Metatron's position; his close proximity to God's Face appears to create a new mediatorial dimension for the exalted hero unknown in early Enochic materials. In the Hekhalot literature, Metatron not only assumes the usual functions pertaining to mediation in knowledge and judgment similar to those performed by the seventh antediluvian patriarch, but also takes a much

¹¹² *3 Enoch* 16:1–5. Alexander, "3 Enoch," 268.

¹¹³ In light of this transition it is understandable that *Sefer Hekhalot* does not contain any direct references to the scribal function of Enoch-Metatron. Instead, in *3 Enoch* 18:24, the scribal duties are assigned to two angels-princes.

higher role as the mediator of the divine Presence.¹¹⁴ This office of Metatron as God's secretary is reflected in *3 Enoch* and in some other Hekhalot materials which depict him as a special attendant of the divine Face who mediates God's presence to the rest of the angelic community.¹¹⁵ In *Synopse* §13, God himself introduces Metatron as his secretary, saying that "any angel and any prince who has anything to say in *my [God's] presence* (לפני) should go before him [Metatron] and speak to him. Whatever he says to you in my name you must observe and do...."¹¹⁶

Furthermore, Metatron's leading role in heaven as God's secretary and vice-regent is not confined to his activities in the celestial realm, but also includes the governance of earthly matters. This function is executed through another prominent office briefly mentioned earlier, the role of the Prince of the World, the one responsible for conveying the divine decisions to the seventy (sometimes seventy two)¹¹⁷ princes controlling the seventy nations of the earth.¹¹⁸ Thus it seems no coincidence that Metatron is also known to creation through his seventy names: these again stress his role in the governing of the earthly realm divided by seventy tongues.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ It should be noted that although Metatron is now depicted as the middle man between the Deity and the whole angelic community, his early mediating dealings with the fallen angels are not forgotten in the Metatron tradition. One such allusion can be found in the *Midrash of Shemhazai and Azael*, where Metatron warns the leader of the fallen Watchers about the upcoming destruction of the earth by the waters of the Deluge: "Forthwith Metatron sent a messenger to Shemhazai, and said to him; 'The Holy One is about to destroy His world, and bring upon it a flood.' Shemhazai stood up and raised his voice and wept aloud, for he was sorely troubled about his sons and (his own) iniquity. And he said: 'How shall my children live and what shall become of my children, for each one of them eats daily a thousand camels, a thousand horses, a thousand oxen, and all kinds (of animals)?'" Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, 328.

¹¹⁵ In this role Metatron is often directly named as the Face of God.

¹¹⁶ *3 Enoch* 10. Alexander, "3 Enoch," 264. Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 8–9.

¹¹⁷ Jarl Fossum observes that "the notion that Enoch-Metatron has 'Seventy Names' is connected with the idea of 'seventy tongues of the world.' The meaning undoubtedly is that Enoch-Metatron in virtue of possessing the 'Seventy Names' is the ruler of the entire world. Elsewhere, *3 Enoch* speaks of the 'seventy-two princes of kingdoms on high' who are angelic representatives of the kingdoms on earth (xvii. 8; ch. xxx). The numbers 'seventy' and 'seventy-two' are, of course, not to be taken literally; they signify the multitude of the nations of the world." Fossum, *The Angel of the Lord*, 298.

¹¹⁸ *3 Enoch* 48C:8–9 reads: "I made every prince stand before him to receive authority from him and to do his will...." Alexander, "3 Enoch," 312.

¹¹⁹ *Synopse* §4 (*3 Enoch* 3:2).

Priestly and Liturgical Roles of Metatron

In one of his recent publications, Philip Alexander traces the development of Enoch's image in Jewish literature from the Second Temple period to the early Middle Ages. He notes that these developments point to a genuine, ongoing tradition that demonstrates the astonishing persistence of certain motifs. As an example of the consistency of some themes and concepts, Alexander points to the evolution of Enoch's priestly role, already prominent in the early Second Temple materials, which later receives its second embodiment in Metatron's sacerdotal duties. He observes that "Enoch in *Jubilees* in the second century B.C.E. is a high priest. Almost a thousand years later he retains this role in the Heikhalot texts, though in a rather different setting."¹²⁰ Pointing to one possible example of the long-lasting association of Enoch-Metatron with the sacerdotal office, Alexander directs attention to the priestly role of this exalted angel attested in *3 Enoch* 15B where Metatron is put in charge of the heavenly tabernacle.¹²¹ The passage from *Sefer Hekhalot* reads:

Metatron is the Prince over all princes, and stands before him who is exalted above all gods. He goes beneath the throne of glory, where he has a great heavenly tabernacle of light, and brings out the deafening fire, and puts it in the ears of the holy creatures, so that they should not hear the sound of the utterance that issues from the mouth of the Almighty.¹²²

The first significant detail of this description is that the tabernacle is placed in the immediate proximity of the Throne, below the Seat of Glory. This tradition does not appear to be peculiar to *3 Enoch's* description since Hekhalot writings depict the Youth, who is often identified there with Metatron, as the one who emerges from beneath the Throne.¹²³ The proximity of the tabernacle to the *Kavod* also recalls early Enochic materials, specifically *1 Enoch* 14, in which the patriarch's visitation of the celestial sanctuary is described as his approach to the *Kavod*. Both traditions

¹²⁰ Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God," 107.

¹²¹ Crispin Fletcher-Louis observes that in comparison with the early Enochic materials, "in *3 Enoch* the priestly tradition is somewhat more muted ... which is unsurprising given that its 'rabbinic' life setting is far removed from the strongly priestly world which nurtured the Enoch tradition towards the close of the Second Temple period. However, Enoch's priestly credentials are not forgotten. In *3 Enoch* 7 Enoch is stationed before the Shekinah 'to serve (as would the high priest) the throne of glory day by day.' He is given a crown which perhaps bears God's name as did that of the high priest (12:4–5) and a *מַעֲיָל* like that of the high priest (Exod 38:4, 31, 34 etc)." Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 24.

¹²² Alexander, "3 Enoch," 303.

¹²³ See, for example, *Synopse* §385: "when the youth enters beneath the throne of glory." Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 162.

(Enochic and Merkabah) appear to stress Enoch-Metatron's role as the celestial high priest, since he approaches the realm where ordinary creatures, angelic or human, are not allowed to enter. This realm of the immediate presence of the Deity, the Holy of Holies, is situated behind the veil represented by heavenly (פרגוד) or terrestrial (פרכה) curtains.¹²⁴

Another important sacerdotal function mentioned in *3 Enoch* 15B and other materials includes the duties of preparation and arrangement of the angelic hosts who participate in the liturgical praise of the Deity. In this respect Metatron is also responsible for the protection of the celestial singers: he guards their ears so that the mighty voice of God would not harm them.¹²⁵

The traditions about Metatron's liturgical duties inside and near the heavenly tabernacle are not limited to the aforementioned description from *Sefer Hekhalot*. Thus, one Mandaean bowl speaks about Metatron as the one "who serves before the Curtain (פרגודא)."¹²⁶ Alexander proposes that this description "may be linked to the Hekhalot tradition about Metatron as the heavenly High Priest (*3 Enoch* 15B:1), and certainly alludes to his status as 'Prince of the Divine Presence.'"¹²⁷

Gershom Scholem draws attention to the passage found in *Merkabah Shelemah* in which the heavenly tabernacle is called the tabernacle of Metatron (משכן מטטרון). In the tradition preserved in *Numbers Rabbah* 12:12, the heavenly sanctuary again is associated with one of Metatron's titles and is called the tabernacle of the Youth (משכן הנער):¹²⁸

R. Simon expounded: When the Holy One, blessed be He, told Israel to set up the Tabernacle He intimated to the ministering angels that they also should make a Tabernacle, and when the one below was erected the other was erected on high. The latter was the tabernacle of the youth (משכן הנער) whose name was Metatron, and

¹²⁴ On the imagery of the Curtain, see also: *b. Yoma* 77a; *b. Ber.* 18b; *Synopse* §64.

¹²⁵ The inability of the angelic hosts to sustain the terrifying sound of God's voice or the terrifying vision of God's glorious Face is not a rare motif in the Hekhalot writings. In such depictions Metatron usually poses as the mediator *par excellence* who protects the angelic hosts participating in the heavenly liturgy against the dangers of direct encounter with the divine presence. This combination of the liturgical duties with the role of the Prince of the Presence appears to be a long-lasting tradition with its possible roots in Second Temple Judaism. James VanderKam notes that in 1QSb 4:25 the priest is compared with an angel of the Face: כמלאך פנים. J. C. VanderKam, "The Angel of the Presence in the Book of Jubilees," *DSD* 7 (2000) 383.

¹²⁶ W. S. McCullough, *Jewish and Mandaean Incantation Texts in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967) D 5–6.

¹²⁷ Alexander, "The Historical Settings of the Hebrew Book of Enoch," 166.

¹²⁸ It should be noted that the expression "the tabernacle of the Youth" occurs also in the *Shi'ur Qomah* materials. For a detailed analysis of the Metatron imagery in this tradition, see Cohen, *Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism*, 124ff.

therein he offers up the souls of the righteous to atone for Israel in the days of their exile.¹²⁹

The intriguing detail in this description of the tabernacle is that it mentions the souls of the righteous offered by Metatron. This reference might allude to the imagery often found in early Enochic materials which refer to the daily sacrifice of the angelic hosts bathing themselves in the river of fire streaming beneath the Throne of Glory, the exact location of the tabernacle of the Youth.

The priestly functions of Metatron were not forgotten in later Jewish mysticism. The materials associated with the Zoharic tradition also attest to Metatron's duties in the heavenly tabernacle. *Zohar* II, 159a reads:

We have learned that the Holy One, blessed be He, told Moses all the regulations and the patterns of the Tabernacle, each one with its own prescription, and [Moses] saw Metatron ministering as High Priest within. ... he saw Metatron ministering.... The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: Look at the tabernacle, and look at the boy....¹³⁰

The significant detail of this passage from the *Zohar* is that it refers to Metatron as the High Priest. It should be noted that not only this relatively late composition, but also the earlier materials associated with the Hekhalot tradition, directly identify the exalted angels with the office and the title of the celestial High Priest. Rachel Elior observes that Metatron appears in the Genizah documents as a High Priest who offers sacrifices on the heavenly altar.¹³¹ She calls attention to the important witness of one Cairo Genizah text which explicitly labels Metatron as the High Priest and the chief of the priests:

I adjure you [Metatron], more beloved and dear than all heavenly beings, [Faithful servant] of the God of Israel, the High Priest (כהן גדול), chief of [the priest]s (ראש הכהנים), you who poss[ess seven]ty names; and whose name[is like your Master's] ... Great Prince, who is appointed over the great princes, who is the head of all the camps.¹³²

As has been already mentioned, Metatron's service behind the heavenly Curtain, *Pargod*, recalls the unique function of the earthly high priest, who

¹²⁹ *Midrash Rabbah*, 5.482–3.

¹³⁰ Tishby, *The Wisdom of Zohar*, 2.645.

¹³¹ Elior, "From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines," 228.

¹³² L. H. Schiffman and M. D. Swartz, *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) 145–7, 151. On Metatron as the High Priest see Schiffman et al., *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah* 25–28; 145–47; 156–157; esp. 145; Elior, "From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines," 299, n. 30. Ya'qub al-Qirqisani alludes to the evidence from the Talmud about the priestly function of Metatron. See Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 6.74; L. Nemoy, "Al-Qirqisani's Account of the Jewish Sects and Christianity," *HUCA* 7 (1930) 317–97.

alone was allowed to enter behind the veil of the terrestrial sanctuary.¹³³ It was previously explained that the possible background for this unique role of Metatron can be traced to *1 Enoch* 14; in this text, the patriarch alone appears in the celestial Holy of Holies while the other angels are barred from the inner house.¹³⁴ This depiction also agrees with the Hekhalot evidence according to which only the Youth, *videlicet* Metatron, is allowed to serve behind the heavenly veil.

