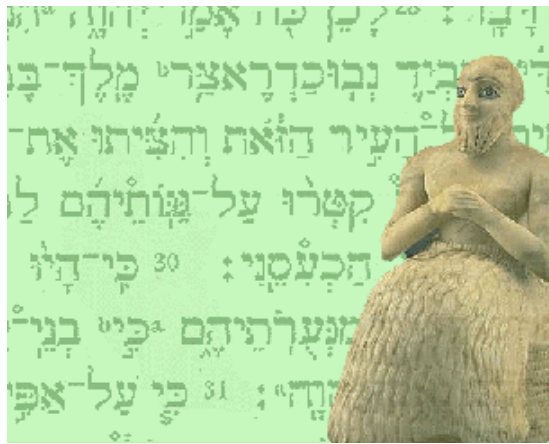


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**VERONIKA BACHMANN,
THE BOOK OF THE WATCHERS (1 ENOCH 1–36):
AN ANTI-MOSAIC, NON-MOSAIC, OR EVEN
PRO-MOSAIC WRITING?**

THE BOOK OF THE WATCHERS (1 ENOCH 1–36): AN ANTI-MOSAIC, NON-MOSAIC, OR EVEN PRO-MOSAIC WRITING?

VERONIKA BACHMANN
UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH

INTRODUCTION

Among the different sections of the First or Ethiopic Book of Enoch, the so-called Book of the Watchers (BW) (1 Enoch 1–36) is probably the catchiest one. It tells the story of angels who decided to transgress the boundaries of the cosmic order established by God. The consequences of their transgression are described as disastrous: The heavenly angels intrude into the worldly and human sphere causing chaos and suffering. The BW, however, is not just a story about these angels, their “fall,” and the world thrown out of order. On a narrative level, the story is told by Enoch, one of the human forefathers mentioned in Genesis 5:18–24. The entire BW is presented as his “words of blessing” addressing a distant generation (1 Enoch 1:1–2). Furthermore, Enoch tells us of his own role within the resolution of the story: He is told to act as a messenger between God and the angels, and to announce and underline God’s condemnation of the angels and their sin. Having in mind the BW’s pseudepigraphic character and the fact that Enoch plays an important role within the plot, it seems appropriate to adopt the common labelling of the writing and to call the BW an “Enochic writing.” From such a perspective, the qualifier “Enochic” basically highlights the narrative weight given to the fictive figure of Enoch by a set of writings.

However, some scholars go even further: They call the BW “Enochic” claiming that the writing offers clues to trace back to a social group within Judaism which they call “the Enochians.” In their opinion, this group is a dissent movement, which no longer belongs to the predominant stream of Judaism, but opposes it. Against this background, the meaning of “Enochic” obviously turns into an ideological issue. “Enochic” becomes a label opposed to labels such as “Mosaic” or “Zadokite.” According to Gabriele Boccaccini, who prominently argues for the existence of an “Enochic Judaism,”¹ such a movement originates from conflicts be-

¹ Cf. Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); idem, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); idem, “Enochians, Urban Essenes,

tween priestly groups after the return from the Babylonian exile. While the “Zadokites” became the dominant priestly group, the religious authorities of the Second Temple period, the “Enochians” became the defeated dissidents, adopting a priestly and anti-priestly attitude at the same time. Accordingly, scholars claiming an “Enochic Judaism” assume that the BW expresses both this priestly and anti-priestly character.

The idea of an “Enochic Judaism” is not without controversy.² Nevertheless, it became quite common to characterize the BW as an anti-priestly as well as an anti-mosaic or at least non-mosaic writing. In addition, many scholars tend to assume a somewhat common “Enochic” ideology shared by all writings centering on the figure of Enoch.³ Such an interpretation has a long history,

Qumranites: Three Social Groups, one Intellectual Movement,” idem and John J. Collins (eds.), *The Early Enoch Literature* (JSJSup, 121; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), 301–27. Boccaccini’s work is influenced by Paolo Sacchi’s contributions on Second Temple Judaism(s), cf. Paolo Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History* (JSPSup, 20; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997). How Sacchi’s assumptions in turn became interwoven with Boccaccini’s sharpened thoughts about the “Enoch literature” becomes clear in Paolo Sacchi, “The Book of the Watchers as an Apocalyptic and Apocryphal Text,” *Henoch* 30 (2008), 9–26.

² Cf. the caveats uttered by different scholars in part five of Gabriele Boccaccini (ed.), *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005). Evaluating the contributions published in Gabriele Boccaccini and John J. Collins (eds.), *The Early Enoch Literature*, Florentino García Martínez underlines the exigency “to verify the existence of a sociological community behind the literary compositions which are the Enochic works, or to disprove totally its existence and dismiss it as a scholarly construct.” [Idem, “Conclusion: Mapping the Threads,” Gabriele Boccaccini and John J. Collins (eds.), *The Early Enoch Literature* (JSJSup, 121; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), 329–35 (334).]

