

26:29) and, in particular, as “scribes” (2 Chr 34:13) and “teachers of the book of the law of YHWH . . . through all the cities of Judah” (2 Chr 17:7-9; cf. Neh 8).

Not improperly, Flavius Josephus would define the structure of power following the Babylonian exile as “a form of government that was aristocratical, but mixed with oligarchy, for the high priests were at the head of their affairs, until the posterity of the Hasmoneans set up kingly government” (*Ant* 11:111). Since the beginning the Zadokite oligarchic power had indeed an “aristocratical character” as it so largely depended on the support of their fellow priests, the Aaronites (and to a lesser extent of the levites). What began with Ezekiel as a Zadokite revolution resulted in an Aaronite hegemony. Ellis Rivkin perceived it long ago: “A coalition of Levitical families . . . join[ed] together as a privileged class, the sons of Aaron, against other priestly families. At the same time, by . . . allocating to the high priest the special privilege of being the Grand Expiator . . . the powerful Zadokite family was allowed to enjoy priestly supremacy, although not the monopoly accorded to them by the last chapters of Ezekiel. Such a coalition could beat down the claims of the other Levitical families for altar rights.”<sup>39</sup> This aristocratic aspect would prove to be providential for the survival of the priestly hierarchy when the Zadokite leadership “imploded,” mostly as a result of its own internal strife, in the first half of the 2nd century. Then, the Aaronite aristocracy would prove to be self-sufficient and strong enough to support a change in the leadership.

All of this, however, belongs to the future of Judaism after the Maccabean Revolt. Since members of the house of Zadok kept the hereditary high priesthood in the early Second Temple period, we may call “Zadokite Judaism” the form of Judaism that was predominant up to the Maccabean Revolt. Wherever and whenever a proto-rabbinic tradition began, its roots must be traced back neither in the legendary institutions of Rabbinic Judaism nor in the vacuum of elusive oral traditions but in the actual dynamics of the priestly society the Zadokites created after the Babylonian exile.

39. Ellis Rivkin, “The Revolution of the Aaronites,” *The Shaping of Jewish History: A Radical New Interpretation* (New York: Scribner, 1971), 21-41 (quotation, 36-37).

## *Zadokite Judaism and Its Opponents*

### 1. The Zadokite Worldview

Zadokite Judaism was a society that unceasingly and persistently defined the boundaries of cosmic and social structure; rules and regulations were enforced to restrict or control interaction and avoid trespassing.

The Priestly writing tells how the Creator turned the primeval disorder into the divine order (Gen 1:1–2:4a [P]). At the beginning was chaos (“a formless void,” 1:2), but through a seven-day process of creation boundaries of division were set to organize the cosmos. God separated light from darkness on the first day, the waters above from the waters below on the second, water from dry land on the third, and day from night on the fourth. As time unfolded, the spaces that progressively came into existence (heavens, water, air) were filled with the living beings that belong to them (stars, fish, birds, respectively), so that all creatures might fit their proper environment. Then God placed on earth the creature it was destined for — the “human being . . . male and female” (1:27). The refrain that scans the creation story, “God saw that it was good” (1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25), repeats that everything was made advisedly according to God’s will, until the climactic conclusion of the sixth day when “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good” (1:31). At this point, God finally “rested from all the work that he had done . . . and blessed the seventh day and sanctified it” (2:2-3).

By creation, therefore, the Priestly writing means the process through which God organized the cosmos by defining the boundaries of time,

space, and society. A coherent mechanism of "graded holiness" preserves the harmony of the system and makes the created world an orderly and closely related hierarchy of living beings, spaces, and times. In the cosmic ecology, each element is assigned a unique role within the graded scale of purity.<sup>1</sup>

- (a) *Society*. At the top of the social hierarchy are the Zadokite high priests, followed by the Aaronite priests, the levites, male Jews, female Jews, Gentiles, clean and unclean animals. Such a division makes each class of living beings subject to different purity laws and defines their mutual relations as well as their cultic responsibilities toward God. Indeed, as commentators have not failed to notice, there is a correspondence, even linguistic, between the structure of the world as set up in Genesis and the social hierarchy of living beings in Leviticus based on diminishing levels of purity. "I am YHWH your God; I have separated you from the peoples; so you must separate between clean and unclean animals. . . . You shall be holy to me, for I YHWH am holy. I separated you from the peoples that you may be mine" (Lev 20:24-26). In the Zadokite worldview, social distinctions, within and outside the temple personnel, are not the result of historical processes, but of divine command.
- (b) *Space*. The Zadokite order defines not only a hierarchy of living beings, but also a sacred geography. The holiness of the earth is concentrated in the highest degree in the Jerusalem temple. This produces areas of decreasing sanctity as one moves away from that center — a concept that Zadokite literature visualizes either in the form of boxed squares (Ezekiel 40–48) or of concentric circles (Num 2:1-34; 10:13-28 [P]) around the sanctuary. Accordingly, a higher degree of purity separates the temple from the city of Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem from the land of Judah, and the land of Judah from the rest of the inhabited world.
- (c) *Time*. Time, as well as society and space, is structured and graded, resulting in a division between sacred and ordinary days. Many of the Jewish festivals, as in the neighboring nations, were originally linked to the natural rhythms of the agricultural year, and in fact the Priestly

1. See Philip Peter Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World*, JSOTSup 106 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992).

writing recognizes for both the sun and the moon the calendrical function to "be for signs and for seasons and for days and years" (Gen 1:14). The Zadokite creation story, however, takes as the central structure of time a cycle independent of any natural cycle, solar or lunar, that is, the regular seven-day cycle of the week, culminating in the holiest time of sabbath (Gen 2:2). The number seven is in fact the unifying element of the priestly calendar, the key element in regulating the orderly succession of sacred and ordinary days conforming to the set times of the cosmos.<sup>2</sup> Both textual evidence and logic point to the conclusion that the Zadokite cultic calendar was some sort of perpetual sabbatical calendar in which each feast fell on the same day of the week, year after year, with no conflict with the sabbatical cycle and, most importantly, no overlapping of sacred and ordinary times.<sup>3</sup>

As the Priestly narrative of the Flood knows only months of 30 days each (Gen 7:11, 24; 8:3-4), it is apparent that equinoxes and solstices were not counted as "days" but as intercalary times between seasons so that the sabbatical cycle knew no interruption in a perpetual 360+4-day calendar.<sup>4</sup> The medieval historian al-Biruni was quite correct when he claimed that the Jews introduced the lunar calendar and began to compute the dates of the new moons "nearly 200 years after Alexander the Great" in the aftermath of the Maccabean crisis and

2. The seventh day (the sabbath) was a special day of rest marked by additional sacrifices (Num 28:9-10). The seventh month was the one with the greatest number of festivals, as well as the most important ones. The seventh year (the sabbath of years) had a special festival character, as "a sabbath of complete rest for the land" (Lev 25:2-7). The seventh sabbath of years, the 49th year, was a special year marked "on the day of atonement" by the celebration of "the fiftieth year . . . a jubilee" (Lev 25:8-12). See Jenson, 192-95.