It appears that Metatron's role as the heavenly High Priest is supported in the Hekhalot materials by the motif of the particular sacerdotal duties of the terrestrial protagonist of the Hekhalot literature, Rabbi Ishmael b. Elisha, to whom Metatron serves as an *angelus interpres*. In view of Enoch-Metatron's sacerdotal affiliations it is not coincidental that Rabbi Ishmael himself is the tanna who is attested in *b. Ber. 7a* as a High Priest.¹³⁵ Rachel Elijor indicates that in *Hekhalot Rabbati*, this rabbinic authority is portrayed in terms similar to those used in the Talmud, as a priest burning an offering on the altar.¹³⁶ Other Hekhalot materials, including *3 Enoch*, also often refer to R. Ishmael's priestly origins.¹³⁷ The priestly features of this visionary might not only reflect the heavenly priesthood of Metatron,¹³⁸ but also allude to the former priestly duties of the patriarch Enoch known from *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*, since some scholars observe that "*3 Enoch* presents a significant parallelism between the ascension of Ishmael and the ascension of Enoch."¹³⁹

¹³³ On the celestial Curtain, *Pargod*, as the heavenly counterpart of the *paroket*, the veil of the Jerusalem Temple, see: Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature*, 169, note 99; Morray-Jones, *A Transparent Illusion*, 164ff.

¹³⁴ David Halperin argues that in *1 Enoch* "the angels, barred from the inner house, are the priests of Enoch's heavenly Temple. The high priest must be Enoch himself, who appears in the celestial Holy of Holies to procure forgiveness for holy beings... We cannot miss the implication that the human Enoch is superior even to those angels who are still in good standing." Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 82.

¹³⁵ See also *b. Ketub. 105b*; *b. Hul. 49a*.

¹³⁶ Elijor, "From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines," 225.

¹³⁷ See, for example, *Synopse* §3: "Metatron replied, 'He [R. Ishmael] is of the tribe of Levi, which presents the offering to his name. He is of the family of Aaron, whom the Holy One, blessed be He, chose to minister in his presence and on whose head he himself placed the priestly crown on Sinai.'" *3 Enoch* 2:3. Alexander, "3 Enoch," 257.

¹³⁸ Nathaniel Deutsch observes that in *3 Enoch* "likewise, as the heavenly high priest, Metatron serves as the mythological prototype of Merkabah mystics such as Rabbi Ishmael. Metatron's role as a high priest highlights the functional parallel between the angelic vice-regent and the human mystic (both are priests), whereas his transformation from a human being into an angel reflects an ontological process which may be repeated by mystics via their own enthronement and angelification." Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate*, 34.

¹³⁹ Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God," 106-7.

The possible parallel between R. Ishmael and Enoch leads again to the question of the hypothetical roots of Metatron's role as the priest and the servant in the heavenly tabernacle. Previous parts of this study have demonstrated that already in the *Book of the Watchers* and *Jubilees*, the seventh antediluvian hero was portrayed as a priest in the heavenly sanctuary. In another Enochic text, *2 Enoch*, the descendants of the seventh antediluvian patriarch, including his son Methuselah, are depicted as builders of an altar on the place where Enoch was taken up to heaven. The choice of the place might underscore the peculiar role of the patriarch in relation to the heavenly prototype of this earthly sanctuary. The same pseudepigraphon portrays Enoch in the sacerdotal office as the one who delivers the sacrificial instructions to his children. These connections will be closely examined later in this study.

Although the prototypes of Metatron's sacerdotal duties can be traced with relative ease to the early Enochic traditions, some scholars argue that other early traditions might have also contributed to this development. Scholem suggests that Metatron's priestly duties in the heavenly tabernacle might be influenced by Michael's role as the heavenly priest.¹⁴⁰ He observes that "according to the traditions of certain Merkabah mystics, Metatron takes the place of Michael as the high priest who serves in the heavenly Temple..."¹⁴¹ Scholem's insights are important since some talmudic materials, including *b. Hag. 12b*, *b. Menah. 110a*, and *b. Zebah. 62a*, suggest that the view of Michael's role as the heavenly priest was widespread in the rabbinic literature and might constitute one of the significant contributing factors to Metatron's sacerdotal image.

Finally, one more element of Metatron's priestly role must be highlighted. The passage from *3 Enoch 15B* introduced in the beginning of this section shows that one of the aspects of Metatron's service in the heavenly tabernacle involves his leadership over the angelic hosts singing their heavenly praise to the Deity.¹⁴² Metatron can thus be seen as not only the servant in the celestial tabernacle or the heavenly High Priest, but also as the leader of the divine worship. Martin Cohen notes that in the *Shi'ur Qomah* materials, Metatron's service in the heavenly tabernacle appears to

¹⁴⁰ Gershom Scholem notes that "Michael as High Priest was known to the Jewish source used in the Gnostic *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, 38; only 'an archangel [i.e. Michael]' enters within the curtain (καταπέτασμα), an act analogous to that of the High Priest who enters once a year into the Holy of Holies. Michael as High Priest in heaven is also mentioned in *Menahoth 110a* (parallel to *Hagigah 12b*) and *Zebahim 62a*. The Baraita in *Hagigah* is the oldest source." Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, 49, n. 19.

¹⁴¹ G. Scholem, "Metatron," *EJ*, 11.1445.

¹⁴² Daniel Abrams draws attention to another important passage from *Sefer Ha-Hashek*, where Metatron commands the angels to deliver praise to the King of the Glory. Abrams, "The Boundaries of Divine Ontology," 304.

be “entirely liturgical;” he “is more the heavenly choirmaster and beadle than the celestial high priest.”¹⁴³

The descriptions of Metatron’s functions in directing angelic hosts in the presence of the Deity occur several times in the Hekhalot materials. One such description can be found in *Hekhalot Zutarti* (*Synopse* §390) where one can find the following tradition:

One hayyah rises above the seraphim and descends upon the tabernacle of the youth (משכן הנער) whose name is Metatron, and speaks with a loud voice. A voice of sheer silence.... Suddenly the angels fall silent. The watchers and holy ones become quiet. They are silent, and are pushed into the river of fire. The hayyot put their faces on the ground, and this youth whose name is Metatron brings the fire of deafness and puts it into their ears so that they could not hear the sound of God’s speech or the ineffable name. The youth whose name is Metatron then invokes, in seven voices, his living, pure, honored, awesome... name....¹⁴⁴

Metatron is portrayed in this account not only as a servant in the celestial tabernacle or the heavenly High Priest, but also as the leader of the heavenly liturgy. The evidence unfolding Metatron’s liturgical role is not confined solely to the Hekhalot corpus, but can also be detected in another prominent literary stream associated with early Jewish mysticism, represented by the *Shi’ur Qomah* materials. The passages found in the *Shi’ur Qomah* texts attest to a familiar tradition in which Metatron is posited as a liturgical servant. *Sefer Haqomah* 155–164 reads:

And (the) angels who are with him come and encircle the Throne of Glory. They are on one side and the (celestial) creatures are on the other side, and the Shekhinah is on the Throne of Glory in the center. And one creature goes up over the seraphim and descends on the tabernacle of the lad whose name is Metatron and says in a great voice, a thin voice of silence, “The Throne of Glory is glistening!” Immediately, the angels fall silent and the *irin* and the *qadushin* are still. They hurry and hasten into the river of fire. And the celestial creatures turn their faces towards the earth, and this lad, whose name is Metatron, brings the fire of deafness ... and puts (it) in the ears of the celestial creatures so that they do not hear the sound of the speech of the Holy One, blessed be He, and the explicit name that the lad, whose name is Metatron, utters at that time in seven voices, in seventy voices, in his living, pure, honored, holy, awesome, worthy, brave, strong and holy name.¹⁴⁵

A similar tradition can be found in *Siddur Rabbah* 37–46, another text associated with the *Shi’ur Qomah* tradition where the angelic Youth, however, is not identified with the angel Metatron:

¹⁴³ Cohen, *Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism*, 134.

¹⁴⁴ Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 164.

¹⁴⁵ M. Cohen, *The Shi’ur Qomah: Texts and Recensions* (TSAJ 9; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1985)162–4.

The angels who are with him come and encircle the (Throne of) Glory; they are on one side and the celestial creatures are on the other side, and the Shekhinah is in the center. And one creature ascends above the Throne of Glory and touches the seraphim and descends on the Tabernacle of the lad and declares in a great voice, (which is also) a voice of silence, “The throne alone shall I exalt over him.” The *ofanim* become silent (and) the seraphim are still. The platoons of *‘irin* and *qadushin* are shoved into the River of Fire and the celestial creatures turn their faces downward, and the lad brings the fire silently and puts it in their ears so that they do not hear the spoken voice; he remains (thereupon) alone. And the lad calls Him, “the great, mighty and awesome, noble, strong, powerful, pure and holy, and the strong and precious and worthy, shining and innocent, beloved and wondrous and exalted and supernal and resplendent God.”¹⁴⁶

These passages indicate that Metatron is understood not just as a being who protects and prepares the heavenly hosts for praise of the Deity, but also as the one who leads and participates in the liturgical ceremony by invoking the divine name. The passage underlines the extraordinary scope of Metatron’s vocal abilities, allowing him to sing the Deity’s name in seven voices.

It is evident that the tradition preserved in *Sefer Haqomah* cannot be separated from the microforms found in *Synopse* §390 and *3 Enoch* 15B since all these narratives are unified by a similar structure and terminology. All of them also emphasize the Youth’s leading role in the course of the celestial service.

It is also significant that Metatron’s role as the one responsible for protecting and leading the servants in praise of the Deity is not restricted only to the aforementioned passages, but finds expression in the broader context of the Hekhalot and *Sh‘iur Qomah* materials.¹⁴⁷ Another similar depiction, which appears earlier in the same text (*Synopse* §385), again refers to Metatron’s leading role in the celestial praise, noting that it occurs three times a day:

When the youth enters below the throne of glory, God embraces him with a shining face. All the angels gather and address God as “the great, mighty, awesome God,” and they praise God three times a day by means of the youth¹⁴⁸

It also appears that Metatron’s duties as the choirmaster or the celestial liturgical director are applied to his leadership not only over the angelic hosts but also over humans, specifically the visionaries admitted to the heavenly realm. In *Synopse* §2, Enoch-Metatron appears to be preparing Rabbi Ishmael for singing praise to the Holy One: “At once Metatron,

¹⁴⁶ Cohen, *The Shi‘ur Qomah: Texts and Recensions*, 162–4. On the relation of this passage to the Youth tradition see: Davila, “Melchizedek, the ‘Youth,’ and Jesus,” 248–74.

¹⁴⁷ This tradition is not forgotten in later Jewish mystical developments. Daniel Abrams notes that in *Sefer Ha-Hashek* “Metatron commands the angels to praise the King of Glory, and he is among them.” Abrams, “The Boundaries of Divine Ontology,” 304.

¹⁴⁸ Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 162–3.

Prince of the Divine Presence, came and revived me and raised me to my feet, but still I had not strength enough to sing a hymn before the glorious throne of the glorious King....”¹⁴⁹

It has already been noted that the priestly duties of Metatron might plausibly find their early counterparts in the seventh antediluvian hero’s affiliations with the sacerdotal office. This background suggests that Metatron’s liturgical role as the celestial choirmaster might also have its origins in early Enochic materials. Entertaining this possibility of the Enochic origins of Metatron’s role as the leader of the divine worship, one must turn to the passage from *2 Enoch* 18 in which the patriarch is depicted as the one who encourages the celestial Watchers to start the liturgy before the Face of God. The longer recension of *2 Enoch* 18:8 relates:

And I [Enoch] said, “Why are you waiting for your brothers? And why don’t you perform the liturgy before the face of the Lord? Start up your liturgy, and perform the liturgy before the face of the Lord, so that you do not enrage your Lord to the limit.”¹⁵⁰

It is significant that, although Enoch gives advice to the angels situated in the fifth heaven, he encourages them to start the liturgy “before the Face of the Lord,” that is, in front of the divine *Kavod*, the exact location where Metatron conducts the heavenly worship of the angelic hosts in the later rabbinic and Hekhalot materials. In view of the aforementioned conceptual developments, the tradition found in *2 Enoch* 18 might represent an important step towards the defining and shaping of Enoch-Metatron’s sacerdotal office as the servant of the heavenly tabernacle and the celestial choirmaster.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ *3 Enoch* 1:9–10. Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 256.

¹⁵⁰ Andersen, “2 Enoch,” 132.