³ Some of the above said scholars and their assumptions are mentioned in the following chapter. For recent contributions assuming that the BW raises priestly issues, cf. Martha Himmelfarb, “Temple and Priests in the Book of the Watchers, the Animal Apocalypse, and the Apocalypse of Weeks,” in *The Early Enoch Literature*, 219–35; Grant Macaskill, “Priestly Purity, Mosaic Torah, and the Emergence of Enochic Judaism,” *Henoch* 29 (2007), 67–89; David W. Suter, “Temples and the Temple in the Early Enoch Tradition: Memory, Vision, and Expectation,” in *The Early Enoch Literature*, 195–218; Luca Arcari, “Autodefinizione sacerdotale e polemica contro i detentori del culto templare nel giudaismo del Secondo Tempio (enochismo e Qumran) e nel protocristianesimo (Ap),” *Ricerche storico bibliche* 21 (2009), 83–125; Helge S. Kvanvig, “Enochic Judaism: A Judaism Without the Torah and the Temple?,” Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (eds.), *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 163–77; Annette Y. Reed, “Enochic and Mosaic Traditions in Jubilees: The Evidence of Angelology and Demonology,” *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, 353–68. A more cautious stance is, for instance, taken by Pierluigi Piovaneli, “Sitting by the Waters

whereby the influence of scholars such as G. H. Dix is unmistakable: In the twenties of the last century, Dix published his famous article “The Enochic Pentateuch.” Here, he describes the composers of 1 Enoch as “religious rebels,” as “spiritual revolutionaries,” and as “the non-conformists of their day.”⁴ As the title of the article suggests, Dix speaks of an “Enochic Pentateuch.” In his view, this Pentateuch formed “another Torah, framed upon the model of the Mosaic Torah...”⁵

The aim of the present paper is to examine the question of whether it is adequate to speak of the BW as an anti- or non-mosaic writing. Do the characteristics of the narrative allow for such conclusions? The question has already been raised from a critical point of view by Kelley Coblenz Bautch.⁶ She cautiously concludes:

“For those who understand the Enochic community to be ambivalent toward the Mosaic legacy, it would seem that still more evidence would be helpful in order for us to clearly discern a divide between the developing Enochic tradition and that of Mosaic Judaism. On the other hand, for those who understand the Enochic corpus as further proof of covenantal nomism or as consisting of works that attest to the same kind of Judaism as presented in Ezra or Ben Sira, it would seem

of Dan,’ or the ‘Tricky Business’ of Tracing the Social Profile of the Communities that Produced the Earliest Enochic Texts,” in *The Early Enoch Literature*, 257–81 (278); James C. VanderKam, “Mapping Second Temple Judaism,” in *The Early Enoch Literature*, 1–20, 20; John J. Collins, “How distinctive was Enochic Judaism?,” *Meghillot* V–VI (2008), *17–*34, esp. *26–*29, *33, and Erik W. Larson, “Worship in Jubilees and Enoch,” in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, 369–83, (382–83). For an extensive discussion of this topic, see the excursus “Die Engel als Priester?” in Veronika Bachmann, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand: Eine Untersuchung zu Aussagegehalt und Theologie des Wächterbuches (1 Hen 1–36)*, (BZAW, 409; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2009), 131–48. Most recent contributions presenting the BW as reflecting a distinctive, not Torah centred form of Judaism include Collins, “How distinctive was Enochic Judaism?” and Helge S. Kvanvig, “Enoch—From Sage to Visionary Apocalyptist,” *Henoch* 30 (2008), 48–51. Corrado Martone, “The Enochic Tradition and the Diversity of Second Temple Judaism,” *Henoch* 30 (2008), 51–55 (53) even questions whether one can speak of the Enochic theology manifest in the Enochic literature as a *Jewish* theology.

⁴ G. H. Dix, “The Enochic Pentateuch,” *JTS* 27 (1926), 29–42 (32).

⁵ Dix, “The Enochic Pentateuch,” 31.

⁶ Cf. Kelley Coblenz Bautch, *A Study of the Geography of 1 Enoch 17–19: “No One Has Seen What I Have Seen”* (JSJSup, 81; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003), 289–99. See also Paul Heger’s recent contribution “1 Enoch—Complementary or Alternative to Mosaic Torah?” *JSJ* 41 (2010), 29–62.

more substantial evidence that establishes a direct relationship between the Enochic works and Mosaic law is a *desideratum*.⁷

Bautch herself thus remains rather indecisive. Exploring a “mosaic” understanding of the BW, she mainly juxtaposes two approaches: On the one hand, she refers to E. P. Sanders work “Paul and Palestinian Judaism.” According to Sanders, the several Enochic writings forming 1 Enoch⁸ share the religious pattern he calls “covenantal nomism,” a pattern under which he finally subsumes all ancient Jewish writings. In his view, Paul was the first to establish “an essentially different type of religiousness from any found in Palestinian Jewish literature.”⁹ On the other hand, Bautch surveys the different attempts of scholars to detect particular legal concerns within the text. In this regard, she rightly states that “[g]enerally speaking, the text is concerned with lawful behaviour, but it is difficult to determine what constitutes law for the author.”¹⁰

In recent years, Mark A. Elliott started to promote anew the idea that covenantal thinking underlies the BW. In his book “The Survivors of Israel,” he challenges the conventional nationalistic view of election theology referring to pre-Christian Jewish groups.¹¹ In fact, he intends to show “that a Jewish theology of special election existed well in advance of the New Testament period.”¹² It is within this agenda that he ascribes a covenantal trait to the BW. In Elliott’s opinion, the BW stems from one of the “Remnant Groups” representing such a view of special election, whereby the latter is expressed by a conditional view of covenant and a soteriological dualism. The “Remnant Groups”, according to Elliott, consisted of pious Jews who were confronted with transformations within their religion.¹³ As a result, he sees the BW as “the reaction of pietists to perceived apostasy in Israel.”¹⁴ Similar to Sanders’s view, Elliott’s position remains disputed among scholars. Concerning our main question, it indeed appears that both scholars tend to interpret the Enochic writings under strong guidance of their overall assumption. Furthermore, like many scholars advocating a non- or an anti-

⁷ Bautch, *Geography of 1 Enoch 17–19*, 299.