3. On the sabbatical nature of the Zadokite calendar, see Annie Jaubert, "Le calendrier des Jubilés et de la secte de Qumrân: Ses origines bibliques," VT 3 (1953): 250-64; "Le calendrier des Jubilés et les jours liturgiques de la semaine," VT 7 (1957): 35-61; James C. VanderKam, "The Origin, Character, and Early History of the 364-Day Calendar: A Reassessment of Jaubert's Hypotheses," CBQ 41 (1979): 390-411; "2 Maccabees 6,7a and Calendrical Change in Jerusalem," JSJ 12 (1981): 52-74.

4. Gabriele Boccaccini, "The Solar Calendars of Daniel and Enoch," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 2:311-28.

that "before that time" their calendrical calculations were based "on the *tekufoth*, i.e. the year-quarters."<sup>5</sup>

The process of creation did not eliminate the disruptive forces of chaos, but confined them within precise boundaries. Even as a physical place, the abyss still exists in contrast to the orderly creation, and so does the wilderness populated by demons (Lev 16:8, 10; 17:7) in contrast to the inhabited world and Sheol, the neverland where the dead live, in contrast to the land of the living. There is therefore a strict connection between the cosmic and the moral order. To cross God's boundaries without proper rituals or without being in the proper state, or for any element of the cosmos to lose the integrity of its proper place, is to jeopardize the stability of the entire system and to invite disaster.

The ancient narratives of primeval history, which the Priestly writing inherited by the previous Jewish tradition, told of a fragile balance, of a universe always dangerously on the verge of collapse. There was a time in which the "sons of God" trespassed the boundary between heaven and earth, humans did what was evil, and for a while with the Flood the chaos seemed to retake the world (Gen 6). But the Priestly writing claims that this is not going to repeat. The covenant of Noah (Gen 9:8-11) between God and the earth (9:13) assures that God's order is forever. This does not mean that God will remain indifferent. On the contrary, God will take any necessary step to protect the order of creation — ordinary steps in ordinary circumstances and extraordinary steps in extraordinary circumstances, including allowing the king of Babylon to destroy the sanctuary (2 Chr 36:11-21). Even the most dramatic punishment, however, leads only to peace and restoration; the narrative of Chronicles ends with the good news of the rebuilt temple (2 Chr 36:22-23). God is perfectly capable of controlling and suppressing any rebellion without destroying the work of creation. There is no room in the Zadokite worldview for extreme measures that would lead to the end of times and a new creation. Despite any odds, this world is and remains the good and orderly universe created by God, and there is no reason God should destroy God's most perfect accomplishment.

God's commitment and care for the created world urge people's active

5. Al-Biruni, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, ed. C. Edward Sachau (London: W. H. Allen, 1879), 68.

cooperation. It is in the very interest of human beings to avoid God's punishment and enjoy the benefits of stability and order. The Zadokite civil and cultic laws share "a common concern for boundaries, sanctions, maintenance and correction" so that the world would remain "a stable and enduring sphere of ordered relations."<sup>6</sup>

The covenantal relationship between God and Israel, as understood by the Zadokites, is a pact for the stability and welfare of the universe. Compliance with the purity and moral laws of the covenant brings about stability and survival for the Jewish society as well as stability and survival for the entire world. The covenant is also the foundation of an orderly and balanced relationship between God and his people, once again by providing precise and not arbitrary boundaries. The Jewish people agreed to submit themselves to God's law, including the hardships of punishment in case of transgression. In return, God also agreed to put the divine punitive power under the restraints of the covenant and to guarantee protection and well-being to those who are faithful to God's laws.

Zadokite Judaism strongly believed in the power of human freedom. People have the duty and the capability of maintaining the distinction between right and wrong, holy and profane, pure and impure, and therefore each generation is accountable for its own actions. The earliest traditions of Israel allowed God a great deal of discretion in distributing reward and punishment within the span of some generations (Exod 20:5; Deut 5:9-10; 1 Kgs 21:28-29). Accordingly, it was not considered unfair to punish the entire family or group with the guilty, as for instance in the case of "Achan, son of Zerah" whom Joshua executed "with his sons and daughters" (Josh 7:24-26).

The Deuteronomistic legislation, however, prohibited humans to use this same criterion of God's justice in their relationships: the death penalty shall not apply to the family of the guilty (Deut 24:16; 2 Kgs 14:6). This created a contradiction between divine and human behavior.

The tension is apparent in Jeremiah at the time of the Babylonian exile. The prophet knows that the actual covenant grants God broad discretion: "You show steadfast love to the thousandth generation, but repay the guilt of parents into the laps of their children . . . rewarding all according to their ways and according to the fruit of their doings" (Jer 32:18-19). But Jeremiah cannot help seeing the unfairness of God's justice and longs for

6. Jenson, 217-18.

the time when God would establish a new covenant whereby the same principle of individual accountability, which regulates covenantal relations within the Jewish people, would also be applied in the relations between God and humans. "In those days they shall no longer say, 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' But all shall die for their own sins" (Jer 31:29-30).

Ezekiel turned Jeremiah's wishful thought into the general rule, claiming that God does hold each generation accountable only for their own actions: "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. . . . It is only the person who sins that shall die" (Ezek 18:2-4).

The only way for the individual to defer punishment is to repent and make atonement. This is not in itself a new principle: when provoked to anger, God is just but not cruel; repentance can make God change his mind. What is new in Ezekiel is that the righteous children have now nothing to fear. In 1 Kings, that Ahab humbled himself only meant that the punishment pending on his house was simply deferred from "his days" to "his son's days." Ezekiel stresses that when the sinner is either forgiven or punished, that is the end of God's wrath: "The righteousness of the righteous shall be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be his own" (Ezek 18:20).

In their rewriting of Jewish history, the Priestly writing and Chronicles scrupulously applied the principles of Ezekiel as the foundation not only of human fair behavior (2 Chr 25:4 = 2 Kgs 14:6) but also of God's behavior toward God's people. The way in which Chronicles copes with the experience of the Babylonian exile offers a clear example of Zadokite revisionism. Kings had offered two reasons for the fall of Jerusalem, blaming either the evil kings of the past or Zedekiah. Neither reason was compatible with the principle of individual retribution.

The accumulation of the sins of the kings in general (2 Kgs 23:37b), and Manasseh in particular, was a key argument in Kings' effort to provide a theological explanation to the catastrophe. "Surely this came upon Judah at the command of YHWH, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, for all that he had committed, and also for the innocent blood that he had shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and YHWH was not willing to pardon" (2 Kgs 24:3-4). But Manasseh had a long life

and a successful kingdom that lasted "fifty-five years" (2 Kgs 21:1). He "did what was evil in the sight of YHWH" (2 Kgs 21:2), yet he did not experience God's wrath; it was the future generations who paid for his sins. How can this unequal treatment be fair and acceptable?