¹⁵¹ It is intriguing that a similar, perhaps even competing, development can be detected in the early lore about Yahoel. Thus, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 10:9 depicts Yahoel as the one who is responsible for teaching “those who carry the song through the medium of man’s night of the seventh hour.” R. Rubinkiewicz, “Apocalypse of Abraham,” *OTP*, 1.694. In chapter 12 of the same text, Abraham addresses Yahoel as the “Singer of the Eternal One.”

“New” Roles and Titles

Metatron as the Prince of the Presence

The discussion in the previous sections has made clear that the traditions about Metatron offer a plethora of titles for this exalted angel. The titles seem to derive from many sources: the early legends about Adam, Enoch, Yahoel, Michael, and Melchisedek, as well as the later rabbinic and Hekhalot angelic lore. In respect to these conceptual developments, *Sefer Hekhalot* can be seen as a compendium or an encyclopedia of Metatron’s titles; as such it offers a great variety of early and late designations, including such well-known titles as the Prince of the World, the Youth, and the lesser YHWH. Yet, if attention is drawn to the frequency of the occurrence of these titles in *3 Enoch*, one of them stands out through repeated use in the text. This title is connected with the unique place that Metatron occupies in relation to the divine Face; he is considered a special servant of the divine Presence, שַׂר הַפְּנִיִּים. Scholars have previously observed that in *3 Enoch*, Metatron becomes “the angel¹⁵² who has access to the divine Presence, the ‘Face’ of the Godhead....”¹⁵³ *Synopse* §11 stresses that Metatron’s duties in this office include the service connected with the Throne of Glory.¹⁵⁴

It is noteworthy that the appellation “Prince of the Divine Presence” repeatedly follows the name Metatron in *3 Enoch*.¹⁵⁵ For example, with this title he is introduced in chapter one of *Sefer Hekhalot*; in this chapter his duty is to invite the visionary, Rabbi Ishmael, into the divine Presence and to protect him against the hostility of the angels:

¹⁵² It is noteworthy that in the Merkabah tradition these functions are not confined solely to Metatron. Scholem observes that “Sar ha-Panim ... is a term that denotes a whole class of the highest angels, including Metatron.” Scholem, *Jewish Mysticism*, 63.

¹⁵³ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.79.

¹⁵⁴ *3 Enoch* 8:1 “R. Ishmael said: Metatron, Prince of the Divine Presence, said to me: Before the Holy One, blessed be he, set me to serve the throne of glory....” Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 262. Metatron’s prominent role might also be reflected in the fragment found on one magical bowl where he is called רַבָּא דְכּוֹרְסִיָּה, “the great prince of the throne.” C. Gordon, “Aramaic Magical Bowls in the Istanbul and Baghdad Museums,” *Archiv Orientalni* 6 (1934) 328.

¹⁵⁵ This tendency is not peculiar to *3 Enoch*. See, for example, MS. Leningrad Antonin 186 (=G19) (Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente*, 163: “I adjure you Metatron, Prince of the Presence, I pronounce upon you Metatron, Prince of the Presence, I claim upon you Metatron, Angel of the Presence, and I seal upon you Metatron, Prince of the Presence... and the Youth, he calls him [] the strong, magnificent, and awesome, [names]....” Schwartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 119–120.

At once the Holy One, blessed be he, summoned to my aid his servant, the angel Metatron, Prince of the Divine Presence. He flew out to meet me with great alacrity, to save me from their power. He grasped me with his hand before their eyes and said to me, "Come in peace into the presence of the high and exalted King to behold the likeness of the chariot."¹⁵⁶

A few verses later, in *3 Enoch* 1:9 (*Synopse* §2), Metatron is mentioned as the one giving R. Ishmael the strength to sing a song of praise to God. Here again the angel is introduced as the Prince of the Divine Presence. The recurring designations of Metatron as the Prince of the Divine Presence are puzzling since this title does not belong exclusively to this angel. The Merkabah tradition follows here the pseudepigrapha which attest to a whole class of the highest angels/princes (שרי הפנימ) allowed to see the divine Face.¹⁵⁷

It is significant that, although the designation is not restricted to Metatron, in *3 Enoch* it becomes an essential part of the common introductory formula, "The angel Metatron, Prince of the Divine Presence," through which R. Ishmael relates the various revelations received from his exalted *angelus interpres*. It also becomes a dividing grid of the microforms that partitions the narrative of *Sefer Hekhalot*. Sometimes this text seeks to enhance the repetitive formula by adding to it the additional definition, "the glory of the highest heaven." The combination of the expressions, the "Prince of the Divine Presence" and "the glory of the heaven," does not appear to be coincidental since the divine Presence/Face is the divine Glory which leads to the transformation of any servant of the Face into a glorious angelic being resembling the luminosity of the divine Face. This paradoxical transformation is described in detail in *Synopse* §19, where Metatron conveys to R. Ishmael his dramatic transition to the role of the servant of the divine Face:

R. Ishmael said: The angel Metatron, Prince of the Divine Presence, the glory of highest heaven, said to me: When the Holy One, blessed be he, took me to serve the throne of glory, the wheels of the chariot and all the needs of the Shekinah, at once my flesh turned to flame, my sinews to blazing fire, my bones to juniper coals, my eyelashes to lightning flashes, my eyeballs to fiery torches, the hairs of my head to hot flames, all my limbs to wings of burning fire, and the substance of my body (וגורי קומתי) to blazing fire.¹⁵⁸

It was already observed that the idea of the Prince of the Presence is both mediatorial and liturgical, and therefore is closely linked with the motif of the celestial curtain, *Pargod* (פרגוד),¹⁵⁹ the entity which separates the divine

¹⁵⁶ Alexander, "3 Enoch," 1.256.

¹⁵⁷ Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God," 105.

¹⁵⁸ *3 Enoch* 15. Alexander, "3 Enoch," 267; Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 10–11.

¹⁵⁹ *Synopse* §§64–65 (*3 Enoch* 45) provides the description of the heavenly Curtain *Pargod*: "R. Ishmael said: Metatron said to me: Come and I will show you the curtain of

Presence from the rest of the heavenly world.¹⁶⁰ The function of this Curtain which can be viewed as a celestial counterpart of the veil found in the earthly sanctuary is twofold. First, it protects the angelic hosts from the harmful luminosity of the divine Face. At the same time it shields the Deity by concealing the ultimate mysteries of the Godhead now accessible solely to the prince(s) of the divine Presence whose duty is to serve the Deity behind¹⁶¹ the Curtain.¹⁶² Several passages found in the Hekhalot literature depict Metatron and other princes of the Face as attendants who serve the divine Presence in the closest proximity to the Throne, and have the right to enter the immediate presence of the Lord.

The passage found in *Hekhalot Zutarti* says that “when the youth enters below the throne of glory, God embraces him with a shining face....”¹⁶³ This description conveys the fact that the deadly effect of the vision of the luminous Face, which terrifies the angelic hosts, cannot harm the Youth who executes here the office of the *sar happanim*.¹⁶⁴ This tradition stresses the difference between the princes of the divine Presence and the rest of the angels, who must shield their own faces because they cannot endure the direct sight of the Deity.¹⁶⁵ Another significant feature of the passage from *Hekhalot Zutarti* is that the Youth’s entrance into God’s presence is understood here liturgically, i.e., as the entrance into the heavenly tabernacle which, according to other traditions, is located beneath the Throne of Glory.

Another text preserved in the Cairo Genizah also depicts the Youth as emerging from his sacerdotal place in the immediate Presence of the Deity:

Now, see the youth, who is going forth to meet you from behind the throne of glory.
Do not bow down to him, because his crown is like the crown of his King And the robe (קלון) on him is like the robe (כחלוק) of his king....¹⁶⁶

the Omnipresent One, which is spread before the Holy One, blessed be he, and on which are printed all the generations of the world and all their deeds, whether done or to be done, till the last generation....” Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 296. On the symbolism of the *Pargod*, see: Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature*, 169, n. 99; Morray-Jones, *A Transparent Illusion*, 164ff.

¹⁶⁰ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 240 and 242.

¹⁶¹ The reference to the veil indicates that the function of the Prince of the Presence has a composite nature and sometimes is linked with the function of the priest who must enter the divine Presence behind the curtain.

¹⁶² Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 296, note a.

¹⁶³ *Synopse*, §385.

¹⁶⁴ On this motif of dangerous encounters with the Divine in Hekhalot literature, see Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot*, 136–139; Andrea B. Lieber, “Where is Sacrifice in the Heavenly Temple? Reflections on the Role of Violence in Hekhalot Traditions,” *SBLSP* 37 (1998) 432–446.

¹⁶⁵ *Synopse*, §§101, 159, 183, 184, 189.

¹⁶⁶ Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, 2b:13–14.

It is intriguing that these two texts which describe the office of the *sar happanim* link the servant(s) of the Face with the title “Youth”¹⁶⁷ (Heb. נער), which some scholars suggest can be rendered in some contexts as a “servant.”¹⁶⁸

Besides apparent liturgical affiliations, the intimate proximity to the King and access to his Presence behind the closed Curtain presuppose the duty of the keeper of secrets, since the servant would necessarily have direct access to the ultimate mysteries of the Deity. In this light, scholars point to proficiency in the divine secrets as one of the important features of the *sar happanim* office. Odeberg observes that “the framework of the book (*3 Enoch*) thus represents Metatron as the angel who has access to the divine Presence, the ‘Face’ of the Godhead (and in this sense the appellation *sar happanim*), hence possesses knowledge of the divine secrets and decrees.”¹⁶⁹ This association with esoteric knowledge points to the composite nature of this role of Metatron and its close affinity with his previously investigated office as an expert in divine secrets.

A word must be said about the imagery of the divine Face¹⁷⁰ which represents an essential element of the title. Although the authors of the early booklets of *1 Enoch* know the theophanic language of the Face, they nevertheless show no interest in the extensive appropriation of this concept to Enoch’s visions.¹⁷¹ Yet, in *2 Enoch* and in the later Hekhalot materials, the imagery of the divine Face looms large. It sometimes is understood as the teleological point of visionaries’ aspirations.¹⁷² It is also observable that in some of these materials, Metatron and other servants of the Face are

¹⁶⁷ Several other Metatron passages attest to the same tradition. See, for example, MS. Leningrad Antonin 186 (=G19) which combines the title “Youth” with Metatron’s office of the Prince of the Presence: “I adjure you Metatron, Prince of the Presence, I pronounce upon you Metatron, Prince of the Presence, I claim upon you Metatron, Angel of the Presence, and I seal upon you Metatron, Prince of the Presence... and the Youth, he calls him [] the strong, magnificent and awesome, [names]....” Schwartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 119–120; Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente*, 163.

¹⁶⁸ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 259, note t.

¹⁶⁹ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.79.

¹⁷⁰ On the origins of the imagery of the divine Face, see S. M. Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him: Exegesis and the Naming of Angels in Ancient Judaism* (TSAJ 36; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1993) 105ff.

¹⁷¹ *1 Enoch* 89:29–31.

¹⁷² Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 17–20.

directly identified with the Face of the Deity and are even labeled as the hypostatic face of God.¹⁷³

Finally, several words must be said about the possible background of the concept of the servant(s) of the divine Presence found in biblical and pseudepigraphic materials.¹⁷⁴ Philip Alexander has suggested that the title might have its background in Isa 63:9, where one can find the following passage: “in all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them.” The imagery of angels of the Presence was also widespread in pseudepigraphic writings, specifically in the early Enochic pseudepigrapha, where the imagery, however, was never¹⁷⁵ directly identified with the seventh antediluvian patriarch.¹⁷⁶ Although the tablet of Nineveh describes Enmeduranki as the one who sat in the presence (*ma-har*) of the deities, and the presence or the “Face” of God is mentioned in the *Book of the Watchers*¹⁷⁷ and the Hebrew text of *Sirach* 49:14,¹⁷⁸ neither Enmeduranki’s lore nor early Enochic traditions refer to the seventh antediluvian hero as the servant of the Face.¹⁷⁹ *1 Enoch* 40:9, however,

¹⁷³ Nathaniel Deutsch argues that the title *sar happanim* is better understood as the “prince who is the face [of God].” In his opinion, at least one Merkabah passage [§§396–397] explicitly identifies Metatron as the hypostatic face of God: “Moses said to the Lord of all the worlds: ‘If your face does not go [with us], do not bring me up from here.’ [Exod 33:15] The Lord of all the worlds warned Moses that he should beware of that face of his. So it is written, ‘Beware of his face.’ [Exod 23:21] This is he who is written with the one letter by which heaven and earth were created, and was sealed with the seal of ‘I am that I am’ [Exod 3:14] ... This is the prince who is called Yofiel Yah-dariel ... he is called Metatron” [§§396–397]. Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate*, 43.