⁸ Sanders actually does not further consider the so called Similitudes (1 Enoch 37–71) in his study.

⁹ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM, 1977), 543.

¹⁰ Bautch, *Geography of 1 Enoch 17–19*, 298.

¹¹ Mark A. Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); cf. idem, “Covenant and Cosmology in the Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book,” *Henoch* 24 (2002), 23–38.

¹² Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel*, 640.

¹³ In this respect, Elliott underlines the influence of Hellenism prior to the reign of Antiochus IV; cf. idem, *The Survivors of Israel*, 191–196, 202, 208–213.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 236.

mosaic trait of the BW, they sum up the particularities found in the different Enochic writings instead of tracing the individual narrative and theological profiles of the different writings. The question remains open whether an examination of the BW itself could support labelling the BW as “covenantal” or even “mosaic.” In order to explore this question, I will begin with a review of the most common arguments leading to the notion that the BW is a non- or an anti-mosaic writing. Such a review should allow to better recognize the presuppositions underlying this conclusion and to raise some methodological questions. The second part, focusing on the BW’s way of presenting the present times as a “time out of order” and the book’s notion of knowledge and law, will be dedicated to the question whether and how an alternative reading is possible.

THE BW, ENOCH AND MOSES

As I already mentioned, the BW is not just considered as having a non- or anti-mosaic character by supporters of an “Enochic Judaism,” but by a much greater number of scholars. Accordingly, the line of argument can differ considerably from one scholar to another. The aim of the following is to focus on the most common points made.

Before going straight into the arguments, it might be helpful to recall the content of the BW in more detail (cf. the table below): Chapters 1–5 form the introductory part, presenting the whole writing as a blessing speech of Enoch addressing a distant generation. A future judgment by God on Mount Sinai is announced—for the benefit of the righteous and holding accountable those who acted against God’s will, the sinners. The introduction is followed by the “Story of the Watchers,” a narrative explaining how in ancient times the worldly order was disturbed by the deeds of a group of so called Watcher angels. These angels took for themselves human wives, fathered voracious giants and spread knowledge among humans which had been until then unknown to humankind. The story culminates in the depiction of a great affliction. Chapters 9–11 form the first sequel of this story, focusing on the reactions in heaven. High-ranking angels ask God what to do; God’s answer reveals that he has clear plans against the evil-doers. The second sequel of the Watcher’s story focuses on Enoch as the messenger between the rebel angels and God. A petition asking for forgiveness is refused by God. This closing section confirms God’s plans and the fact that he is able and willing to prosecute any transgression of the order he established as the great creator and ruler of the universe.

***Content and Literary Structure of the Book of the Watchers
(1 Enoch 1–36)***

1–5	Introduction	Enoch’s speech of blessing (addressing a distant generation) Announcement of God’s judgment on Mount Sinai
6–8	“Story of the Watchers” •Exposition (6,1–7,2) •Complication (7,3–8,4)	Some Watcher angels mix with human women and reveal knowledge to humankind Disastrous outcome of the angels’ deeds
9–11	First Sequel •Resolution I (9–11)	Reactions in “heaven”; God reveals his plan to the high-ranking angels Michael, Sariel, Rafael and Gabriel
12–36	Second Sequel •Resolution IIa (12,1–13,3) •Challenge of the Resolution (13,4–10) •Resolution IIb (14–36)	Enoch mediates between the rebel angels and God; endorsement of God’s plan against the Watchers and their accomplices

In order to underline the non- or anti-mosaic trait of the BW, many scholars point to the universal scope of the work. Indeed:

- Enoch is not an “Israelite figure” in the strict sense, but an antediluvian forefather of the entire humankind.
- According to the BW, the troubles described affect the whole world and all of its inhabitants.
- Finally, the BW suggests that every single creature is supposed to live according to the order established by the one God. For humans, this means that Israelites and non-Israelites are likewise obliged to follow the rules he established for them. But it also means that every human being—whether Israelite or not—is able to forfeit God’s favour by ignoring and transgressing these rules.

According to James VanderKam, the composers of the BW (and of 1 Enoch at large) consciously avoided any reference to Israelite law. In his view, they intended to impart a basic law significant for all humans. He further argues that affiliating oneself with the tradition of Enoch meant to accept the revelations of Enoch as guidelines for life. Or as he puts it:

“The Enochic tradition (...) finds its cornerstone not in the Sinaitic covenant and law but in events around the time of the flood. (...) The primary revelations to which the tradition appealed were those disclosures given to Enoch before the flood. At that time, an extraordinary wisdom and an understanding of the course of human history were disclosed to him. On the ba-

sis of those disclosures the pious person in this tradition was to live.”¹⁵

Unlike VanderKam, George W. Nickelsburg is one of those scholars who notice that the perspective of the BW is not merely universal.¹⁶ In fact, the text for instance, announces that God will appear on Mount Sinai (1 Enoch 1:4). Although the name “Sinai” is not mentioned again, it is likely that the text also refers to this site of God’s descent to earth in chapter 18 (v. 8) and in chapters 24–25.¹⁷ From the fact that the judgment will take place on Mount Sinai, Nickelsburg concludes that according to the BW “the Torah given on Sinai would be the basis of that judgment.”¹⁸ Such a statement suggests that Nickelsburg does not differentiate between Enochic and Sinaitic law as VanderKam does. However, Nickelsburg clearly adheres to the idea that all in all 1 Enoch—he likes to speak of “Enochic wisdom”—is “non-mosaic.” What he means by this, however, especially with regard to the BW, is not expressed very clearly. For instance, he not only points to 1 Enoch 1:4 in order to substantiate that the Torah given on Sinai would be the basis of the great judgment announced by Enoch; he also refers to the same passage arguing that the authors intended to depreciate the character of Moses by placing “in the mouth of Enoch a text that was modelled after the Blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 33).”¹⁹ The reasons for such an intention of the authors are not elaborated.

¹⁵ James C. VanderKam, “The Interpretation of Genesis in 1 Enoch,” Peter W. Flint (ed.), *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation* (Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 129–148 (142–143).

¹⁶ For Nickelsburg’s discussions of the relationship of the writings of 1 Enoch to the “Mosaic Torah,” cf. idem, “Scripture in 1 Enoch and 1 Enoch as Scripture,” Tord Fornberg and David Hellholm (eds.), *Texts and Contexts. Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts. Essays in Honor of Lars Hartman* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995), 333–354; idem, “Enochic Wisdom. An Alternative to the Mosaic Torah?,” Jodi Magness and Seymour Gitin (eds.), *Hesed ve-emet: Studies in Honor of Ernest S. Frerichs* (BJS 320; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 123–132; idem, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), esp. 50–53, 57–61; idem, “Enochic Wisdom and Its Relationship to the Mosaic Torah,” in *The Early Enoch Literature*, 81–94.

¹⁷ Cf. Bautch, *Geography of 1 Enoch 17–19*, 107–114, 120–126.

¹⁸ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 145. The idea that the mentioning of Mount Sinai in 1 Enoch 1:4 calls for a conversion to Torah has already been put forward by Lars Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1–5* (ConBNT 12; Lund: Gleerup, 1979). Hartman states that “[b]oth the universal responsibility and the covenant obligation are certainly ideas that are of importance” in this passage (ibid., 44).

¹⁹ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 52.

Nor is further explained how this judgment fits with the first statement.²⁰

As a proponent of the idea of an “Enochic Judaism,” the German New Testament scholar Andreas Bedenbender, advances a view based on the combination of the observations made by VanderKam and Nickelsburg.²¹ Bedenbender assumes that the BW was originally composed as a “non-mosaic” writing, which then underwent a process of “Mosaisierung.” The BW was made “mosaic.” According to Bedenbender, this process temporally coincides with the persecution under Antiochus IV 167 BCE. He therefore concludes that the introductory chapters of the BW, chapters 1–5, were added only around that time, with the purpose of a rapprochement between Enochic and Mosaic Judaism. The introductory chapters and especially the mentioning of Mount Sinai, in Bedenbender’s view, document the “Weg des Henochgottes zum Sinai.”²² He argues that such a rapprochement was reasonable for both sides in order to cope with the situation. In sum, similar to Nickelsburg, Bedenbender includes the mentioning of Mount Sinai into his reasoning about the relationship of the BW to the “Mosaic” stream of Judaism. Unlike Nickelsburg, he clearly considers the reference to Mount Sinai as indicating a positive reference, not a depreciation of Moses. Concurring with VanderKam, Bedenbender assumes that the remaining parts of the BW are “non-mosaic.” Unfortunately, he does not provide clear arguments for this last assumption, but rather draws on the scholarly consensus.

Gabriele Boccaccini’s contributions offer further hints. As I mentioned in the beginning, he assumes the opposition of two priestly movements in post-exilic times, whereby the BW represents the ideology of the Enochic dissent movement. Boccaccini emphasizes that the Zadokites understood themselves as “the faith-

²⁰ In the introduction of his commentary on 1 Enoch 1–36 and 81–108, he downplays the role of the Sinaitic law and writes more cautiously than in the quotation above: “Since God will judge ‘all flesh’ (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) (...), the Sinaitic covenant and Torah cannot be the only point of reference.” (Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1, 50.)

²¹ Cf. Andreas Bedenbender, *Der Gott der Welt tritt auf den Sinai: Entstehung, Entwicklung und Funktionsweise der frühjüdischen Apokalyptik* (Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Theologie und Zeitgeschichte 8; Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 2000) and especially idem, “Als Mose und Henoch zusammenfanden: Die Entstehung der frühjüdischen Apokalyptik als Reaktion auf die Religionsverfolgung unter Antiochus IV. Epiphanes,” Hermann Lichtenberger and Gerbern S. Oegema (eds.), *Jüdische Schriften in ihrem antik-jüdischen und urchristlichen Kontext* (Studien zu den Jüdischen Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit 1; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2002), 182–203; idem, “The Place of the Torah in the Early Enoch Literature,” in *The Early Enoch Literature*, 65–79.