Chronicles straightens things out. Based on the principle that the sins of past generations have an effect only on rebellious children, Chronicles is committed to review the lives of the kings case by case. Manasseh was, yes, evil, but later he "humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors. He prayed to him, and God received his entreaty [and] heard his plea" (2 Chr 33:12-13). Manasseh's repentance explains the length of his kingdom in accordance with the words of Ezekiel: "if the wicked turn away from all their sins that they have committed and keep all my statutes and do what is lawful and right, they shall surely live; they shall not die" (Ezek 18:21).

Kings also established a more direct link between the sins of Zedekiah and God's anger against "Jerusalem and Judah" (2 Kgs 24:18-20). The king was made personally accountable for the destruction of Jerusalem, and this was surely more acceptable from the Zadokite point of view, but his sin meant the ruin of the entire nation; the leader's guilt fell upon the people. Once again, is it fair that the innocent paid for sins they had not committed?

The Zadokite historiography obviously agreed that Zedekiah was guilty "in the sight of YHWH his God" (2 Chr 36:12) and deservedly lost his power. To the religious sins against God Chronicles adds also the political act of rebellion "against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God" (2 Chr 36:13; cf. Ezek 17:16). Of course, the Zadokites had no sympathy whatsoever for the memory of the Babylonian king who executed Seraiah and exiled Jehozadak, but they did not want to miss the opportunity to stress their gratefulness and loyalty to the new "foreign kings" by whom they had been so generously treated and under whom they happily prospered.

What the Zadokites could not accept, however, was Kings' stance that innocent people paid for the sins of their king. In contrast, Chronicles points out that "all the chief priests (LXX: all the leaders of Judah and the priests) and the people also were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of YHWH that he had consecrated in Jerusalem" (2 Chr 36:14). From the perspective of hindsight, the Ezekielian principle that "it is only the person who sins that

shall die" (Ezek 18:4) was confirmed. Collective catastrophe can be provoked only by collective guilt.

In the Zadokite reinterpretation of the Mosaic covenant, people's accountability is enhanced and God's discretion limited. Generation after generation, people can only blame themselves for their physical and moral failures, and God can no longer miss or delay the chance of punishing the wicked and rewarding the righteous. The Zadokite sense of order was fully satisfied: misfortune always follows transgression and well-being is always a sign of obedience.

At the core of the Sinaitic covenant is now the Jerusalem temple. In Kings the foundation of the sanctuary was a corollary of God's promise of eternal kingship to David and his successors. In the Zadokite worldview the house of YHWH has taken the place of the house of David, the priesthood has replaced the monarchy, and Aaron has superseded Moses. Priestly sources stress the absolute continuity between the tent in the wilderness and the First and the Second Temple, as well as the continuity and legitimacy of their institutions and rituals. God's one and exclusive temple, led by God's one and legitimate priesthood, is ideally at the center of the world. Its architecture and internal structure, its hierarchically disposed personnel, and the regularity of its liturgical calendar were intended to replicate the sacred geography of creation, the social hierarchy of humankind, and the eternal times of the cosmos. As the temple so closely mirrors the divine order of heaven, "to enter the Temple and take part in the Temple cult is therefore to participate in some degree in the unceasing worship going on in heaven."<sup>7</sup>

A replica of the divine and the human realms, the temple is also the place of interaction between the two. The regularity of its rituals is ultimately the main guarantee that creation would not collapse, the cult having the dual function of maintaining and restoring the creative order, by reminding God of God's commitments and removing sin and impurity from the worshippers.

The Priestly writing views the objects and acts of worship as a "memorial for the children of Israel before YHWH" (Exod 12:14; 28:12, 29; 30:16; 39:7; Lev 23:24; Num 10:10; 16:40 [Heb. 17:5]; 31:54), so that, as Num 10:9 explains about the ritual sounding of the trumpets, Israel will be remembered before God and God will intervene in their favor. Sacrifices are "the

7. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet*, 113.

food of their God" (Lev 21:6; *passim*); they do not feed the deity, however, but appeal to God's sense of smell through the pleasant and reminding fragrance of burning offerings (Gen 8:21; Lev 2:2). In essence, while the previous Deuteronomistic tradition stressed the value of worship as a reminder for future generations (Deut 16:3; cf. 16:9-12; Exod 13:3-10; Josh 4:1-9), for the Zadokite tradition worship regards not human memory but God's memory, so that God will continue to remember and sustain the divine order of creation.<sup>8</sup>

Since some sort of evil and impurity, deliberately or undeliberately, individually or corporately, could not be avoided, the cult played an essential role also in providing rituals of atonement and purification, so averting God's wrath and punishment. The sacrifices "are the means by which the divine order, disturbed by impurity or sin, is restored to an original harmony."<sup>9</sup> People are offered a way back to their proper status provided that in their freedom they are eager to fulfill the required conditions for purification.

The Day of Atonement was indeed the climax of the temple cult and the highlight of Zadokite theology. On that occasion, in the holiest time of the year, the holiest space on earth was entered by the holiest living being on earth to provide atonement and purification of the sins and impurities of Israel. The sacredness and power of the day were exactly in its realigning in a perfect and unique coalescence, year after year, the social, spatial, and temporal axes on which the order of the universe is based.<sup>10</sup>

This was what the temple, the Mosaic Torah, and the Jewish priesthood were ultimately for. From their role as the keepers of the holiest place on earth, the interpreters of the sacred laws, and the ministers of the sacred times the Zadokites derived both their power at the top of Jewish society and the responsibility of adhering to the strictest rules of purity and the highest level of morality. Where modern historians see a mixture of social conservatism, national pride, and even obsession to cultic minutiae, the Jerusalem priests looked at themselves as the chosen to a hard service on be-

8. See Gabriele Boccaccini, "Il tema della memoria nell'ebraismo e nel giudaismo antico," *Hen* 7 (1985): 1-26 (esp. 11-13); Brevard S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel*, SBT 37 (Naperville: Allenson, 1962); and Willy Schottroff, *Gedenken im Alten Orient und in Alten Testament*, WMANT 15 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1964).

9. Jenson, 164.

10. Jenson, 197-208.

half of the entire cosmos. "The high priest . . . and his priestly kinsmen served as the human community that established and maintained connection between the various orders of being. Their labor in the temple preserved all other orders of beings from collapse. Upon them, the people of Israel, the land of Israel, and, ultimately, the entire cosmos and its population all depended."<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Early Opponents: Samaritans, Tobiads, Prophets

The progressive establishment of the Zadokite order was accompanied by obscure conflicts with large sections of Israelites who had remained in the homeland — the "peoples of the land," often alluded to in Ezra-Nehemiah (Ezra 4:4-5; 6:21).