¹⁷⁴ On the origin of the *sar happanim* imagery, see P. Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen: Untersuchungen zur rabbinischen Engelvorstellung* (SJ 8; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975) 20–21.

¹⁷⁵ Except *2 Enoch*.

¹⁷⁶ Scholars suggest that the appellation was originally connected not with Enoch but with Michael. Jonas Greenfield suggests that “the title *sar ha-panim* ‘prince of the countenance’ was originally shared by Michael with three other archangels (Ethiopic *Enoch* 40.9–10), but it would seem that it soon became his [Michael] alone; in time, however, the title became exclusively Metatron’s (or that of the other angels, such as Surya, who replaced Metatron in certain texts).” Greenfield, “Prolegomenon,” xxxi.

¹⁷⁷ *1 Enoch* 14:21: “And no angel could enter, and at the appearance of the face (*gaṣṣ*) of him who is honored and praised no (creature of) flesh could look.” Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, 2.99.

¹⁷⁸ In Hebrew *Sirach* 49:14, Enoch’s ascent is described as נלקח פניו, the expression which Christopher Rowland renders as “taken into the divine presence.” C. Rowland, “Enoch,” in: *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (eds. K. van der Toorn et al; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 302.

¹⁷⁹ *2 Enoch*, where the patriarch is explicitly identified with the Face and is also labeled as the one who will stand before the Face forever, represents a unique case in the early Enochic materials and will be discussed later.

mentions the four “Faces”¹⁸⁰ or “Presences” of Ezek 1:6, identifying them with the four principal angels: Michael, Phanuel,¹⁸¹ Raphael, and Gabriel.¹⁸²

The imagery of the angel of the Presence is also influential in the *Book of Jubilees* where this angel does not have a specific name.¹⁸³ He is depicted there as a special agent of God who dictates the contents of the heavenly tablets to Moses.¹⁸⁴ Several expressions found in the Qumran materials also deal with the imagery of the servants of the divine Presence. Among these materials the fragments of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* merit special attention as these texts contain concepts and imagery closely related to the later Hekhalot developments. James VanderKam notices that, although the term מלאכי הפנים itself does not occur in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, similar expressions, such as משרתי פנים and מלך קודש, can be found in 4Q400.¹⁸⁵

At the conclusion of this analysis of the *sar happanim* imagery, one important methodological issue pertaining to Metatron’s appellations must be addressed. It has been noticed that the Merkabah tradition applies the title the Prince of the Presence not only to Metatron but also to other angelic beings including Suryah and others. It is not uncommon that in the Hekhalot writings other important titles of Metatron, such as the Prince of the World, the Youth and others, are used regularly in the descriptions of other angels. This situation, however, can be partially explained by the tradition

¹⁸⁰ Peter Schäfer notes that, along with the labeling of the four principal angels as “the four faces,” the author of the *Book of the Similitudes* also replaces Uriel with Phanuel. Schäfer then cautiously suggests that the replacement of Uriel with Phanuel might be a hint that all four angels are in fact the angels of the Face. P. Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen: Untersuchungen zur rabbinischen Engelvorbildung* (SJ, 8; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975) 21.

¹⁸¹ Although the early Enochic materials associated with *I Enoch* do mention an angel named Phanuel (see, for example, *I Enoch* 40:9), the name which most likely can be rendered as the Face of God, this celestial being is never identified in this composition with Enoch. On the connection between Uriel/Sariel/Phanuel and the angel Suriya, who is designated in *Hekhalot Rabbati* as the Prince of the Countenance, see: Greenfield, “Prolegomenon,” xxxiv–xxxv.

¹⁸² Scholem traces the *sar happanim* imagery to the Enochic angelological prototypes. He observes that “the angelology of apocalyptic literature mentions a group of angels who behold the face of their king and are called ‘princes of countenance’ (Ethiopic Book of Enoch, ch. 40). Once Metatron’s personality takes a more definite form in the literature, he is referred to simply as ‘the Prince of the Countenance,’” Scholem, “Metatron,” *EJ*, 11.1443.

¹⁸³ VanderKam, “The Angel of the Presence in the Book of Jubilees,” 378–393.

¹⁸⁴ This angel is introduced in *Jub* 1:27, where the Ethiopic expression *mal’aka gašš* means literally “the angel of the face.” J. C. VanderKam, “The Angel of the Presence in the Book of Jubilees,” *DSD* 7 (2000) 382. It is intriguing that in some Merkabah materials Metatron is named as both the Prince of the Face and the Angel of the Face. See, for example, Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente*, G–12, fol. 1a, lines 15–18.

¹⁸⁵ VanderKam, “The Angel of the Presence in the Book of Jubilees,” 384.

according to which this exalted angel is known under other names,¹⁸⁶ whose number ranges from eight in *Hekhalot Rabbati* to ninety-two in the *Alphabet of Rabbi Akiba*.¹⁸⁷ Although this evidence is helpful in recognizing some angelic names, some attributions of Metatron's titles to angelic beings with different names cannot be explained simply by reference to his multiple names, since the angelic agents who bear these titles are sometimes clearly differentiated from Metatron or act along with him in these offices. This situation might point to the polemical context of the Metatron tradition and indicates that this lore not only originated from the polemical pool of the early mediatorial traditions but, even in the later stages of its development, did not abandon this polemical essence, being continuously reshaped by new challenges which other traditions about exalted angelic agents presented to Metatron's myth.

Some scholars observe that assigning Metatron's title to other angelic beings might point to the existence of other parallel developments in which these titles do not belong to Metatron, but to other exalted figures.¹⁸⁸ An important distinction, therefore, must be made between the internal polemical character of the Metatron tradition and the polemical nature of the broader context surrounding this tradition in the Merkabah texts. In contrast to the inner circle of competition between Yahoel, Michael, and Enoch for their primacy in the shaping of the various titles and offices of Metatron, these external developments manifest the outer circle of this polemic when the constructed titles are not completely retained within the Metatron imagery, but continue to be used by the previous owners of these sobriquets. As an illustration, one can point to the prominent *sar happanim* of the Hekhalot literature, the angel Suryah, in whom one can easily recognize the familiar image of Sariel/Uriel/Phanuel, the angel of the Presence from *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*. Such developments indicate that some of the helpers involved in the shaping of Metatron's identity later become the competitors of this exalted angel.

Metatron as the Prince of the World

Philip Alexander notes that in *Synopse* §74,¹⁸⁹ the duties of the Prince of the World appear to be attached to Enoch-Metatron's figure.¹⁹⁰ This text

¹⁸⁶ *Synopse* §4: "I [Metatron] have seventy names, corresponding to the seventy nations of the world ... however, my King calls me 'Youth.'" Alexander, "3 Enoch," 257.

¹⁸⁷ On the names of Metatron, see Dan, "Seventy Names of Metatron," 1.229–34; Cohen, *Liturgy and Theurgy*, 128.

¹⁸⁸ See James Davila's research on the Youth imagery in the Hekhalot literature.

¹⁸⁹ *3 Enoch* 48C:9–10.

¹⁹⁰ Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God," 105, n. 24.

informs the reader that God placed under Metatron's hand every authority that rules over the world:¹⁹¹

I gave seventy princes into his hand, to issue to them my commandments in every language; to abase the arrogant to the earth at his word; to elevate the humble to the height at the utterance of his lips; to smite kings at his command; to subdue rulers and presumptuous men at his bidding; to remove kings from their kingdoms, and to exalt rulers over their dominions....¹⁹²

In examining the imagery of the Prince of the World in *3 Enoch*, one must maintain a careful distinction between the depictions of the various activities pertaining to this office and the references to the appellation itself. Thus, although Enoch-Metatron seems to possess some definite qualities of the Prince of the World in *3 Enoch*, it appears that the sobriquet the Prince of the World is not directly associated¹⁹³ with Enoch-Metatron in this text.¹⁹⁴ Metatron's duties in *Synopse* §4, §13, and §74, however, are very similar¹⁹⁵ to those found in the passages which deal with the title the Prince of the World in *Synopse* §47 and §56.

Thus, *Synopse* §47 refers to the seventy-two princes of the kingdoms in the world when it mentions the Prince of the World:

Whenever the Great Law Court sits in the height of the heaven 'Arabot, only the great princes who are called YHWH by the name of the Holy One, blessed be he, are permitted to speak. How many princes are there? There are 72 princes of kingdoms in the world, not counting the Prince of the World (שַׁר הָעוֹלָם), who speaks in favor of the world before the Holy One, blessed be he, every day at the hour when the book is opened in which every deed in the world is recorded, as it is written, "A court was held, and the books were opened."¹⁹⁶

Alexander argues that if one takes this passage in conjunction with *Synopse* §13 (*3 Enoch* 10:3), which depicts Metatron's authority below the eight

¹⁹¹ The term "world" (עוֹלָם) in the angelic title appears to signify the entire creation. Peter Schäfer observes that in rabbinic literature the Prince of the World is understood as an angel set over the whole creation. His duties include praying together with the earth for the coming of the Messiah and praising God's creative work. P. Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen: Untersuchungen zur rabbinischen Engelvorbildung* (SJ 8; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975) 55.

¹⁹² Alexander, "3 Enoch," 312.

¹⁹³ Alexander points to the fact that the later texts (Tosepht to Yeb. 16b and to Hul. 60a) equate Metatron explicitly with this title. Alexander, "3 Enoch," 243. See also: *b. Sanh.* 94a.

¹⁹⁴ Alexander, "3 Enoch," 243.

¹⁹⁵ Igor Tantlevskij observes that in *3 Enoch* 8, Enoch-Metatron has qualities by which, according to *b. Hag.* 12a and *Avot de Rabbi Nathan* A 27:43, the world was created and is sustained. I. R. Tantlevskij, *Knigi Enoha* (Moscow/Jerusalem: Gesharim, 2000) 185 [in Russian].

¹⁹⁶ *3 Enoch* 30. Alexander, "3 Enoch," 285. Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 24–25.

great princes of YHWH but above all other princes, it would appear that Metatron is the Prince of the World.

Another usage of the title found in *Synopse* §56 (*3 Enoch* 38) also does not bring this appellation in direct connection with the name Metatron. The passage informs us that when the ministering angels utter the heavenly *Qedushah*, their mighty sound produces a sort of earthquake in the celestial realm; this earthquake alarms the constellations and stars. The Prince of the World then comes forward and calms down the celestial bodies, explaining to them the source of the commotion:

“Stay at rest in your places; be not afraid because the ministering angels recite the song before the Holy One, blessed be he,” as it is written, “When all the stars of the morning were singing with joy, and all the Sons of God in chorus were chanting praise.”¹⁹⁷

While this narrative does not mention Metatron, it alludes to the activities of this angel who is often depicted in the Hekhalot materials as the pacifier and the protector of the celestial beings during the performance of the heavenly liturgy.

Although *3 Enoch* for some reason hesitates to connect the name Metatron with the appellation of the Prince of the World, several other rabbinic and Hekhalot passages bring this title in direct connection with this name and with Metatron’s other sobriquets. Thus, the earliest Jewish reference to the Youth in the rabbinic literature (*b. Yebam.* 16b) links this title with the appellation the Prince of the World. While Metatron is not mentioned in this text, the conjunction of the two familiar designations makes it plausible. Metatron, the Youth and the Prince of the World are also identified with each other in the *Synopse* §959.¹⁹⁸

The most important early evidence of Metatron’s role as the Prince of the World includes the testimony found in the Aramaic incantation bowls.¹⁹⁹ One bowl appears to represent the oldest source which clearly identifies Metatron as the Prince of the World. On this bowl Metatron is designated as אַיִסְרָא רַבָּה דְכָלִּיָּהּ עַלְמָא – “the great prince of the entire world.”²⁰⁰

In the conclusion of this section, some suggestions pertaining to the possible prototypes of the title must be mentioned. While the discussion will demonstrate that the aforementioned imagery in the Enochic materials was

¹⁹⁷ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 290.