²² Bedenbender, *Der Gott der Welt tritt auf den Sinai*, 234.

ful keepers of the cosmic order.”²³ With this self-image in mind, the present was supposed to represent the divine order and stability. For the Enochians, in contrast, “God’s past order has been replaced by... disorder.”²⁴ Boccaccini sees this understanding expressed by the “Story of the Watchers” and by the corresponding depiction of history: Due to the Watcher’s deeds in the far past, the worldly order (the present time, respectively) is still fundamentally corrupt. Boccaccini writes about the consequences:

“For the Enochians, the power that the house of Zadok claims is mere illusion, if not the guilty pretentiousness of evil usurpers. Evil and impurity are uncontrollable, and human beings, including the proud priests of Jerusalem, are powerless. The only hope is in God’s intervention.”²⁵

And he adds that the Enochians “completely ignore the Mosaic torah and the Jerusalem temple, that is, the two tenets of the order of the universe.”²⁶

Summarizing the positions hitherto mentioned, the following picture emerges:

- Scholars such as VanderKam and Boccaccini assume a non-mosaic character observing that some figures and institutions are not mentioned within the BW. From this observation they more or less directly conclude that the composers intended to ideologically dissociate themselves from groups behind texts attributing more significance to such figures and institutions.
- Furthermore, we saw that Boccaccini emphasizes the BW’s understanding of the present as a time of disorder. In his view, such an understanding seriously challenges the ideology of writings such as Esra, Nehemia, P or Chronicles and therefore must point to a different author- and readership.
- Nickelsburg’s observations remain ambivalent. On the one hand, he clearly notices a link to the Sinaitic law. On the other hand, he nevertheless assumes that the figures of Enoch and Moses are played off against each other.
- Finally, similar to Nickelsburg, Bedenbender is aware of the ambivalent picture. However, he resolves the tension by identifying different text layers, that is, by applying a diachronic approach: Since in his view, the introductory chapters do not fit ideologically with the ideas attributed to “Enochic Judaism,” they must have been added later.

²³ Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 73.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 74.

²⁶ Ibid.

THE BW AND THE “LORD OF SINAI”

Among the most recent contributions, we encounter a further interpretation of the BW’s reference to Mount Sinai. Instead of deeming it a clear indication for a “mosaic” trait of the BW, Helge S. Kvanvig, for instance, suggests that the mentioning of Sinai might not draw on the tradition of the giving of the law, but on “the presumably oldest Sinai tradition where Sinai is the abode of God, who reveals himself in theophanies.”²⁷ However, scholars draw different conclusions from this observation. According to Kvanvig, the missing reference to the Mosaic Torah should not be seen “as a deliberate denial of its legitimacy.” For in his view, the Torah as a literary construct, known from passages such as Nehemia 8–10, “had not yet gained broad authority” at the time of its composition.²⁸ John J. Collins, in contrast, embeds the same interpretation of 1 Enoch 1:4 into his overall picture of the “Enoch literature”:

“The understanding of the relationship between the elect and God may be covenantal, in the sense that it is based on laws which entail reward or punishment as their consequences, but it is not based on the Mosaic covenant, which was so widely accepted as the foundation of Jewish religion in the Hellenistic period.”²⁹

Kvanvig’s and Collins’s interpretation of 1 Enoch 1:4 reminds us to be very careful when exploring the range of meanings a reference is able to evoke.³⁰ Indeed, it would be inadequate to interpret the reference to Mount Sinai as exclusively referring to the narration of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai. In several texts, YHWH is portrayed as what we could call the “Lord of Sinai.”³¹ As such, YHWH majestically appears on earth, and the earth is shaken by

²⁷ Kvanvig, “Enochic Judaism,” 171. Or as Collins states: “(...) a mere reference to Sinai does not in itself establish a reference to covenantal law-making. Sinai was the mountain of theophany long before it was associated with the giving of the Law.” (Collins, “How distinctive was Enochic Judaism?” *30.)

²⁸ Kvanvig, “Enochic Judaism,” 172. In a similar way, Reed, “Enochic and Mosaic Traditions in Jubilees,” 365–366 advises caution against assuming anachronistically an exclusive and central position of the Pentateuch in second temple times.

²⁹ Collins, “How distinctive was Enochic Judaism?” *32.

³⁰ Cf. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 144–145 offering important observations in this regard.

³¹ Cf. Ps 68:9 and Judg 5:5 referring to YHWH as אלהים/יהוה זה סיני, but also texts such as Deut 33 and Hab 3:3–6. For a discussion of recent attempts to date these references to Sinai as late as to Hellenistic times, see Martin Leuenberger, “Jhwhs Herkunft aus dem Süden: Archäologische Befunde – biblische Überlieferungen – historische Korrelationen,” *ZAW* 122 (2010): 1–19.

the deity's powerful appearance. All of these texts further specify the power of God: God is depicted as the one who powerfully supports his own people (cf. Deut 33:26–29; Hab 3:13; Judg 5:5) or, more generally, his creatures (cf. Ps 68:11) and who brings his or his people's enemies to justice. Returning to the BW and reconsidering its content and its self-designation as a blessing speech, we find that this traditional notion of YHWH fits nicely into the larger picture. The entire writing predominantly underlines that God is committed to his creation and holds accountable any wrongdoers.

However, how tenable is it to assume that the reference to Mount Sinai might have triggered merely this old “Lord of Sinai” notion? As Kvanvig and others emphasize, we should certainly refrain from anachronistically assuming an entrenched biblical canon for the 3rd century BCE, the time when the BW was most probably composed.³² Notwithstanding, most of our models on the growth of the biblical books suggest that the narrative traditions of the *Urgeschichte* and the narrative traditions about Mount Sinai and about Moses were intertwined at least since late Persian times. This strong consensus in my view makes it difficult to maintain that people in early Hellenistic times were unfamiliar with the story about the giving of the law to Moses at Mount Sinai. On the contrary, such an overall picture suggests that the composers of the BW could indeed presuppose that their addressees were not only familiar with the notion of the “Lord of Sinai,” but also with the story of Moses receiving the laws on Mount Sinai as well as the related narratives. As we will see below, the meaning of the text is reinforced by both references. Scholars who assume that the composers aimed at one reference only would need to further explicate why and by which narrative means readers are prompted to consider only one of the two semantic ranges.

SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

After this brief comment on the interpretation of the reference to Mount Sinai in 1 Enoch 1:4, let us return to the other scholarly arguments. The overview above might have revealed that in spite of all the differences, the arguments unfold in a similar manner. Many of the conclusions tend to relate basically to the visibility or non-visibility of particular ideas and the occurrence or non-occurrence of single figures or terms. Relatively little importance is attributed to thoughts about the historical context, and even less to the pragmatics of the text. In many cases, the text and its elements tend to be perceived statically instead of being understood as means of textual communication.

Referring to such kind of interpretation, Christof Hardmeier and other scholars, based on communication-oriented linguistics,

³² For further considerations about the dating of the BW see the following chapter.

distinguish between an approach which they call “representationssemantisch” and one which they call “instruktionssemantisch.”³³ For them, a text forms a sequence of signs initiating a process of generating meaning on the part of the readers or listeners. Every sign figures as a carrier of semantic instruction and offers a further clue within this process and in this sense channels the reading process.³⁴ Having such a notion of text in mind, assessing the meaning of a single textual element necessarily implies taking into account the dynamics of the entire lexematic field.

Of course, interpreting a text does not in itself require such a communication-oriented perspective.³⁵ However, if we are interested in tracing back to those who might have written and promoted a text (and if we are optimistic enough to find some hints through our sources), such a communication-oriented understanding of literature might be helpful.³⁶ As I will show in the following,

³³ Cf. Christof Hardmeier and Regine Hunziker-Rodewald, “Texttheorie und Texterschliessung. Grundlagen einer empirisch-textpragmatischen Exegese,” Helmut Utzschneider and Erhard Blum (eds.) *Lesarten der Bibel. Untersuchungen zu einer Theorie der Exegese des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006), 13–44 (offering further references). The distinction builds on the theoretical model developed by Siegfried Schmidt in the seventies of the 20th century.

³⁴ Cf. Umberto Eco’s statement addressing readers of *Finnegans Wake*: “[B]ada che l’autore, che ha tanto faticato ad architettare questa immense macchina per produrre interpretazioni, ha anche cercato di indicarti dei percorsi di lettura. Non si è limitato a ricopiare l’elenco telefonico, in base al quale, grazie alla dovizia di personaggi, ciascuno può costruirsi la *Commedia Umata* che desidera, ma ha disposto con meditata accortezza ogni *pun*, ogni incrocio di allusioni, e il suo testo richiede anche quest’atto di rispetto.” [Idem, *I limiti dell’interpretazione* (Studi Bompiani. Il campo semiotico; Milano: Bompiani, 1990), 106.] Translated into German: “Vergiss (...) nicht, dass der Autor, der soviel Mühe aufwandte, um diese gewaltige Maschine zum hervorbringen von Interpretationen zu bauen, auch versucht hat, dir bestimmte Interpretationswege vorzugeben. Er hat sich nicht darauf beschränkt, das Telefonbuch abzuschreiben, von dem ausgehend sich jeder aus der Unzahl von Personen ganz nach Wunsch eine Menschliche Komödie zusammenstellen kann, sondern hat mit Bedacht jeden *pun*, jedes Sichüberschneiden von Anspielungen vorbereitet, und sein Text möchte sich auch in dieser Hinsicht gewürdigt sehen.” [Idem, *Die Grenzen der Interpretation* (3d. ed.; dtv 30168; München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2004), 143; the English translation (or rather adaptation, since it differs from the Italian original in many ways) skips this passage.]

³⁵ On this topic, see part one of *Lesarten der Bibel*.

³⁶ For a fruitful methodological approach based on examining the literary function of the specific manner how certain literary figures are depicted within different writings, see Reed, “Enochic and Mosaic Traditions in Jubilees” (though mainly about Jubilees). Among the few contributions taking into account the literary character on the BW (whereby this approach does not necessarily imply a communication-oriented under-

such an understanding, as trivial as it sounds, indeed questions some of the prevailing opinions about the BW.

A READING BEYOND “ENOCHIC” VERSUS “MOAIC”?

It is not possible to provide an extensive close reading of the BW within the confines of the present article.³⁷ In response to the scholarly arguments discussed above, I want to address two selected topics that highlight some of the results of such a reading. However, one question must be answered in advance: When interpreting the BW, it is important to determine which text unit is envisioned. What I am focusing on is the pre-Maccabean version of the BW in its “Enochic” form. In this case, “Enochic” means that I am working with a version which already combines the material about the Watchers with traditions about Enoch. The manuscript evidence allows us to conclude that such a version has circulated as an independent writing in the 3rd century BCE when Palestine was under Ptolemaic dominion.³⁸ 4Q201 furthermore allows for the

standing of literature) figure Lars Hartman, *Asking for a Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1–5* (ConBNT 12; Lund: Gleerup, 1979) (examining the introductory chapters); Johan C. Thom, “Aspects of the Form, Meaning and Function of the Book of Watchers,” *Neotestamentica* 17 (1983), 40–49; Martin Stowasser, “Heil und Gericht im ‘Buch der Wächter.’ Ein Versuch zu einem synchronen Verständnis von 1 Hen 1–36,” *Protokolle zur Bibel* 13 (2004), 25–47; Helge S. Kvanvig, “Origin and Identity of the Enoch Group,” *Henoch* 24 (2002), 207–212; Piovanelli, “Sitting by the Waters of Dan.”