The conflict was not only political but also religious. The land of Israel that welcomed the returned exiles was not an estranged land, and most of its inhabitants were not pagans but people of Israelite descent and worshippers of YHWH. The Babylonian exile affected only the upper strata of the Jewish society — the political, military, religious, and economic elites. The rural and poor constituencies remained in Judah; their way of life and their religious practices were not significantly altered. With the establishment of the Second Temple and the Zadokite rise to power, the returnees came to dominate the province of Judah by transforming the strategies of survival they had developed in Babylon in a context of exile and minority into an effective means of social control over against their neighbors and former compatriots.<sup>12</sup>

The remainees were required to conform to the new order. Those who were unwilling to join the process of "restoration" and to accept its logic were banned from participating in the "reconstruction" of the temple and from intermarrying with the returnees, and finally outcast as "foreigners" from the cultic community of Jerusalem. Fringe phenomena of survival of the ancient religion of Israel, like the presence of a Jewish

11. Martin S. Jaffee, "Ritual Space and Performance in Early Judaism," *Early Judaism*, 164-212 (quotation, 171).

12. Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah," in *Second Temple Studies*, ed. Philip R. Davies, 1: *The Persian Period*, JSOTSup 117 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 22-53.

temple in Egypt at Elephantine, were tolerated for some time, provided that they recognized the authority of the Jerusalem priesthood, and then gradually reabsorbed.<sup>13</sup>

The victory of the Zadokite party defined the new Jewish identity as the "sons of the exile" (Ezra 4:1; 6:19-21; 8:35; 10:7, 16) and led to the myth in Chronicles that the Babylonian conquest left behind an empty land, all the inhabitants of Judah being either killed or exiled (2 Chr 36:17-21; cf. Lev 26:27-39).<sup>14</sup> "By their own self-definition, the returnees were the only surviving community with the right to call themselves the sons of Israel."<sup>15</sup>

Such an extreme retroactive glance at the historical events of the return from the exile shows the depth of the struggle. Many indeed tried to resist. Nehemiah lists his enemies: "Tobiah and Sanballat . . . and also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me afraid" (Neh 6:1-14; cf. 2:10, 19-20; 4:1-4 [Heb. 3:33-36]).

### A. The Samaritans

The roots of the conflict between Judah and Samaria go back to the monarchic period. At stake was the hegemony in the region — a situation that repeated after the Babylonian exile. In spite of their common religious roots, the Samaritans found themselves in the front line against any attempt at restoring an autonomous political or religious power in Judah, which would have diminished the hegemony they had gained in the region. Eventually, they could not stop the exiles' plan of reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple, nor effectively challenge the Zadokite refusal to share control of the rebuilt sanctuary with any local priesthood. The support the returnees received from the Persian administration under Darius I was a decisive factor in the setback. The political and economic power in the region, however, remained largely in the hands of the Samaritans.

13. Bezael Porten, *Archives from Elephantine: The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

14. Robert P. Carroll, "The Myth of the Empty Land," in *Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts*, ed. Tina Pippin, Semeia 59 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1992), 79-93.

15. John H. Hayes and Sara R. Mandell, *The Jewish People in Classical Antiquity: From Alexander to Bar Kochba* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 1.

into captivity" (Judg 18:30).<sup>21</sup> In the monarchic age, prophets of non-Levitical descent, like the Ephraimite Samuel (1 Sam 1:1), were priests, and members of priestly families, like Jeremiah (Jer 1:1), were prophets. The boundary between priesthood and prophecy was not clearly drawn, and leaders of the prophetic movement were very much interested and often deeply involved in temple affairs as performers of cultic functions.

In the early Second Temple period, Third Isaiah and Ruth still testify to the vitality of the prophetic movement faithful to the heritage of the Davidic monarchy, and to their opposition against Zadokite exclusiveness. This explains not only Nehemiah's ruthless lack of respect for the prophet, but also the stubbornness of the Priestly writing in denying any priestly status to Moses. The Zadokite attitude toward Moses and the prophets was indeed ambivalent. They needed the prophetic mediation of Moses in order to set a divine foundation for the priesthood and the sanctuary and, accordingly, exalted the role of the prophet at Sinai. But once the revelation was completed, the tent of meeting was sealed off and turned by Moses himself into Aaron's tabernacle (Exod 40:1-35 [P]). It was time for the prophet to step back. The Aaronite line cut off the descendants of Moses from any priestly function; the genealogy of the descendants of Levi in Exod 6:16-25 (P) ignores the line of Moses completely, as if he had no sons. The role of forerunners of the priesthood deprived the prophet of any ambition of power and autonomy; Moses was the greatest prophet, as he established the priesthood of Aaron.

A credible anti-Zadokite opposition, however, did not build up around the prophets. With the end of the monarchy and the centralization of the cult, the prophets had already lost the most important war, that of survival. The social and political environment that for centuries had sustained their fortunes and authority in the Jewish society had vanished. The motives of the prophets did not fail; it was the prophets who failed as an autonomous social class and a dependable means of expression of those motives. Even before they could stand up, the prophets were doomed; others would carry on the cause of opposition.

As the voice of the prophets as an autonomous group weakened, gradually their opposition was reabsorbed and accommodated within the

21. The reading "Manasseh" (*mnsh*), instead of "Moses" (*msh*), is an ingenious yet obvious scribal correction aimed to eradicate an embarrassing tradition. See Lester L. Grabbe, *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages*, 43.

Zadokite structure of power. The aura of celebration that surrounded the glorious accomplishments of the ancient prophets covered their current subordination to the priesthood. Like the king, the prophet became a highly regarded institution of the past whose main credit was to have contributed so much to the success of the priesthood.

Chronicles pursues the Zadokite program of *damnatio memoriae* by erasing any historical reference to the cultic functions of the prophets, but also shows a less polemical and more inclusive attitude. The confrontation was over. Chronicles recruits the former cult prophets (1 Chr 25:1) and even the forgotten "sons of Moses" (23:14) into the Levitical ranks. Accordingly, "the prophets" who went up with King Josiah to the temple (2 Kgs 23:2) are transformed by 2 Chr 34:30 into "levites." Now that the priests had won the war, they could even allow themselves the luxury of being gracious. They celebrated the prophet Moses who gave the Torah to Aaron, with the same sense of gratitude they had reserved for King David who built the Jerusalem temple.

### 3. The Priestly Opposition: Enochic Judaism

In spite of its accomplishment and undeniable authority, the Zadokite hegemony was not without its critics. Specialists in ancient Jewish apocalypticism and mysticism concur in identifying the presence of a priestly opposition active in Jerusalem since the early Second Temple period.<sup>22</sup> The strength of the movement is proved by the impressively high level of sophistication of its literature, which is now preserved mostly in the modern collection of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and has the Book of the Watchers, Aramaic Levi, and the Astronomical Book as its earliest pieces of evidence. The recognition of the existence of such a "movement of dissent" is becoming a key element for any general reconstruction

22. John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*; Paolo Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History*, JSPSup 20 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990); Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); Ithamar Gruenwald, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism*, BEATAJ 14 (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1988); *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, AGJU 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1980); Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

of the development of Jewish thought in the Second Temple period, and for the understanding of Qumran and Christian origins in particular.<sup>23</sup>

We do not know what this party was called, or what it called itself in antiquity. However, since the priestly opposition to the Zadokites first coalesced around ancient myths with Enoch as their hero, the term "Enochic Judaism" seems quite appropriate and satisfactory as a modern label. What must be certainly avoided are denominations like "early Jewish apocalypticism" or "early Jewish mysticism," which are descriptive of much broader phenomena. Enochic Judaism was indeed (yet not exclusively) an apocalyptic and mystical party, but the history of early Jewish apocalypticism and mysticism is the comprehensive history of two literary genres and their respective worldviews, whose influence went far beyond the boundaries of Enochic Judaism. There are, for example, clear apocalyptic and mystical motifs in Zadokite Judaism.<sup>24</sup> Since the beginning, mysticism and apocalypticism in Judaism have never been tied to one single ideology or group.<sup>25</sup>