¹⁹⁸ „...והנער הזה מטטרון שר הפנים שנכתב שר עולם הגדול....” Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 296.

¹⁹⁹ Scholars observe that although “many of these bowls cannot be dated with certainty ... those from Nippur (among which are some of our most informative texts on Metatron) were found in stratified deposits and have been dated archeologically to the seventh century A.D. at the very latest.” Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 228.

²⁰⁰ The text on the bowl is published by C. Gordon, “Aramaic and Mandaic Magical Bowls,” *Archiv Orientalni* 9 (1937) 84–95, esp. 94.

developed under the influence of the Adamic tradition, several scholars point to the possible formative value of the lore about the archangel Michael. Both Scholem and Alexander note that in some rabbinic writings, Michael was often identified as the Prince of the World (*Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 27; *Yalqut Shimoni* Gen 132).²⁰¹ It is possible that the traditions about Michael and Metatron coexisted in the rabbinic literature, mutually enriching each other. Scholem remarks that in *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 27, Michael is given the title of שרן של עולם; yet in a source from the same period, Metatron was called the “Great Prince of the Whole World.”²⁰²

Metatron as Sar Torah

It has already been observed that *Sefer Hekhalot* describes Enoch-Metatron as the expert in divine wisdom. In *Synopse* §11, Metatron conveys to R. Ishmael that God bestowed upon him “wisdom heaped upon wisdom, understanding upon understanding, prudence upon prudence, knowledge upon knowledge, mercy upon mercy, Torah upon Torah....”²⁰³ The angel underscores the exclusivity of his initiation, stressing the fact that he was honored and adorned with all these qualities “more than all the denizens of the heights.”²⁰⁴ In *Synopse* §13, God himself steps forward to confirm Metatron’s superiority in wisdom when he commands the angelic hosts to obey Metatron’s commands on the grounds that this exalted angel was instructed in “the wisdom of those above and of those below, the wisdom of this world and of the world to come.”²⁰⁵

These lofty qualifications, which include references to human and divine wisdom, recall Enoch’s role as the sage and one of his titles, “wisest of all men,” explored earlier in this study.²⁰⁶ As in these early Enochic designations, the Merkabah text appears to depict Enoch-Metatron not simply as an ordinary wise man, that is, one among others, but as the sage *par excellence*. Such a role is intimated in the account found in *Synopse* §80 (*3 Enoch* 48D:10), where Metatron stands out as the first character in the noble line of transmission of special knowledge, the one on whom the future generations of the sages are ultimately dependent:

²⁰¹ Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 44; Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 243.

²⁰² Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 48.

²⁰³ *3 Enoch* 8:2. Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 263.

²⁰⁴ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 263.

²⁰⁵ *3 Enoch* 10:5. Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 264.

²⁰⁶ Alexander observes that “the pseudepigraphic Enoch has many similarities to the Enoch-Metatron of *3 Enoch*: he is a wise man and a revealer of heavenly wisdom.” Alexander, “The Historical Settings of the Hebrew Book of Enoch,” 159.

Metatron brought it [Torah] out from my storehouses and committed it to Moses, and Moses to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, the Prophets to the Men of the Great Synagogue, the Men of the Great Synagogue to Ezra the Scribe, Ezra the Scribe to Hillel the Elder, Hillel the Elder to R. Abbahu, R. Abbahu to R. Zira, R. Zira to the Men of Faith, and the Men of Faith to the Faithful....²⁰⁷

Scholars have previously noted²⁰⁸ that this succession of the mystical tradition recalls the chain of transmission of the oral law preserved in the *Sayings of the Fathers*.²⁰⁹ Although the early traditions about Enoch's wisdom as the sign for all generations are discernible in Metatron's primal position, the Merkabah tradition obviously cannot be satisfied with the depiction of its hero simply as the universal sage.

Despite the temptation to see in Metatron's activities solely the reference to his role of sage²¹⁰ *par excellence*, known from the previous Enochic or Mesopotamian traditions,²¹¹ the allusion to the chain of transmission of the oral Torah hints that one may be dealing here with another particular function of this primary angel, his role in disseminating a very special wisdom, the wisdom of the Torah.²¹² Scholars have previously noted that the passages from *Synopse* §75²¹³ and *Synopse* §78–80²¹⁴ appear to depict Enoch-Metatron in his role as the Prince of Torah, *שר התורה*.²¹⁵ These passages specifically assign to the hero the title and the duties associated with this role. The narratives also indicate that the author of *Sefer Hekhalot* is cognizant of two main functions of the Prince of Torah, attested also in other rabbinic and Hekhalot materials: the function of the revealer of Torah to visionaries, including Moses, and the function of the celestial teacher of

²⁰⁷ Alexander, "3 Enoch," 315; *Synopse* §80. The reference to the chain of tradition is repeated several times in the Hekhalot literature. For detailed analysis of this evidence see Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 178ff.

²⁰⁸ Alexander, "3 Enoch," 315, note v.

²⁰⁹ *m. Avot* 1:1: "Moses received the Law from Sinai and committed it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the Prophets; and the Prophets committed it to the men of the Great Synagogue." H. Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 446.

²¹⁰ Steven Fraade's research provides a useful introduction to the imagery of the rabbinic sage using examples from *m. Avot* 1:1. S. D. Fraade, "The Early Rabbinic Sage," in: *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (eds. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 417–436.

²¹¹ In the Enmeduranki and Enochic traditions, the seventh antediluvian hero is depicted as a primeval sage who starts the line of esoteric transmission continued by the generations of the earthly sages.

²¹² On the Prince of Torah traditions in the Hekhalot literature, see Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 53–135.

²¹³ *3 Enoch* 48C:12.

²¹⁴ *3 Enoch* 48D:6–10.

²¹⁵ Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God," 105, footnote 24.

the Law to deceased children.²¹⁶ In various Hekhalot writings, the Prince of Torah, who is often not identified with Metatron, acts as the helper to visionaries by assisting them in understanding the Torah and prevents the chosen ones from forgetting this crucial knowledge.²¹⁷ One of these Sar Torah traditions deals with the story of Rabbi Ishmael who experienced many problems in mastering the Torah in his youth. The knowledge of the Torah did not stay in him, and a passage that he read and memorized one day was completely forgotten the next day. According to the story this pitiful situation was finally resolved when his teacher Rabbi Nehuniah revealed to R. Ishmael the Prince of the Torah. This archetypal Sar Torah narrative is repeated in varying forms in several Hekhalot writings, including *Merkavah Rabbah* and *Ma'aseh Merkavah*.²¹⁸

Synopse §75²¹⁹ refers to another duty of the Sar Torah's office when it depicts Enoch-Metatron as the one who instructs deceased children in the wisdom of the written and oral Torah. This duty of Metatron is also not forgotten in the rabbinic lore including passages from *b. Avod. Zar.* 3b, *Num. R.* 12:15, and other rabbinic writings.

It should be noted that, as with Metatron's other titles, such as the Youth and the Prince of the Divine Face, the office of the Prince of Torah does not belong exclusively to Metatron, but is often shared with other angelic beings. The *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to Deuteronomy 34:6 gives a list of the Princes of Wisdom (a.k.a. Princes of Torah) which includes, besides Metatron, also Yofiel, Uri'el, and Yepipyah. The Hekhalot materials too do not hesitate to designate Yofiel, Suriel, and other angels as the Princes of Torah.²²⁰ Some scholars suggest that "Yofiel" might represent here one of Metatron's names; it has already been mentioned, however, that the tradition of Metatron's various names is not always useful in explaining the attributions of Metatron's titles to other angelic characters.²²¹ As with other titles of Metatron, there is a possibility that some Sar Torah traditions originated and existed independently of the Metatron tradition.²²²

²¹⁶ In the Hekhalot tradition the role of Metatron as Sar Torah looms large. In these materials he is sometimes addressed with specific adjurations as Sar Torah. On Metatron's adjurations in the Merkavah writings, see: R. M. Lesses, *Ritual Practices to Gain Power*, 63ff.

²¹⁷ Accordingly, in *Synopse* §77 Yepipyah is named the Prince of Torah.

²¹⁸ Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 62ff.

²¹⁹ 3 *Enoch* 48C:12.

²²⁰ *Synopse* §313; "I said to him: The Prince of the Torah (שרה של תורה), what is his name? And he said to me: Yofiel is his name." See also *Synopse* §560: "The name of the Prince of the Torah (D436: שר התורה) (M22: שר של תורה) is Yofiel." Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 139, 213.

²²¹ Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 182.

²²² Michael Swartz's research underscores the importance of Metatron's figure in the search for the early date and provenance of the Sar Torah traditions. He observes that "the

Metatron as the Youth

The information about Metatron's title "Youth" is widely disseminated in the rabbinic and Hekhalot materials.²²³ Despite the extensive information about the title provided by other Hekhalot evidence, *3 Enoch* appears to contain a substantial bulk of the unique knowledge pertaining to this sobriquet of Metatron. The appellation occurs several times in the text and becomes a locus of extensive theological deliberation. It is significant for this research that the authors of *Sefer Hekhalot* construe the context and even the origin of the title on the basis of the motifs associated with the Enochic traditions.

The title is first introduced in *Synopse* §3 (*3 Enoch* 2:2) in the context of the angelic opposition to the ascension of R. Ishmael. There the designation "Youth" in relation to Enoch-Metatron first comes from the mouth of the angelic hosts who challenge the exalted angel on the subject of the legitimacy of his protégé, Rabbi Ishmael, "the one born of woman," to enter God's presence and behold the Chariot:

Then the eagles of the chariot, the flaming ophanim and the cherubim of devouring fire, asked Metatron, "Youth (נען), why have you allowed one born of woman to come in and behold the chariot? From what nation is he? From what tribe? What is his character?" Metatron replied, "He is of the nation of Israel, whom the Holy One, blessed be he, chose from the seventy nations to be his people. He is of the tribe of Levi, which presents the offering to his name. He is of the family of Aaron, whom the Holy One, blessed be he, chose to minister in his presence and on whose head he himself placed the priestly crown on Sinai." At once they began to say, "This

earliest explicit indications of the Sar-Torah phenomenon, then, date from the tenth century. However, there are other elements of the phenomenon that have earlier origins. The archangel figure of Metatron appears in the Talmud and in the seventh-century Babylonian incantation bowls, although not as the Sar-Torah." Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 213.

²²³ According to the current consensus, the earliest rabbinic reference to the title "Youth" is *b. Yeb.* 16b which also depicts him as the Prince of the World. Metatron is not mentioned, but the conjunction makes it plausible. Metatron, the Youth, and the Prince of the World are identified with each other in *Synopse* §959. Among premishnaic Jewish texts, two documents must be mentioned. First, Charles Mopsik draws attention to the passage in *Zech* 2 in which an angel, described as a measurer responsible for measuring Jerusalem, is also designated in *Zech* 2:4 as Youth (נען). Mopsik points to the fact that the Merkabah tradition, similar to *Zech* 2, also often describes Metatron both as the Youth and the Measurer. C. Mopsik, *Le Livre hébreu d'Hénoch ou Livre des palais* (Paris: Verdier, 1989) 48–49. Second, the *Wisdom of Solomon* 4:10–16 might refer to Enoch as the Youth. The text reads: "There were some who pleased God and were loved by him, and while living among sinners were taken up....and youth that is quickly perfected will condemn the prolonged old age of the unrighteous." On the title "Youth" in Hekhalot literature, see Davila, "Melchizedek, the 'Youth,' and Jesus," 254ff, Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot*, 491–4.

one is certainly worthy to behold the chariot, as it is written, happy is the nation of whom this is true, happy is the nation whose God is the Lord.”²²⁴

The story from *Synopse* §3, which revolves around the theme of the humanity of the visionary, alludes to Enoch’s situation, underscored in *Sefer Hekhalot* by the parallel story of the angelic opposition to the seventh antediluvian patriarch.²²⁵ According to *Synopse* §6 (*3 Enoch* 4:5–10), he encountered a similar challenge from the three ministering angels ‘Uzzah, ‘Azzah, and ‘Aza’el at the time of his ascension in the generation of the Flood:

And the Holy One, blessed be he, appointed me (Enoch) in the height as a prince and a ruler among the ministering angels. Then three of ministering angels, ‘Uzzah, ‘Azzah, and ‘Aza’el, came and laid charges against me in the heavenly height. They said before the Holy One, blessed be he, “Lord of the Universe, did not the primeval ones give you good advice when they said, do not create man!” The Holy One, blessed be he, replied, “I have made and I will sustain him; I will carry and I will deliver him.” When they saw me they said before him, “Lord of the Universe, what right has this one to ascend to the height of heights? Is he not descended from those who perished in the waters of the Flood? What right has he to be in heaven?” Again the Holy One, blessed be he, replied and said to them, “What right have you to interrupt me? I have chosen this one in preference to all of you, to be a prince and a ruler over you in the heavenly heights.” At once they all arose and went to meet me and prostrated themselves before me, saying, “Happy are you, and happy your parents, because your Creator has favored you.” Because I am young in their company and a mere youth among them in days and months and years – therefore they call me “Youth” (נער).²²⁶

In this passage, as in the account found in *Synopse* §3, the angelic opposition is provoked by the human origin of the visionary who attempts to enter the celestial realm, violating the boundaries separating human and angelic regions. Both stories also have an identical structure, since in both of them the angels who initially opposed the visionary eventually were persuaded and pacified by the argumentation of the seer’s patrons (God and Metatron), and are finally obliged to deliver a similar address praising the social or physical (nation/parents) pedigree of the invader.