³⁷ For such a reading, see Bachmann, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand*, 63–107.

³⁸ The different scrolls allow the conclusion that at least two of the writings have once circulated and were read as independent writings: the Astronomical Book [at least in a form containing the calendar material, maybe still without being linked to the figure of Enoch; cf. Michael A. Knibb, “The Book of Enoch or Books of Enoch? The Textual Evidence for 1 Enoch,” in *The Early Enoch Literature*, 21–40 (21–22); Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, “Some Remarks on the Book of the Watchers, the Priests, Enoch and Genesis, and 4Q208,” *Henoch* 24 (2002), 143–45 (145); idem and Florentino G. García Martínez, “4QAstronomical Enocha-b ar,” Philip Alexander et al. (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4 XXVI: Cryptic Texts and Miscellanea, Part 1* (DJD 36; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 95–171 (95, 105) and the BW. Concerning the BW cf. 4Q201 and 4Q202, both stemming from the 2nd century BCE and solely witnessing fragments of the BW. Against this latter assumption, Michaël Langlois, *Le premier manuscrit du ‘Livre d’Hénoch’: Étude épigraphique et philologique des fragments araméens de 4Q201 à Qumrân* (Lectio divina; Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2008) recently considered that fragments 1l, 1o and 2 of 4Q201 might be attributed to 1 Enoch 93:4–6; 102:7–10 and to the *Book of the Giants* respectively. Whether Langlois’s reading of the fragments turns out to be more convincing than Milik’s reading remains to be seen; his proposal at least points to the difficulty that several Aramaic fragments are too scanty for

assumption that such a 3rd century version already included the introductory chapters and probably also at least parts of the accounts of Enoch's journey. Although a general form of such a version may be determined, reflections on the growth of the text remain indispensable. Such reflections for instance led me to conclude that the passages 19:1–2 (ideologically concurring with 8:1 of the Greek Syncellus fragment) and 33:3–36:3 (linking the BW to the contents of an “Enochic” Astronomical Book) might be later additions.³⁹

THE IDEA OF A “WORLD OUT OF ORDER”

The first issue to address is the BW's understanding of the present time as a time of disorder. The BW conveys an understanding of history which along general lines is known from the prophetic literature:⁴⁰ An ideal “Ur-Zeit” is followed by corrupt times, whereby the present time is understood to be part of this corrupt era. However, a turn in history initiating the restoration of good times is announced. By explaining the negative turn of history with the narrative about the Watcher angels, the BW combines this overall picture with the priestly idea that the decline of history started at a very early stage in human history, in the time of the earliest forefathers of humankind. The angels started trespassing God's order “in the days of Jared” (1 Enoch 6:6), and it is his son, Enoch, who tells us about these events and about his own involvement (1 Enoch 1–5; 12–36).

It is important to see that the BW not only emphasizes that the world was corrupted once the angels challenged God's order. Reciting the deeds, but also the consequences of such deeds and the destiny of the angels, the BW points to several stages within this corrupt era. The deeds of the angels first lead to a disastrous era even jeopardizing the existence of humanity (1 Enoch 7–8). Thanks to the emergency steps ordered by God (1 Enoch 9–11), this era leads to another, which coincides with the present of the

drawing clear conclusions. In any case, only 4Q204, 4Q205 and 4Q206 undoubtedly contain fragments of the BW beside other “Enochic” writings within the same scroll. All of these scrolls stem from the 1st century BCE.

³⁹ Concerning the assumption that the *Astronomical Book* was not necessarily linked with traditions about the figure of Enoch in its early version, see the previous note. For further arguments supporting the idea that 1 Enoch 19:1–2 and 33:3–36:3 are later additions, see Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *Prophets of Old and the Day of the End: Zechariah, the Book of Watchers and Apocalyptic* (Oudtestamentische studiën 35; Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1996), 157–158, 161–163; Veronika Bachmann, “Rooted in Paradise? The Meaning of the ‘Tree of Life’ in 1 Enoch 24–25 Reconsidered,” *JSP* 19 (2009), 83–107 (22–25, 39–43).

⁴⁰ Cf. Klaus Koch, *Die Profeten I: Assyrische Zeit* (3d. ed.; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1995), 247–48.

readers. The latter remains corrupt, but in a more latent sense: Human beings still hand down the tempting knowledge and techniques received from the angels; and moreover, the offspring of angels still bother humans as “evil spirits” (cf. chapter 15). A blessed life for the righteous is still not guaranteed. Only the future great judgment on the wrongdoers among all creatures will bring about a restored good era.