The catalyst of Enochic Judaism was a unique concept of the origin of evil that made the "fallen angels" (the "sons of God" also recorded in Gen 6:1-4) as ultimately responsible for the spread of evil and impurity on earth.<sup>26</sup> According to the Book of the Watchers, despite God's reaction and

23. Mark Adam Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel*; Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period*; Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*; Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Community of the Renewed Covenant: Between Judaism and Christianity," in *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Eugene C. Ulrich and James C. VanderKam (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 3-24; Florentino García Martínez, *Qumran and Apocalyptic: Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran*, STDJ 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

24. See in particular Stephen L. Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

25. This has been recognized in particular by specialists of Jewish apocalypticism. "We conclude that the apocalyptic writers were to be found not in any one party within Judaism but throughout many parties, known and unknown, and among men who owed allegiance to no party at all"; D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 27. "The apocalyptic framework is not itself tied to a particular ideology"; Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 255.

26. For a description of the early Enochic literature, see Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*; Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History*; and James C. Vanderkam, *Enoch, A Man for All Generations* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995); *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, CBQMS 16 (Washington:

the subsequent Flood, the divine order of creation was not restored. The cosmos did not return to what it was. The good angels, led by Michael, defeated the evil angels led by Semyaz and Azazel; however, the victory resulted not in the death or submission of the rebels but in their confinement "in the wilderness which was in Dudael," where the fallen angels were imprisoned "in a hole . . . underneath the rocks of the ground" (1 En 10:4-6, 11-12). The mortal bodies of the giants, the offspring of the evil union of immortal angels and mortal women, were killed (1 En 10:9-10); however, their immortal souls survived as evil spirits and continue to roam about the world (1 En 15:8-10). Humankind was decimated with the Flood but not annihilated, as Noah's family survived (1 En 10:1-3). Creation was cleansed but not totally purified, as God used water and not the "fire" that is reserved only for "the great day of judgment" (1 En 10:6). As disturbing as this idea can be, God's reaction limited but did not eradicate evil. A time of "seventy generations" was set "until the eternal judgment is concluded" (1 En 10:12).

The anti-Zadokite implications of the Enochic myth are obvious. First, against the Zadokite idea of stability and order, the Enochians argued that God's order was no more, having been replaced by the current disorder. In their view, the rebellion of the "sons of God" was not simply one of the primeval sins that characterized the ancient history of humankind; it is the mother of all sins, the original sin which corrupted and contaminated God's creation and from which evil relentlessly continues to spring forth and spread. By crossing the boundaries between heaven and earth, the angels broke apart the divisions set by God at the time of creation. The consequent unleashing of chaotic forces condemns humans to be victims of an evil they have not caused and cannot resist.

Second, against the Zadokite idea of stability and order, Enochic Judaism introduced the concept of the "end of days" as the time of final judgment and vindication beyond death and history. What in the prophetic tradition was the announcement of some indeterminate future event of God's intervention became the expectation of a final cataclysmic event that will mark the end of God's first creation and the beginning of a second creation — a new world qualitatively different from, and discontinu-

Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984); Matthias Delcor, "Le mythe de la chute des anges et de l'origine des géants comme explication du mal dans le monde dans l'apocryphe juive: Histoire des traditions," *RHR* 190 (1976): 3-53.



ous with, what was before.<sup>27</sup> Such an idea has become so closely associated to Judaism (and Christianity) that it is difficult for us even to imagine a time when it was not. But that God's creation has not only a "beginning" but also an "end" contradicts the infallibility of God and God's unchallenged control over creation. No one needs to build a new house if the old one is perfect. Why should God feel compelled to remake what God said was "very good"? Which mistake has God made to make creation deteriorate so rapidly that God cannot fix it anymore? And if the infallible God did not make any mistake, how can the almighty God have allowed the creature to spoil God's work? The concept of new creation implies that something went wrong in the first creation — a disturbing and quite embarrassing idea that the Zadokites could not accept without denying the very foundations of their theology and power.

Third, against the Zadokite idea of stability and order, the Enochians openly challenged the legitimacy of the ruling priesthood. In a seminal article in 1976, Michael A. Knibb was the first to notice, almost with surprise, that according to the Enochic literature the Babylonian exile has not ended yet: Israel is still in exile.<sup>28</sup> The attribution to Enoch of priestly characteristics as the intercessor in heaven between God and the fallen angels as well as the warnings of Aramaic Levi about his apostate descendants assume the existence of a purer pre-Aaronite priesthood and disrupt the Sinaitic foundations of the Zadokite structure of power as a later degeneration. When transferred within the Enochian worldview, the Zadokite claim of being the faithful keepers of the cosmic order sounds like the grotesque and guilty pretentiousness of evil usurpers.

Finally, against the Zadokite idea of stability and order, the Enochians questioned the correspondence of the cultic calendar with the cosmic structure, as attested by the existence, at least by the 3rd century B.C.E., of calendrical discussions. The Astronomical Book claims that "people err" in not reckoning equinoxes and solstices as "days" of the months and the year as the angel Uriel reveals to Enoch. In place of the 360 days plus four intercalary times between seasons of the Zadokite calendar, Enochic Judaism promoted a year of 364 "days" with a seasonal cycle of two 30-day and

27. Jean Carmignac, "La notion d'eschatologie dans la bible et à Qumrân," *RevQ* 7 (1969): 17-31.

28. Michael A. Knibb, "The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period," *Heyf* 17 (1976): 253-72.

one 31-day months.<sup>29</sup> The discussion was more theoretical than practical; as it did not alter the sabbatical cycle, it affected only marginally the succession of sacred days and the regularity of the cult. However, even the dimension of time is compounded to the Enochians' list of complaints against the Zadokite priesthood — a factor that would have dramatic developments after the Maccabean Revolt, when the lunar calendar was enforced in the temple.

While the anti-Zadokite character of Enochic Judaism seems to be unquestionable, the origins of such an opposition party remain largely obscure. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the pre-Maccabean origin of Enochic literature was the authoritative yet still minority stance of some distinguished specialists in ancient Judaism. In particular, the multiple stages of composition of the Book of the Watchers led Robert H. Charles to believe that the document might have had a long and complex prehistory before its final redaction in the 2nd century B.C.E.<sup>30</sup>

The publication of the Aramaic fragments of 1 Enoch by Josef T. Milik in 1976 provided the breakthrough.<sup>31</sup> It was no longer possible to claim that Enochic Judaism generated in the wake of the Maccabean Revolt as a reaction to the process of Hellenization. The oldest manuscript of the Book of Astronomy went back "to the end of the third or the beginning of the second century BCE," and the Book of the Watchers was already attested in its final shape by "the first half of the second century BCE."<sup>32</sup> Milik was also convinced that the relationship between Genesis and the Book of the Watchers (or at least its oldest stratum, chs. 6-19) had to be reversed. Far from being an expansion of the biblical text, the Enochic version of the myth of the fallen angels was the original source and predated the composition of the "Yahwist." Making the Genesis passage (Gen 6:1-4) a shortened form of the Enochic text implied a very ancient, preexilic origin for the Enochic movement.