It is significant that *Synopse* §6 contains a reference to the Adamic tradition by recalling the protoplast’s situation. This motif might reflect the Adamic provenance of the stories from *Synopse* §3 and §6 and their possible connection with the tradition about the veneration of Adam by some angels and the refusal of such obeisance by others, a tradition which was

²²⁴ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 257; Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 4–5.

²²⁵ On the Adamic motif of angelic opposition and its appropriation in early Enochic materials, including *2 Enoch*, see M. E. Stone, “The Fall of Satan and Adam’s Penance: Three Notes on the *Books of Adam and Eve*,” *JTS* 44 (1993) 143–156.

²²⁶ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 258–9; Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 6–7.

widespread in early Adamic literature. This connection will be explored in detail later in this investigation.

The most important aspect of the presentation for this investigation of the title “Youth” in *Sefer Hekhalot* is that this text explicates the provenance of the title on the basis of Metatron’s human origins and his connection with the figure of the seventh antediluvian patriarch. David Halperin observes that in *Sefer Hekhalot* Enoch-Metatron is portrayed among the inhabitants of heaven as a sort of a Johnny-come-lately who despite his late arrival manages to become the greatest in their midst.²²⁷ Metatron’s answer to R. Ishmael’s question about the designation “Youth” bears the form of an etymological explanation²²⁸ of the puzzling title: “Because I am young in their company and a mere youth among them in days and months and years – therefore they call me ‘Youth’ (נער).”²²⁹

This Enochic explanation might not be a later rabbinic invention but a tradition stemming from the earlier, possibly premishnaic, context since *Synopse* §3 and §6 appear to be connected through the early Adamic-Enochic theme of angelic opposition. In this regard, *Synopse* §6 seems to stay closer to the original Adamic-Enochic prototype and reflects the underlying story more fully because, in addition to the theme of the angelic opposition, it also refers to the motif of the angelic veneration of humanity.

Besides the aforementioned motifs, *Sefer Hekhalot* brings to light another unique tradition pertaining to the appellation “Youth.” According to 3 *Enoch* 3, this title becomes the Lord’s preferred choice when he desires to invoke his servant Metatron. In *Synopse* §4, in response to R. Ishmael’s query about his name, the angel answers: “I have seventy names, corresponding to the seventy nations of the world, and all of them are based on the name of the King of kings of kings, however, my king calls me

²²⁷ Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 421.

²²⁸ Gershom Scholem and other scholars reject this etymology of the “Youth” as a secondary development, arguing that *na‘ar* must be properly translated as “servant” in view of Metatron’s function as a servant in the celestial tabernacle and his designation as *shammasha rehima*, the “beloved servant,” in the Aramaic text. David Halperin, however, suggests that the rejection of the interpretation of *na‘ar* as the “Youth” is not “wholly satisfying.” He draws attention to the fact that if “the people who coined this term [*na‘ar*] wanted to convey that Metatron was a servant, why did they not pick one of the familiar Hebrew words (like *‘ebed* or *mesharet*) that would say this unambiguously? Why did they use *na‘ar*; which, though it can indeed mean ‘servant,’ is so much more commonly used for ‘youth’ that it could hardly avoid conveying this meaning to anyone who heard it?” Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 422. In connection with Halperin’s plausible comment it should be noted that the Merkabah lore also operates with the title עבד, unambiguously identifying Metatron as God’s “servant.” This title, among other places, can be found in *Synopse* §13 (3 *Enoch* 10:3), *Synopse* §72 (3 *Enoch* 48C:1), and *Synopse* §76 (3 *Enoch* 48D:1).

²²⁹ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 258–9.

‘Youth’ (נער).”²³⁰ This passage stresses the intermediary position of Metatron; he is recognized by the majority of the creatures through his seventy names, but is known to the Deity through his appellation “Youth.” This narrative also implicitly points to Metatron’s title the Prince of the World through the reference to his seventy names which correspond to the seventy nations of the world.²³¹ This combination recalls the previously mentioned passages from *b. Yeb. 16b* and the *Synopse* §959, where one can find similar constellations.

Finally, I must discuss the possible provenance of the title “Youth.” Recent publications of James Davila have demonstrated that the imagery of the “Youth” was widespread in the Hekhalot traditions, where it often was associated with other angelic figures other than Metatron.²³² Davila suggests that some Hekhalot imagery of the Youth might have its background in the Melchisedek tradition(s). A possible explanation for the attachment of the title “Youth” to the varied subjects in the Merkabah lore can be found in the ubiquity of the Youth imagery; this imagery appears to have been widespread in Second Temple Judaism(s) and was applied in various texts and traditions to Melchisedek, Adam, Enoch, and other exalted figures. It is also possible that the Youth imagery made its way into the later Merkabah accounts through several independent early trajectories connected with the aforementioned mediatorial traditions. Later in the investigation I will further explore the Adamic and Enochic background of the Youth imagery in *Sefer Hekhalot*. The emphasis on these two formative traditions, of course, does not exclude that other attestations of the title “Youth” in the Hekhalot writings have a different provenance based on their connection with Melchisedek, Yahoel, and other exalted figures.

Metatron as the Deity: Lesser YHWH

The previous investigation has demonstrated that in the Mesopotamian and Enochic traditions, the seventh antediluvian hero often appears in the role of

²³⁰ 3 *Enoch* 3:2. Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 257; Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 4–5.

²³¹ This connection might also signify that the Youth and the Prince of the World appear to be interconnected by a rhetoric of power: Metatron is called the Youth by God because he is subordinate to God and he is called the Prince of the World by others, including the seventy Princes of the World, because they are subordinate to him.

²³² James Davila specifies two important pieces of evidence, first, a fragment from the Cairo Genizah, T.-S. K 21.95.C, where the title “Youth” is attached to the *nomen barbarum* ZHWBDYH and second, the tradition preserved in *Siddur Rabbah*, a text associate with the *Shi‘ur Qomah* materials, where the Youth is also not associated with Metatron, since Metatron in this text is the one who tells a visionary about the angel named “Youth.” Davila, “Melchizedek, the ‘Youth,’ and Jesus,” 254–259.

the diviner whose functions are to discern the will of the Deity and make it known to humans. In *Sefer Hekhalot*, however, when Enoch is elevated above the angelic world and brought into the immediate presence of the Deity, the traditional divinatory techniques have become unnecessary since the hero himself is now situated not outside but inside the divine realm and becomes a kind of a second, junior deity, the lesser manifestation of God's name.

As noted in the previous discussion, the significance of Metatron's figure among the angelic hosts can be briefly and accurately summed up in his title יְהוָה הַקָּטָן, the Lesser YHWH,²³³ which occurs with abbreviations several times in *3 Enoch*, including passages found in *Synopse* §15, §73, and §76. In *Synopse* §15, Metatron reports to R. Ishmael that the Deity proclaimed him the junior manifestation of his name in front of all the angelic hosts: "the Holy One, blessed be he, fashioned for me a majestic robe...and he called me, 'The Lesser YHWH' (יְהוָה הַקָּטָן) in the presence of his whole household in the height, as it is written, 'My name is in him.'"²³⁴

As with Metatron's other offices, this designation as the lesser Tetragrammaton is closely connected with the angel's duties and roles in the immediate presence of the Lord. Scholars have thus previously noted that the name the Lesser YHWH, attested in *3 Enoch* (*Synopse* §15, §73, and §76) is used "as indicative of Metatron's character of representative, *vicarius*, of the Godhead; it expresses a sublimation of his vice-regency²³⁵ into a second manifestation²³⁶ of the Deity in the name²³⁷ YHWH."²³⁸

²³³ The title can be found in several sources. Ya'qub al-Qirqisani mentions it in connection with the Talmud: "This is Metatron, who is the lesser YHWH."

²³⁴ Alexander, "3 Enoch," 265. The tradition found in *Synopse* §15 recalls the one found in *b. Sanh.* 38b.

²³⁵ Alan Segal remarks that "in the Hebrew Book of Enoch, Metatron is set on a throne alongside God and appointed above angels and powers to function as God's *vizir* and plenipotentiary." Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven*, 63. In a similar vein, Philip Alexander observes that "the Merkabah texts represent God and his angels under the image of an emperor and his court. God has his heavenly palace, his throne, and, in Metatron, his grand vizier." Alexander, "3 Enoch," 241.

²³⁶ Nathaniel Deutsch has noted that "along with his roles as heavenly high priest and angelified human being, Metatron was sometimes portrayed as a kind of second – albeit junior – deity." Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate*, 35.

²³⁷ Jarl Fossum suggests that the references to the seventy names of Metatron might indirectly point to this exalted angel as the bearer of the "ultimate" Name of God, since these seventy names might just reflect God's main Name. In this respect, Fossum points to *Synopse* §4 (*3 Enoch* 3:2), where Metatron tells R. Ishmael that his seventy names "are based on the name of the King of kings of kings," and to *Synopse* §78 (*3 Enoch* 48D:5) which informs that "these seventy names are a reflection of the Explicit Name upon the Merkabah which is engraved upon the Throne of Glory." Fossum argues that these seventy names originally belonged to God himself and only later were transferred to Metatron. Fossum, *The Angel of the Lord*, 298.

In his remarks on Metatron's activities as God's vice-regent, Christopher Morray-Jones points to the composite nature of this office, which is ultimately interconnected with his other roles and functions:

As the Angel of the LORD, Metatron functions as the celestial vice-regent who ministers before the Throne, supervises the celestial liturgy and officiates over the heavenly hosts. He sits on the throne which is a replica of the Throne of Glory and wears a glorious robe like that of God. He functions as the agent of God in the creation, acts as intermediary between heavenly and lower worlds, is the guide of the ascending visionary, and reveals the celestial secrets to mankind. He is, by delegating divine authority, the ruler and the judge of the world. He is thus a *Logos* figure and an embodiment of the divine Glory. In his *shi'ur qomah*, we are told that Metatron's body, like the kabod, fills the entire world, though the writer is careful to maintain a distinction between Metatron and the Glory of God Himself.²³⁹

Hugo Odeberg points to the specific attributes that accompany Metatron's elevation into a lesser manifestation of the divine Name. Among them Odeberg lists the enthronement of Metatron, the conferment upon him of (a part of) the divine Glory, "honor, majesty and splendor," represented by "a garment of glory, robe of honor," and especially "a crown of kingship on which the mystical letters, representing cosmic and celestial agencies are engraved."²⁴⁰ The sharing of the attributes with the Godhead is significant and might convey the omniscience of its bearer. Peter Schäfer observes that in *Sefer Hekhalot*, Enoch-Metatron who stands at the head of all the angels as "lesser YHWH" is the representation of God. Endowed with the same attributes as God, Metatron, just like the Deity, is omniscient.²⁴¹ Another important attribute that the Deity and the lesser manifestation of His name share is the attribute of the celestial seat, an important symbol of authority. The Aramaic incantation bowl labels Metatron as *אִיסְרָא רַבָּא דְכּוֹרְסִיָּה* – the Great Prince of God's Throne.²⁴² He is the one who is allowed to sit in heaven, a privilege denied to angels.

