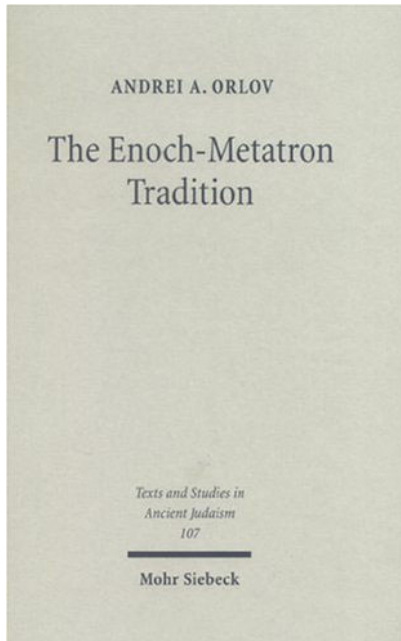


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**Orlov, Andrei A.**

***The Enoch-Metatron Tradition***

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James R. Davila  
University of St. Andrews  
St. Andrews, United Kingdom

In this book Andrei Orlov addresses important questions about the origins of the mysterious book of *2 Enoch*, which survives only in Slavonic manuscripts in two or more recensions. He sets *2 Enoch* within the context of the early and late Enochic traditions as a whole and draws significant conclusions about its relationship to these other traditions, although not all of his conclusions are persuasive.

The introduction sets the stage with a review of scholarship on early Jewish mysticism and the book of *2 Enoch*, introducing the thesis that the traditions of the Slavonic work preserve a stage intermediate between the early Enoch literature and the Hekhalot traditions about Enoch-Metatron, but a stage stemming nonetheless from the late Second Temple period. Part 1 deals with the roles and titles of Enoch from his Mesopotamian antecedents to the arguably latest Enochic traditions in the book of *3 Enoch*. The first chapter surveys the roles and titles associated with the Mesopotamian antediluvian sage Enmeduranki, who is widely understood to have served as a template for the traditions about Enoch. Chapter 2 looks at the roles and titles of Enoch in the earliest Enoch traditions found in the works collected in the book of *1 Enoch*, dividing them into older ideas found also in the Enmeduranki tradition, and perhaps deriving from that tradition,

and new ones found only in the Similitudes. Chapter 3 analyzes both old roles and titles for Enoch as developed further in *3 Enoch* and related materials and also new roles not found in the earlier Enochic traditions. It also discusses possible etymologies for the title Metatron and concludes that the new roles and titles of Enoch-Metatron are often shared by other angels, raising the possibility that they arose in a polemical context of competing mediator figures. Chapter 4, which presents the central argument of the book, analyzes the roles and titles of Enoch in *2 Enoch* (once again categorized as “new” and “old”), arguing that they are transitional between those of *1 Enoch* and those of *3 Enoch*.

Part 2 deals with polemics in *2 Enoch* about biblical characters and the implications of these polemics. Chapter 5 treats Adamic polemics with reference to some Enochic titles, concluding that *2 Enoch* transfers a number of mythic features of Adam to Enoch. Chapter 6 looks at Mosaic polemics with special reference to the title “Prince of the Face.” Orlov argues that the Moses tradition applied Enochic features to Moses in order to downplay Enoch’s authority, while at roughly the same time the Enochic tradition applied Mosaic features to Enoch and portrayed Moses as subordinate to the angelified Enoch. Chapter 7 deals with Noachic polemics and their implications for the date of *2 Enoch*. The main argument is that Noah’s priestly role in the earlier Enoch literature is downplayed in *2 Enoch* in favor of priestly roles for his otherwise unknown brother Nir, his grandson Methuselah, and the priest Melchizedek, thus diffusing Noah’s exalted status and making him less of a competitor for Enoch.

The first part of Orlov’s thesis (the stratigraphic place of *2 Enoch* in the Enoch traditions) is largely persuasive, but the second part (the Second Temple date for the work) is considerably less so. He makes a good case that some of the roles and titles of Enoch in *2 Enoch* (notably the title Prince of the Face and the scribal, priestly/liturgical, divinatory, and universalized mediatorial roles) are more developed than in *1 Enoch* but less so than in *3 Enoch*. Likewise, some elements of the anti-Mosaic polemics in *2 Enoch* are closer to Second Temple traditions than those in *3 Enoch*. The title *prometaya* may be a precursor to the name Metatron, but this is not certain. The title “Youth” and the roles of governor of the world and God’s enthroned vice-regent are close to the forms found in *3 Enoch* but not obviously earlier. The idea of Enoch’s heavenly counterpart or double may be present in both the Similitudes and *2 Enoch*, but this is not certain in either case. The Zoharic parallels to the secrets of creation in *2 Enoch* are intriguing, but it is special pleading to assert that the Zohar preserves early traditions in this case. Orlov does demonstrate that *2 Enoch* knows many Enochic traditions similar to (and sometimes less developed than) those in *3 Enoch* and other late Jewish mystical texts, but at most this points to a date of composition no later than the early Middle Ages. The interest of *2 Enoch* in sacrifice, temple, and Jewish ritual, along with the odd assertion in chapter 64 that Enoch bears away the sins of the human race, sit better in a sectarian Jewish context than a Christian

one. Orlov does not discuss the calendrical material of the work in any detail, but it too may point to a sectarian Jewish origin. The degree of Christian composition, editing, and interpolation during what was clearly a long and complicated transmission is difficult to assess until a critical text of the work is available that takes into account all of the manuscript evidence. (Grant Macaskill at the University of St. Andrews is now working on a new critical text.)

Orlov frequently asserts a Second Temple date for *2 Enoch* and appeals to a consensus for this date (e.g., on 16, 152, 181, 241, 278, 326), but he has very few arguments in its favor, and these are not compelling. It is true that we find some polemics about sacrificial practices that could argue for a date when the temple was still standing, but there are few such, and we should not underestimate the potential role of post-temple antiquarian and utopian interests in a work of this type. Likewise, the apparent polemic against Noah's priestly status in *2 Enoch* is not found in post-Second Temple literature, but to conclude that all interest in these issues ended with the destruction of the temple is to argue from silence. Jewish polemics about the priesthood continued long after the loss of the temple, as is illustrated, for example, by the post-talmudic traditions about R. Ishmael, Melchizedek, and Metatron as high priests, which shifted according to the ideology and agenda of those who wrote about them—sometimes apparently even in competition with Christian theology (see Ra'anana S. Boustán, *From Martyr to Mystic* [TSAJ 112; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005], for details.) In general, Orlov does not give us a clear picture of the social situation he envisages behind the Adamic, Mosaic, and Noachic polemics. He proposes that the social context may be the first-century C.E. Alexandrian Diaspora (187, 241), but this suggestion is not developed in any detail.

Orlov's main contribution is to draw attention to the close relationship between the traditions in *2 Enoch* and *3 Enoch* and to put forward some indications that those in *2 Enoch* are less developed and therefore plausibly earlier. This is an important advance in the discussion. His development of the case that the Son of Man in the Similitudes is Enoch's heavenly double is also a noteworthy contribution. But the evidence he presents for a Second Temple date of composition of *2 Enoch* is not convincing. Such a date cannot be ruled out and may indeed prove to be correct, but at this stage of research a date of composition in late antiquity or even the early Middle Ages remains possible. Nevertheless, Orlov is to be commended for asking the right questions and marshalling evidence that moves our understanding of this baffling document forward. His book should be read by anyone interested in the Enochic and Hekhalot traditions.