Accordingly, Margaret Barker presented Enochic Judaism as a survival

29. See Boccaccini, "The Solar Calendars of Daniel and Enoch"; cf. Paolo Sacchi, "The Two Calendars of the *Book of Astronomy*," *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History*, 128-39; "Testi palestinesi anteriori al 200 a.C. con particolare riguardo al problema dei due calendari solari del Libro dell'Astronomia," *RivB* 34 (1986): 183-204.

30. R. H. Charles, "Book of Enoch," *APOT* 2 (1913): 163-281.

31. Josef T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976).

32. Milik, 22.

form of the religion of the First Temple, which the Zadokites replaced and tried in vain to eradicate. "What we have in Enoch is the writing of a very conservative group whose roots go right back to the time of the first temple."<sup>33</sup>

Barker is certainly right when she warns against having "a double standard when it comes to the dating of non-biblical texts." It cannot be assumed that "biblical texts" are necessarily old unless the opposite is proven, while "non-biblical texts" are necessarily late unless the opposite is proven. The problem of dating the different parts of 1 Enoch needs to be addressed "with open minds" by asking the proper questions: "when [the documents] might have been written, where the ideas originated, and who cherished them sufficiently to preserve and transmit them."<sup>34</sup> The actual composition of these documents could be earlier, even much earlier, than the end of the 3rd century B.C.E., when the texts were copied in the scrolls found at Qumran.

Barker is also correct when she argues that "the Genesis account of the fallen angels. . . has also been heavily edited."<sup>35</sup> On the one hand, the Genesis texts are abridged versions of stories of which the authors knew more than they chose to include: the logic is confused, the language does not run smoothly, and one cannot help smelling embarrassment and censorship. On the other hand, the Enoch texts can hardly be characterized simply as additions or expansions of Genesis; the author is interested neither in clarifying the obscurity of the biblical texts nor in using Genesis as a source of legitimacy. His theological agenda seems to rest on completely autonomous sources. "1 Enoch preserves ancient ideas that have dropped from the Old Testament."<sup>36</sup>

Scholars have long recognized the antiquity of the traditions about the fallen angels. These traditions go back to the Babylonian milieu of the exilic age and to the preexilic mythological and polytheistic heritage that the ancient Israelite religion shared with the other peoples of the Near East.<sup>37</sup>

33. Margaret Barker, *The Lost Prophet: The Book of Enoch and Its Influence on Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 19.

34. Barker, 105.

35. Barker, 19.

36. Barker, 108.

37. A. Kirk Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

The myth of fallen "sons of gods" was also well known by the early Greek mythology, where the cosmic battle between Olympians and Titans led to Zeus' rise to power and to the defeat and enslavement of the Titans in Tartaros far below earth.<sup>38</sup> When later the titan Prometheus gave humankind the fire he stole from Zeus and the titan Epimetheus married Pandora, the result was the Great Flood and the spreading of every sort of evil on earth.<sup>39</sup> The giants also were familiar, transcultural characters; even Josephus knew this: "the deeds that tradition ascribes to [the *nephilim*] resemble the audacious exploits told by the Greeks of the giants" (*Ant* 1.73).<sup>40</sup>

The antiquity of these traditions, however, cannot be used to support an ancient, preexilic origin for Enochic Judaism. Dating traditions is not the same as dating documents, social groups, and systems of thought, exactly as the age of a building cannot be dated by the age of its bricks. Using such a criterion uncritically, one should conclude that most Romanesque churches go back to pre-Christian times as they are often built out of the ruins of ancient pagan temples, and that Christianity already existed before Jesus as so many traditions in the New Testament clearly predate the 1st century C.E. The evidence that Enochic literature is rooted in very ancient oral and literary traditions does not give an exact clue to the time of the emergence of Enochic Judaism as an established movement.

Moreover, there are some compelling reasons that prevent us from seeing Enochic Judaism as a conservative pre-Zadokite movement, and that indicate a more likely post-Zadokite setting.

First, the theological problem that the Book of the Watchers wants to address, that of the origin of evil, makes sense only within the monotheistic context of Second Temple Judaism as an attempt to absolve the one, all-good and all-powerful God from being the source of evil. We simply do not know what the meaning of the story of the fallen angels was within the ancient polytheistic religion of Israel in which it originated. The function the myth now exercises within the Book of the Watchers belongs to a later stage of reinterpretation which parallels that testified to in Genesis.

38. See Timothy Ganz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 44-56.

39. Ganz, 152-66.

40. Ganz, 445-54.

In the biblical text the story of the fallen angels was first taken as an example of the ancient sins that characterized the primeval history of humankind — a regrettable incident but without lasting consequences. The Zadokite historiography, which inherited the story, shows the concern of further downplaying the already demythologized narrative. There was in fact a dangerous potential of disruption in the idea that both angels in their sin and God in God's punishment trespassed the boundaries of creation that separate heaven from earth and the waters of below from the waters of above, respectively. The story of the covenant with Noah was advisedly added to reassure people that never again would God either tolerate or cause any trespassing (Gen 8:21-22).

What makes Enochic Judaism differ from Zadokite Judaism is not the reference to the fallen angels but the different meaning given to the same ancient story. The narrative was developed according to an opposite trajectory, to the extent of making it the central paradigm for the origin of sin and evil. In itself the myth of the fallen angels is neither Enochic nor Zadokite, but belongs to the common polytheistic heritage of both movements.

Second, the beginning of Enochic Judaism is the link that the Book of the Watchers established between Enoch and the story of the fallen angels. It was the presence of the heavenly seer that made it possible to use the polytheistic myth in order to solve a monotheistic problem, by giving a new theological meaning to the ancient narrative and fully exploiting its subversive potential.

Living in heaven, Enoch had a firsthand knowledge of the secrets of heaven and a continuous ability to communicate with his son Methuselah, the grandfather of Noah. The heavenly dwelling and the familial ties made Enoch the perfect forerunner of a tradition that claimed to have survived the Flood and reached the present of Israel. The antiquity of Enoch also made him the perfect vehicle for a revelation that claimed to be over and above that of Moses. But if the presence of Enoch is so crucial for the birth of Enochic Judaism, when did the association between the fallen angels and the heavenly seer occur?

There are strong indications that "Enoch was developed as a Jewish counterpart of such heroes as Enmeduranki . . . the Mesopotamian seventh king . . . [who] was the founder of a guild of diviners and a recipient of revelations."<sup>41</sup> The character of Enoch therefore is as pre-Zadokite as

the fallen angels; his origins lie in the ancient Mesopotamian tradition.<sup>42</sup> However, there is no evidence that Enochic Judaism inherited the connection between Enoch and the fallen angels as something that already belonged to an earlier stage of the tradition. Both the parallel versions of the myth of the fallen angels in the Book of the Watchers (1 En 6-11) and Genesis (6:1-4) do not contain any reference to Enoch and make perfect sense without him. Before Enochic Judaism, Enoch and the fallen angels were autonomous mythological characters, belonging to autonomous cycles of narrative.