Several comments must be made about the background of the throne imagery in the Enochic lore. The enthronement of Metatron might recall the Mesopotamian traditions which attest to the enthronement of the seventh antediluvian hero in the assembly of the gods. Enmeduranki's enthronement, however, is not permanent; he must return to his earthly duties. The early Enochic traditions reflected in *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, and the *Book of Giants* do not *directly* attest to the fact that the patriarch has a seat in heaven. The imagery found in the *Book of the Similitudes*, where Enoch

²³⁸ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.82.

²³⁹ Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition," 8.

²⁴⁰ Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 1.82.

²⁴¹ Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 141.

²⁴² Gordon, "Aramaic Magical Bowls in the Istanbul and Baghdad Museums," 328.

appears to be identified with the preexistent son of man enthroned in heaven, is ambiguous and puzzling. An early possible testimony to Enoch's enthronement near the Deity might be found, however, in the longer recension of 2 *Enoch* 24:1–2. There Enoch is depicted as the one who has a seat left of the Lord, “closer than Gabriel,” that is, in the location next to God.²⁴³ This honorable placement of the hero coincides in the Slavonic text with his initiation into the divine secrets which the Lord did not explain even to angels, a motif that stresses the intimate proximity between the Deity and Enoch:

And the Lord called me; and he said to me, “Enoch, sit to the left of me with Gabriel.” And I did obeisance to the Lord. And the Lord spoke to me: “Enoch [Beloved], whatever you see and whatever things are standing still or moving about were brought to perfection by me. And I myself will explain it to you.”²⁴⁴

This Enochic testimony might constitute part of the background for Metatron's future profile as the vice-regent of the Deity. Early Enochic traditions, however, never refer to the seventh antediluvian hero as the bearer of the divine name. The possible antecedents of this imagery apparently can be traced to different source(s), among which the lore about the angel Yahoel is often mentioned.²⁴⁵

Scholem argued that “Jewish speculation about Metatron as the highest angel who bears, in a way, the name of God, and who is called יהוה הקטן or אֱדֹנֵי הַקָּטָן (the Lesser YHWH), was preceded by an earlier stage in which this Angel on High was not called Metatron, but Yahoel; a fact which explains the talmudic references to Metatron much more convincingly than any of the older attempts.”²⁴⁶ He further observed that the statement found in *b. Sanh.* 38b,²⁴⁷ according to which Metatron has a name “like the name

²⁴³ The assigning of the left side to the vice-regent instead of the right one might appear puzzling. Martin Hengel, however, observes that this situation can be explained as the “correction” of the Christian scribe(s) who reserved the right side for Christ. M. Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1995) 193. Hengel points to a similar situation in the *Ascension of Isaiah* where the angel of the holy spirit is placed at the left hand of God.

²⁴⁴ Andersen, “2 Enoch,” 142.

²⁴⁵ Another possible source can be the Mosaic tradition. On the early sources about Moses as a bearer of the divine name see: Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord*, 90–94; W. A. Meeks, “Moses as God and King,” in: *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (ed. J. Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 1968) 354–371; idem, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (SNT 14; Leiden: Brill, 1967).

²⁴⁶ Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 41.

²⁴⁷ “R. Naḥman said: He who is as skilled in refuting the *Minim* as is R. Idith, let him do so; but not otherwise. Once a *Min* said to R. Idith: It is written, and unto Moses He said, Come up to the Lord. But surely it should have stated, Come up unto me! – It was Metatron [who said that], he replied, whose name is similar to that of his Master, for it is

of his Master” (מטטרון ששמו כשם רבו) is incomprehensible except when it is understood to refer to the name Yahoel.²⁴⁸

In considering the possible date of the appropriation of the Yahoel imagery into the Metatron tradition, Scholem observes that

there can be no doubt, for instance, that the concept of Jahoel as we find it in Chapter 10 of the *Apocalypse of Abraham* was an esoteric one and belonged to the mystical teachings on angelology and the Merkabah. The borrowings from esoteric Judaism about Jahoel must have been made, therefore, before the metamorphosis into Metatron took place. This brings us back again into the late first or early second century and makes a case for connecting the Hekhaloth strata of the late second or early third century with this even earlier stage of Jewish Gnosticism, one which was striving equally hard to maintain a strictly monotheistic character.²⁴⁹

Scholem’s suggestion that the concept of Metatron as the Lesser YHWH originated not in Enoch literature but in the Yahoel lore²⁵⁰ or some other traditions²⁵¹ seems plausible.²⁵² As we will see later, this hypothesis can be

written, For my name is in him. But if so we should worship him! The same passage, however, – replied R. Idith – says: Be not rebellious against him, i.e. exchange Me not for him. But if so, why is it stated: He will not pardon your transgression? He answered: By our troth we would not accept him even as a messenger, for it is written, And he said unto Him, If Thy [personal] presence go not etc.” Epstein, *Soncino Hebrew-English Talmud. Sanhedrin*, 38b.

²⁴⁸ Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 41.

²⁴⁹ Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 41–42.

²⁵⁰ In his book *the Guardians of the Gate*, Nathaniel Deutsch summarizes the parallels between Yahoel and Metatron. He notes that “Yahoel’s relationships with Abraham in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is analogous to Metatron’s relationships with R. Ishmael in the Hekhalot tract *3 Enoch*. Both figures serve as heavenly guides, protectors, and agents of revelation. Like Metatron, Yahoel is linked with the high priesthood, in this case, via the turban (cf. Exod 28:4) which Yahoel wears. Finally, as emphasized by Scholem, both Metatron and Yahoel were known by the epithet ‘The Lesser YHWH,’ a name which also found its way into Gnostic and Mandaean literature.... In *3 Enoch* 48D:1 Metatron is actually called by the names Yahoel Yah and Yahoel....” Deutsch concludes that “from the available evidence, it appears that Yahoel and Metatron developed separately but, at some point, Metatron absorbed the originally independent angel Yahoel.” Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate*, 36–7.

²⁵¹ Gershom Scholem and other scholars point to the imagery of “the Great Jao” and “The Little Jao” found in third-century Christian Gnostic text *Pistis Sophia*, and in the Gnostic *Book of Jêu*. See Alexander, “The Historical Settings of the Hebrew Book of Enoch,” 162.

²⁵² Philip Alexander and Christopher Rowland agree with Scholem’s position. Rowland observes that “in Jewish apocalyptic literature there was the development of beliefs about an exalted angelic figure who shared the attributes and characteristics of God himself, e.g. the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 10 and 17f. In this apocalypse the angel Jaoel, like the angel Metatron is said to have the name of God dwelling in him (*b. Sanh.* 37b and Heb. Enoch 12) and is described with terminology more usually reserved for God himself.” Rowland, *The Open Heaven*, 338. See also Alexander, “The Historical Settings of the Hebrew Book of Enoch,” 161.

supported by turning to the 2 *Enoch* materials, where one can find references to such Enoch-Metatron's titles as the Youth, the Prince of the Presence, and the Prince of the World, but not to his role as the Lesser YHWH. The Slavonic apocalypse in this respect is consistent with the early Enochic lore, which does not identify the patriarch with the divine name.²⁵³

Scholem's insistence on the formative value of the Yahoel tradition for Metatron mysticism is methodologically significant, since it again demonstrates that the search for the origins of all Metatron's titles should not be limited to the Enochic tradition or any other single source. There are undoubtedly multiple streams of traditions which have contributed to the development of the Metatron imagery. Later on I will demonstrate that the majority of the new Metatron titles might have developed as a result of interaction with developments which were external to the Enochic tradition, being borrowed from Adamic, Mosaic, and other mediatorial traditions.

The case of the Yahoel lore appears to be important also for understanding the various streams in the Metatron tradition which do not postulate the human origin of this exalted angel but instead view him as a preexistent being. Scholem proposed that in the Metatron lore one can find two possible perspectives on the origins of this angel. The first one considers him a celestial counterpart of the seventh antediluvian patriarch translated to heaven before the Flood and transfigured into an immortal angelic being. Scholem argued that there was also another prominent trend in which Metatron was not connected with Enoch or any other human prototype but was understood as an angel brought into existence in the beginning of, or even before, the creation of the world. This primordial Metatron was referred to as Metatron Rabbah.²⁵⁴ He believed that Yahoel or Michael²⁵⁵ traditions played a formative role in this second "primordial Metatron" development.²⁵⁶ Scholem argued that the two streams of the

²⁵³ Jarl Fossum observes that "Enoch is not said to have received the Name of God when having been installed in heaven as the son of Man, but this notion appears in 3 *Enoch*, where it is related that Enoch was enthroned as Metatron, another name of God's principal angel, 'whose name is like the Name of his Master.'" Fossum, *The Angel of the Lord*, 297.

²⁵⁴ Scholem, "Metatron," *EJ*, 11.1444.

²⁵⁵ In *Sefer Zerubabel*, Michael is identified with Metatron. On this source, see Himmelfarb, "Sefer Zerubbabel," 73; I. Lévi, "L'apocalypse de Zorobabel et le roi de Perse Siroès," *REJ* 68 (1914) 133. In *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, MS NY 8128 (*Synopse* §576), Michael is mentioned in the Sar Torah passage where his function, similar to that in 2 *Enoch* 33:10, is the protection of a visionary during the transmission of esoteric knowledge. "I shall collect and arrange to these orders of Michael, great prince of Israel, that you safeguard me for the study of Torah in my heart." Schwartz, *Scholastic Magic*, 111–12.

²⁵⁶ Scholem recognized that "...we have necessarily, then, to differentiate between two basic aspects of Metatron lore, which in our Hekhaloth literature, as far as it deals

Metatron lore in the beginning existed independently and were apparently associated with the different bodies of the rabbinic literature: the preexistent Metatron trend with the Talmud²⁵⁷ and the Enoch-Metatron trend with the targumic and the aggadic literature. In his opinion, only later did these two initially independent trajectories become intertwined. Scholem remarked that the absence of the Enoch-Metatron trend “in the Talmud or the most important midrashim is evidently connected with the reluctance of the talmudists to regard Enoch in a favorable light in general, and in particular the story of his ascent to heaven, a reluctance still given prominence in the Midrash *Genesis Rabbah*.”²⁵⁸ He proposed that this situation does not indicate that the Metatron-Enoch trend was later than the primeval Metatron trend since the Palestinian Targum (Gen 5:24) and midrashim have retained allusions to the concept of the human Metatron.

Scholem notes that the variation in the Hebrew form of the name Metatron might point to the existence of the two aforementioned streams. He observes that in the *Shi'ur Qomah* materials the name Metatron has two forms, “written with six letters and with seven letters,” that is מטטרון and מיטטרון.²⁵⁹ He points out that, although the original reason for this distinction is unknown, the kabbalists regarded the different forms of the same name as signifying two prototypes for Metatron. These kabbalistic circles usually identified the seven-lettered name with the primordial Metatron and the six-lettered name with Enoch, who later ascended to heaven and possessed only some of the splendor and power of the primordial Metatron.²⁶⁰

In light of Scholem’s hypothesis, it is possible that the conceptual and literary distance between the two aforementioned understandings of Metatron, which apparently had very early, possibly even premishnaic, roots, might have prevented Yahoel’s imagery from being adapted into the framework of the Enochic tradition as happened with some other roles and titles of Metatron in *2 Enoch*. Although some details of the *Apocalypse of*

specifically with Metatron, have already been combined and to a certain extent confused. One aspect identifies Metatron with Jahoel or Michael and knows nothing of his transfiguration from a human being into an angel. The talmudic passages concerned with Metatron are of this type. The other aspect identifies Metatron with the figure of Enoch as he is depicted in apocalyptic literature, and permeated that aggadic and targumic literature which, although not necessarily of a later date than Talmud, was outside of it. When the *Book of Hekhaloth*, or *3 Enoch*, was composed, the two aspects had already become intertwined....” Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 51.

²⁵⁷ The *Babylonian Talmud* refers to Metatron in three places: *b. Hag.* 15a; *b. Sanh.* 38b and *b. Avod. Zar.* 3b. Metatron is also mentioned several times in *Tosepith*.

²⁵⁸ Scholem, “Metatron,” *EJ*, 11.1445.