This view is confirmed by the fact that Enoch and the fallen angels entered the Torah at different stages. While the story of the fallen angels belongs to an earlier layer of the Genesis narrative, the character of Enoch was only a postexilic addition by the Priestly writing. According to Gen 5:18-24 {P}, Enoch was the seventh in the genealogy of Adam. His father, Jared, "lived after the birth of Enoch eight hundred years. . . . When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methuselah. Enoch walked with the *elohim* [= angels] after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years. . . . Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. Enoch walked with the *elohim* [= angels]; then he was no more, because Elohim [= God] took him."

In no way does the character of Enoch affect the previous and subsequent narrative. Enoch is an erratic meteor once met in a close encounter and then lost in the depths of outer space. According to the Priestly writing, however, Enoch lived immediately before the Flood, which happened to make him contemporaneous to the episode of the fallen angels. The Priestly writing did not make the connection; yet it created the chronological framework that made it possible.

The chronology of the Book of the Watchers depends on the Zadokite narrative. After presenting its version of the ancient myth of the fallen angels without any reference to Enoch (1 En 6-11), the text continues: "Before these things (happened) Enoch was hidden, and no one of the children of the people knew by what he was hidden and where he was. And his dwelling place as well as his activities were with the Watchers and the holy ones; and (so were) his days" (1 En 12:1-2). The Enoch who witnessed the

42. Helge S. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man*, WMANT 61 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1988).

41. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 44-47.

sin of the fallen angels is clearly the same Enoch introduced by the Priestly author, the one who spent his days with the *elohim*. The synchrony is strengthened by the specification that the fallen angels descended "in the days of Jared," the father of Enoch (1 En 6:6 [4Q201 (4QEnoch a) and Greek; the Ethiopic is corrupted]).

Paolo Sacchi disagrees on this point. He argues that the original context of the Book of the Watchers implies that Jared is the son of Enoch, not his father, because "Enoch was hidden *before* these things happened" (1 En 12:1). In his view, 1 Enoch followed the chronology of the Yahwist (Gen 4:18), not that of the Priestly writing.<sup>43</sup> But this is not the case. According to the chronology of the Priestly writing, Jared was still alive when "Enoch was taken by God," which invalidates the argument that the fall of the angels may not have happened after Enoch's ascent to heaven and still "at the time of Jared." Besides, according to the Zadokite interpretation, Enoch "walked with the angels" even before he was taken away by God.<sup>44</sup>

This seems to be the most likely perspective of the Enoch texts, for which Enoch acted for some time as a mediator between heaven and earth. He received the revelation from the angels, while he was still in contact with his earthly family. According to the Book of Astronomy (1 En 81:6), after Enoch received divine revelation, a period of one year was granted to him to dwell with his son Methuselah "... and teach [his] children ... and in the second year, [he] shall be taken away from (among) all of them." The time when Enoch "was hidden ... and his dwelling place was among the Watchers" (1 En 12:1-2) may well refer to the time when he walked with the *elohim*, not to the time when he was taken away by God. The chronology of chs. 106-7, which is held to be a very ancient fragment of the Book of Noah, also depends on the priestly chronology, according to which Noah was born 69 years after Enoch was taken away by God.<sup>45</sup> Consistently, this time it was not Enoch who visited his family but rather Methuselah who had to go and visit his father's "dwelling place ... among the angels ... at the ends of the earth" (1 En 106:7-8). The only chronolog-

43. See Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History*, 157.

44. See VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, 31; and Deborah Dimant, "The Biography of Enoch and the Books of Enoch," VT 33 (1983): 14-29.

45. García Martínez, *Qumran and Apocalyptic*, 27-28.

ical framework that the Enoch literature knows and uses, even in its most ancient texts, is that provided by the Priestly writing.

Thanks to Enoch, myths that in the Zadokite Torah resurfaced only in the form of obscure and theologically inert allusions were given new life and were turned into the cornerstone of an autonomous and alternative system of thought. However, it was only thanks to the Zadokite Torah that Enoch was connected to the story of the fallen angels and to the primeval history of Israel. Also from the literary point of view, Enochic Judaism was a side-effect of the Zadokite editing of the ancient biblical narrative.

Third and finally, not only are Enochic and Zadokite Judaism rooted in a common mythological legacy, not only does the Enochic narrative depend on the Zadokite chronology, but both traditions share the same priestly background. Scholars have not failed to emphasize the many parallels between Ezekiel and the Book of the Watchers (esp. chs. 21-36), so much so that both Enochic and Zadokite Judaism can legitimately claim a father-child relationship with the exiled prophet-priest.<sup>46</sup>

There is now a widespread scholarly consensus that in the Enochic literature the myth of the fallen angels is a mirror of intrapriestly conflicts. The story reflects an experience of exclusion and disorder that interrupts a brief period of order, exactly as a "plot" of evil forces came shortly after the creative act of God.<sup>47</sup> As Benjamin G. Wright III has effectively said, Enochic Judaism voices "groups of priests and scribes who feel marginalized and even disenfranchised vis-à-vis the ruling priests in Jerusalem."<sup>48</sup>

The strong antipriestly attitudes of the Enoch books do not signal that this literature came from nonpriestly circles, as Paul D. Hanson believed.<sup>49</sup> Enochic Judaism was not the reaction of outsiders against the Zadokite order, but rather was the cry of insiders who (after a brief period of order) had seen denied (lost) (what they claimed were) their rights within the divine order. In the priestly worldview, the exclusion of legitimate priests from the earthly sanctuary could only mean that a "rebellion in heaven" had occurred; humans had now to cope with "the collapse of the order of

46. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*.

47. David W. Suter, "Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest: The Problem of Family Purity in 1 Enoch 6-16," HUCA 50 (1979): 115-35.

48. Benjamin G. Wright, "Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest: Ben Sira as Defender of the Jerusalem Priesthood," in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research*, ed. Pancratius C. Beentjes, BZAW 255 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), 189-222 (quotation, 218).

49. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*.

creation, with pugnacious forces unleashed in a vicious process of degeneration and decay.”<sup>50</sup>

Enochic Judaism was a post- and anti-Zadokite phenomenon, a reaction to their claims, made by people who viewed themselves as priests and shared the same worldview and traditions as the Zadokites, while denouncing a present of degeneration and disorder due to the rebellion of evil usurpers which caused the collapse of the divine order. Hence, the birth of Enochic Judaism must be located somewhere between the Priestly writing and the 3rd century B.C.E., after the return from the exile and the establishment of Zadokite order, before the writing of the earliest extant copies of 1 Enoch found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Can we be even more specific?

Scholars generally point to the Hellenistic period. “The fallen angels induced culture shock in the prediluvian generation. Similar culture shock in Israel in the Hellenistic period gave rise to the apocalyptic visions ascribed to Enoch.”<sup>51</sup> More specifically, George W. E. Nickelsburg has suggested that we should detect in the myth of the fallen angels a reflection of the wars of the Diadochi.<sup>52</sup>

The 4th-century origin of Enochic Judaism is strongly articulated and advocated by Paolo Sacchi and the Italian school of apocalypticism.<sup>53</sup> To the arguments already proposed by Charles and Milik about the complex textual prehistory of the document and its multiple stages of composition, Sacchi adds ideological considerations, pointing to the similarities between the Book of the Watchers and Chronicles. He sees Qoheleth as the terminus ad quem: “[The Book of the Watchers] must be earlier even than Qoheleth, who would not have spoken ironically of those who believe in the immortality of the soul if certain ideas had not circulated, and with a certain frequency, in the Jerusalem of his time.”<sup>54</sup>

50. Paul D. Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6–11,” *JBL* 96 (1977): 195–233 (quotation, 199–200).

51. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 51.

52. George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981).

53. Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History*, 13–108; *The History of the Second Temple Period*, 174–82; cf. Gabriele Boccaccini, “Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition: The Contribution of Italian Scholarship,” in *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium*, ed. John J. Collins and James H. Charlesworth, *JSPSup* 9 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 33–50.

54. Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History*, 61.

In light of my reconstruction of Zadokite origins, the 4th century appears to be a more likely setting for the emergence of a movement like Enochic Judaism than the early Hellenistic period. We have no evidence that the Hellenistic conquest provoked any “culture shock” in the Jerusalem priesthood in the 3rd century. At the beginning, Hellenism produced more attraction than rejection within the priestly circles; the rise of Jewish nationalism and of a militant anti-Hellenistic party belongs only to the Seleucid period.<sup>55</sup>

Against the turmoil(s) that in the 5th and 4th century accompanied the Zadokite rise to power, the 3rd century appears as a period of stability and order. There was struggle and fighting about the political role of the priesthood, but no significant change occurred in the structure of the priestly hierarchy, as described by Chronicles. No one questioned the legitimacy of the hereditary Zadokite high priesthood or the threefold distinction of sons of Levi, sons of Aaron, and sons of Phinehas. There may have been some minor changes in the order of priestly and Levitical classes, but no class was added or expelled. On the contrary, the 4th century was indeed a critical period of controversy and division within the priesthood — a time of flexibility and uncertainty, when the boundaries between being in or out were not yet clearly defined, and the hope of being included was no less than the fear of being excluded.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Zadokite struggle for power in the Persian period was marked by the production of genealogical lists that aimed to justify their authority while enlarging the basis of consensus. But the process worked also through exclusions and purges. The same genealogical lists through which the Zadokites co-opted (or were forced to co-opt) some of their most powerful adversaries as allies functioned as lists of proscription against their weakest adversaries. Translated into the bureaucratic language of census and accountability, it was certified that some families “proved” their genealogical right to the priesthood, while others never did or suddenly could no longer prove it.

One of the several lists that have survived (1 Esd 5:38–40 = Ezra 2:61–63 = Neh 7:63–65) keeps memory of some “of the priests,” namely “the descendants of Habaiah, Hakkoz, and Jaddus (Barzillai),” who “had assumed the priesthood” (1 Esd 5:38); but when the Jerusalem temple authorities

55. Doron Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (1992, repr. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997).

"looked for their entries in the genealogical records, they were not found there, and so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. . . . [Hence], the governor told them not to share in the holy things until a [high] priest [Ezra] with Urim and Thummim should come."

This ancient priestly document is certainly not the faithful list of the returned exiles under Zerubbabel and Joshua that it pretends to be. Yet, its archaic distinction of the priesthood in four classes and only two additional classes of levites, as well as its archaic reference to Urim and Thummim, makes the text belong to an early stage in the development of Zadokite Judaism. Since the division of priesthood into four classes is consistent with the tradition of Ezra (cf. Ezra 10:18-22 = 1 Esd 9:18-22), the passage most likely reflects the situation at the beginning of the 4th century, before Chronicles and its 24 classes of priests.

The condition of those priests who were excluded was far more miserable than that of most Levitical families. These are not people who tried to make a claim to the priesthood and failed. These are people who did serve as priests for some time in the Second Temple, only to be excluded later. They were reckoned among the priests and, according to an enlightening detail that resurfaces only in 1 Esdras, "had assumed the priesthood" (1 Esd 5:38), that is, had ministered in the Second Temple for a while, yet for reasons that remain unknown to us they were doomed with the worst possible punishment. While they saw some other Levitical families gain the priesthood, they experienced a traumatic devolution in their status.

We are not claiming, of course, that the Enochians were indeed "the descendants of Habaiah, Hakkoz, and Jaddus," but the passage offers a very likely 4th-century context for the origins of the conflict that opposed the Zadokites (and their Aaronite allies) to members of dissident priestly families.

Unlike the situation with the Samaritans, we have no evidence that the Enochians formed a schismatic community, in Palestine or elsewhere. John J. Collins agrees: "It does not appear . . . that the bearers of the Enoch tradition before the Maccabean revolt were separated from the rest of Judaism in the manner of the later Qumran community."<sup>56</sup> The Enochians were an opposition party within the Jerusalem aristocracy, not a group of separatists. The words of Robert A. Kugler about Aramaic Levi apply to the entire Enochic literature in pre-Maccabean times: it testifies to "a period

56. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 79.

of time when there was a dispute regarding the proper character of the priestly office, but when the discussion was still quite tame, and there was yet room for differences of opinion."<sup>57</sup> It was only the Maccabean Revolt that caused Enochic Judaism to grow and expand into something different and larger — a movement of dissent that would be ultimately known as Essenism.<sup>58</sup> What at the beginning was probably only the experience of exclusion of a few priestly families generated a sophisticated theological alternative that would attract a large portion of the Jewish population and become a powerful and potentially schismatic component of ancient Jewish thought, ultimately fostering the most radical schism of all, that of Christianity.

#### 4. The Lay Opposition: Sapiential Judaism

The Enochians were not the only opposition party in early Second Temple Judaism. "Instruction must not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophets" — said Jeremiah (Jer 18:18; cf. Ezek 7:26), seeking a future and balanced coexistence for the religious authorities of preexilic Judaism. In its disproportionate growth, postexilic priesthood silenced the prophet but did not suffocate nor domesticate the wise. Indeed, the early Second Temple period was the golden age for Jewish wisdom traditions. Unlike Enochic Judaism, Sapiential Judaism was a form of Judaism that originated in the monarchic period prior to, and independently of, Zadokite Judaism, and was able to flourish and maintain its autonomy in the Zadokite society. The books of Ahiqar, Proverbs, Job, and Jonah testify to the continuity of scribal schools from preexilic times throughout the Persian period. The dual structure of postexilic Jewish society, with the Zadokite priests in charge of the temple and an autonomous Persian administration led by a governor in charge of political affairs, gave the proper setting for the development of Sapiential Judaism as an autonomous movement.

The most striking feature of Sapiential Judaism is the absence of any

57. Robert A. Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest: The Levi-Priestly Tradition from Aramaic Levi to Testament of Levi*, *Early Judaism and Its Literature* 9 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), 135.

58. See Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*.