²⁵⁹ Scholem points out that in the early manuscripts the name is almost always written with the letter *yod*.

²⁶⁰ Scholem, “Metatron” *EJ*, 11.1445.

Abraham indicate that the authors of that pseudepigraphon were familiar with Enochic traditions, Yahoel's imagery is not linked in that text to the seventh antediluvian patriarch, but instead to Abraham.

Metatron as the Measurer/Measure: God's *Shi'ur Qomah*

This study has already noted that in his transition to the position of God's vice-regent and the lesser manifestation of the divine name Enoch-Metatron came to resemble or imitate the Deity when various divine attributes and features were transferred to this exalted angel. One of the important features of this divine *dédoublement* was Enoch-Metatron's acquisition of a new celestial body which closely resembles the gigantic extent of the divine form. Although the crucial bulk of the traditions about Metatron's stature and its correspondence with God's anthropomorphic extent can be found in the texts associated with the *Shi'ur Qomah* literature,²⁶¹ these materials do not make any explicit connections between Metatron and Enoch.²⁶² The investigation of the imagery of the divine body therefore must begin with texts in which this association between Metatron and the seventh antediluvian patriarch is unambiguous. One such passage is *Synopse* §12 (3 *Enoch* 9), which portrays the metamorphosis of Enoch's body into a gigantic extent matching the world in length and breath: "I was enlarged and increased in size till I matched the world in length and breath. He made to grow on me 72 wings, 36 on one side and 36 on the other, and each single wing covered the entire world...."²⁶³

Christopher Morray-Jones suggests that the sudden transformation of the human body of the patriarch into a gigantic extent encompassing the whole world cannot be properly understood without reference to another anthropomorphic corporeality known from the Priestly and Ezekelian traditions of the divine *Kavod*. Morray-Jones observes that "in his *shi'ur qomah*, we are told that Metatron's body, like the *Kabod*, fills the entire world, though the writer is careful to maintain a distinction between Metatron and the Glory of God Himself."²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ For the texts and translations of the *Shi'ur Qomah* materials, see Schäfer et al., *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*; M. Cohen, *The Shi'ur Qomah: Texts and Recensions* (TSAJ 9; Tübingen, 1985); P. Schäfer et al., *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur* (TSAJ 17, 22, 29, 46; Tübingen, 1987–95).

²⁶² Martin Cohen observes that the tradition of Metatron as the translated Enoch does not seem to appear in the *Shi'ur Qomah* texts. Cohen, *Liturgy and Theurgy*, 126.

²⁶³ Alexander, "3 Enoch," 263.

²⁶⁴ Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition," 8.

It is true that some Enochic materials, including 2 *Enoch*, underline the difference between the Lord's anthropomorphic extent and Enoch-Metatron's transformed body, pointing to the fact that the second corporeality represents a mere "likeness" of the first.²⁶⁵ This interdependence between the two bodies, already linked together in the *Similitudes* and 2 *Enoch*, indicates that the passage in *Synopse* §12 might represent a long-standing tradition which cannot be divorced from another significant testimony found in *Synopse* §19 (3 *Enoch* 15:1–2).²⁶⁶ This testimony describes the dramatic metamorphosis of Enoch's body re-created into the likeness of God's own terrifying extent known as his luminous Face.

Although the two bodies (of Metatron and of the Lord) are linked through an elaborate common imagery, Morray-Jones is correct in emphasizing that the Merkabah writers are cautious about maintaining a careful distinction between the two entities. Martin Cohen observes that in the *Shi'ur Qomah* materials the comparisons between the two corporealities, the Deity and Metatron, are not particularly favorable for the latter: "whereas the sole of the foot or the pinky-finger of the Deity is said to be one universe-length long, Metatron himself is altogether only that height."²⁶⁷ These distinctions, however, should not be overestimated since they do not prevent the *Shi'ur Qomah* materials from unifying both corporealities through an identical terminology. In the Merkabah materials the divine corporeality is labeled the Stature/Measure of the Body (שיעור קומה).²⁶⁸ The same terminology is often applied to Enoch-Metatron's body. According to one of the Merkabah texts, "the stature (קומה) of this youth fills the world."²⁶⁹ As we will see a little bit later, the same terminological parallels are observable in *Synopse* §73 (3 *Enoch*

²⁶⁵ *Synopse* §73 (3 *Enoch* 48C:6): "I increased his honor from the glory of my honor."

²⁶⁶ Commenting on the scene of Enoch's metamorphosis into the highest angel Metatron in *Synopse* §19, Peter Schäfer observes that this theme of transformation has scarce witnesses elsewhere. He argues that one of the clearest parallels to this scene can be found in 2 *Enoch* 22:8–10. He observes that, despite the similarities, 2 *Enoch's* description is nevertheless exceptionally modest in comparison with *Sefer Hekhalot's* account. He notes that, while in the Slavonic apocalypse Enoch is anointed with oil and becomes like one of the angels, in 3 *Enoch* he is actually transfigured into an angel. (P. Schäfer, "Engel und Menschen in der Hekhalot-Literatur," in: Schäfer, *Hekhalot Studien*, 274). Schäfer's remark is important since it further supports the idea that the description found in 2 *Enoch* represents a very early form of the tradition in comparison with the one found in *Sefer Hekhalot*.

²⁶⁷ Cohen, *Liturgy and Theurgy*, 133.

²⁶⁸ Gershom Scholem observes that the term *qomah* was often translated as "height" ("Measurement of the Height"), being used in the biblical sense. He stresses that such translation does not apply to the Merkabah materials where *qomah*, as in the Aramaic incantation texts, signifies "body." See, Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 364.

²⁶⁹ Schäfer et al., *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, 162.

48C:5–6), which refers to Metatron’s stature as קומה while the patriarch’s human body is designated as גוף. The similarity in terminology, which stresses the proximity of the statures of the Deity and Metatron, also points to the angel’s role as the measurer/measure of the divine Body.

The association of Enoch-Metatron’s body with the divine Face also points to his duties as the Measure of the Lord and the possessor of the body, which serves as the lesser manifestation of the divine corporeality. They are closely connected with Metatron’s other roles since Metatron’s function as God’s *Shi^cur Qomah* cannot be separated from his mediation in the divine Presence and his activities as the servant of the divine Face, or one of the *sar happanim*.²⁷⁰ This shows that Metatron’s connection with the tradition about the colossal divine extent is not an isolated construct foreign to the rest of the Enoch-Metatron story but represents the logical continuation of his other prominent offices and duties in close proximity to the divine Presence. In *Synopse* §73 the *Shi^cur Qomah* motif and the motif of Metatron’s face are brought together:

I increased his stature (קומתו) by seventy thousand parasangs, above every height, among those who are tall of stature (בכל רומי הקומות). I magnified his throne from the majesty of my throne. I increased his honor from the glory of my honor. I turned his flesh to fiery torches and all the bones of his body (גופו) to coals of light. I made the appearance of his eyes like the appearance of lightning, and the light of his eyes like “light unfailing.” I caused his face to shine like the brilliant light of the sun.²⁷¹

Several words must be said about the fashion in which the *Shi^cur Qomah* tradition appears in *3 Enoch*. It is noteworthy that *Sefer Hekhalot* preserves only one side of the story when it applies the traces of the *Shi^cur Qomah* tradition solely to Enoch-Metatron. The evidence found in *3 Enoch* represents relatively short accounts that differ from the extended descriptions found in the materials associated with the *Shi^cur Qomah* tradition; there the reader is normally provided with elaborate depictions of God’s limbs and their mystical names. In contrast, *Sefer Hekhalot* does not say much about the divine body since the depiction of the body of the translated Enoch serves here as the focal point of the presentation. Although the narration refers to God’s hand, by which Enoch’s body appears to be transformed, and to his glorious Presence, according to which the patriarch

²⁷⁰ Joseph Dan’s research points to a striking resemblance between the Deity and Metatron since the latter, similar to God, “... sits on the throne of glory, he has spread over himself a canopy of radiance, such as the one over the Throne of Glory itself, and his throne is placed at the entrance to the seventh *hekhal*, in which stands the Throne of Glory of God Himself. Metatron sits on it as God sits on His Throne.” Dan further observes that the author of *3 Enoch* wants to portray Metatron “as almost a miniature version of God Himself.” Dan, *The Ancient Jewish Mysticism*, 115–17.

²⁷¹ Alexander, “3 Enoch,” 312; Schäfer et al., *Synopse*, 36–37.

was changed, *Sefer Hekhalot* does not supply any information about the dimensions of the limbs of the Deity as the materials associated with the *Shi'ur Qomah* tradition often do. Only through the depiction of the new Enoch-Metatron body does the reader get an impression of the possible dimensions of God's *Shi'ur Qomah*.²⁷²

It is interesting that the tradition of Metatron's body found in *Sefer Hekhalot* closely resembles the evidence from *2 Enoch* 22 and 39, where the passages with a precise *Shi'ur Qomah* terminology are also introduced and unfolded through reference to the patriarch's body.²⁷³ Similarly to *3 Enoch* the Slavonic apocalypse refers only to the divine Face/Presence, and to the hand of God.²⁷⁴ Later I will demonstrate that already in *2 Enoch* one can uncover the beginning of Enoch-Metatron's role as God's *Shi'ur Qomah*. It occurs in the account found in *2 Enoch* 37, in which the patriarch describes his encounters with the divine extent, the fiery and terrifying Face of God.

Conclusion

1. The analysis of the old titles and roles of Enoch-Metatron indicates that the initial Mesopotamian and Enochic concepts and imagery have undergone substantial development within the Metatron tradition, resulting in the changes which in some instances have led to the creation of completely new offices and appellations (for example, Enoch-Metatron's roles as the redeemer and the judge). These later developments of the old roles and titles nevertheless have their roots in the previous texts and traditions about the seventh antediluvian hero.

2. The investigation of the new roles and titles of Enoch-Metatron reveals the polemical context of the origin and the existence of these appellations and offices within the Merkabah tradition; they are not assigned exclusively to one hero, but are often shared by many angelic

²⁷² Philip Alexander indicates that "in *Shi'ur Qomah* a form is given to the divine glory: it is envisaged as a colossal human figure and the dimensions of its limbs are computed. Of this speculation there is hardly a trace in *3 Enoch*." Alexander, "3 Enoch," 241.

²⁷³ Gershom Scholem was first to propose that the expression "the extent of the Lord" found in *2 Enoch* 39 might reflect the exact terminology found in the *Shi'ur Qomah* materials. See Scholem's lecture "The Age of *Shi'ur Qomah* Speculation and a Passage in Origen," in: Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965); idem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah*, 29.

²⁷⁴ According to *Synopse* §12 (*3 Enoch* 9:1) during the transformation of Enoch into Metatron God "laid his hand" on Enoch-Metatron. The same situation is observable in *2 Enoch* 39:5, which describes the Lord with "the right hand" beckoning the patriarch during his metamorphosis near the Throne of Glory.

characters, including Suriel, Yofiel, Michael, Yahoel, and others.²⁷⁵ These varied attributions point to two significant things:

First, they indicate the possible polemical nature of the early background responsible for providing the antecedents or prototypes of the roles and titles attested in the Merkabah lore. Second Temple Judaism with its wealth of mediatorial trends and exalted figures represented a highly competitive ideological environment in which the roles and offices of one character were easily transferred to the hero of another tradition. This study will demonstrate that in this melting pot one can find the origins of almost all roles and titles of Metatron which later became prominent in the Hekhalot and rabbinic texts.

Second, the attributions of the same celestial roles and titles to the various angelic characters in Hekhalot and rabbinic materials point not only to the polemical context of their Second Temple origin, but also to the polemical nature of their later existence within the Hekhalot and rabbinic lore.²⁷⁶ It is possible that such polemical developments were facilitated by the formal peculiarities of the Hekhalot literature and its transmission history.

²⁷⁵ Alexander observes that “the Metatron side of the composite Enoch-Metatron figure is itself compounded of diverse elements.” Alexander, “The Historical Settings of the Hebrew Book of Enoch,” 161.

²⁷⁶ Many social, ideological, and literary factors might be responsible for these polemical developments. Scholem noted that Metatron’s passages in *b. Hag. 15a* and *b. Sanh. 38b* are connected with polemics against heretics. These arguments often take the form of polemics with the figure of Metatron.