If we pay attention to the pragmatics, it turns out that the BW emphasizes the sovereignty of God and the relevance of his rules through its understanding of history: God remains the great powerful one and his rules remain the only ones preventing his creatures from being judged, although there are times (such as the present one) in which the (Jewish) God and this God’s rules appear less attractive. As a result, the readers are called to reconsider their way of life. They are called upon to decide whether to live as those who respect and appreciate the true ruler of the universe—or to live as the accomplices of the angels, aspiring for more than what God provided for every species.⁴¹

By its specific manner of emphasizing the biblically well known call to return to God, the BW combines different theological streams manifest in the religious writings of ancient Israel: Its strong focus on the theme of God’s perfectly established and essentially untouchable order recalls priestly and sapiential ideas. However, it also includes patterns of thoughts manifest in deuteronomistic texts: The BW exhibits that it is possible to forfeit the favour of God. In order to provide an understanding of the present as a “time out of order,” it explains how this had actually already happened in history—with the far-reaching consequences exposed throughout the book. In this regard, it is striking that on the narrative level the BW does not centre on human misconduct, but the misconduct of celestial beings.⁴² The deeds of such celestial beings are even depicted as the origin of any human misconduct. On a theological level, this not only unburdens God—who remains the creator of a perfect, everlasting universe who never intended to cause any evil—but to some extent also the humans. For such an

⁴¹ The angels desired women; although as eternal beings, they do not need to procreate like the mortal humans (cf. 1 Hen 15); likewise, the knowledge and the techniques disseminated among the humans can be interpreted as creating the desire for representing and having more than God provided; see in greater detail Bachmann, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand*, 68–69.

⁴² At this point, many scholars turn to an allegorical reading, assuming that by mentioning the angels the authors actually referred to human priests or to a specific priestly group. Against such a reading, see Bachmann, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand*, 131–48. Although the BW centres on the misconduct of celestial beings, it also mentions human misconduct. In fact, human wrongdoing is addressed in every of its literary parts (cf. 1 Enoch 1–5; 8; 9:8; 16:3; 22; 27).

overall picture allows perceiving them both as offenders and victims. Whereas there is no forgiveness for the angels who sinned (cf. 1 Enoch 13ff.), the BW insinuates that returning to a decent way of life still pays off for humans.⁴³

According to the proposed reading, the depiction of the present as a “time out of order” proves to be one important element generating the strong appellative character of the BW. The question remains what the BW means by God’s rules that are not to be transgressed. As we saw, some scholars assume a set of “Enochic laws” which differ from the Sinaitic or Mosaic law. The second question I shall therefore address is what it means to speak of Enoch’s revelations or knowledge, or even of Enoch’s “wisdom.”

GOD’S RULES AND ENOCH’S KNOWLEDGE

First, it is striking that the BW itself makes no explicit claim to convey wisdom. We should therefore be very cautious when using terms such as “Enochic wisdom.” If we analyze the book’s use of the term “wisdom” and if we carefully observe the different ways of how knowledge plays a role within the writing, we discover that the BW’s notion of wisdom is quite particular.⁴⁴ On one hand, the BW adheres in a traditional manner to the idea that wisdom implies well-being for the righteous (cf. 1 Enoch 5). On the other hand, we saw that the BW depicts the present as a disturbed era in which righteous people are not necessarily rewarded with a good fortune. The composers of the BW apparently resolved this tension by separating “knowledge” from “wisdom.” Whereas knowledge is depicted as being available through all times, wisdom is tied to the good eras of history: Wisdom strikes roots as soon as God’s order is established and permanently maintained.⁴⁵

Once having adduced this notion of wisdom, the notion of knowledge or revelation may be better traced. Scholars often observe that the BW contrasts “good” or “salvific” and “bad” knowledge. The latter is the knowledge revealed by the Watchers. The text suggests that this knowledge is bad not only because of its negative effects, but primarily due to the fact that God never intended to impart it to humankind. Concerning the “good” or “salvific” knowledge, a closer look is necessary. As we have seen before, the pragmatics of the text point to an understanding of the BW as addressing readers who might be attracted to another way of

⁴³ Such reading of course remains barred for those scholars who adhere to the assumption that the rebel angels refer to priests.

⁴⁴ On this topic, see Bachmann, “Rooted in Paradise?” and idem, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand*, 186–203.

⁴⁵ Cf. the tree imagery of 1 Enoch 24–25. As I outlined in Bachmann, “Rooted in Paradise?” and in idem, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand*, 89–96, this particular tree imagery should be linked to wisdom instead of being linked to the story of Genesis 2–3 as it is mostly done.

life than what is considered to be the traditional “Jewish” way of life. If this is true, it is also clear why the basic “good knowledge” is not further specified: It is the knowledge the readers are supposed to know or to rediscover. Perhaps we can call it the Torah or the Mosaic or Sinaitic law.⁴⁶ But maybe it is more appropriate to describe it in a broader sense as the cultural “Jewish” heritage that emerged during the Persian period, a “Jewish” way of life which can even differ in detail.⁴⁷ As the BW insinuates, humans become the precious agents for maintaining the true universal order by adhering to such a way of life. They are no longer the companions of angels like Shemihazah (the chief of the angels who decided to mix with humans) or Asael (the key figure responsible for the revelation of knowledge), but the companions of great angels such as Michael, Sariel, Rafael and Gabriel. They have nothing to fear with regard to the announced judgment.

The question remaining is how Enoch’s revelations relate to this good or salvific knowledge. The introductory chapters of the BW make clear: Just as the “good knowledge” is provided by God, likewise Enoch’s whole message is authorized by God. Nevertheless, Enoch’s message to the “distant generation”/the readers is a separate issue. It might be most accurate to interpret it as a kind of additional salvific knowledge that undergirds the importance of the basic salvific knowledge. As such, it belongs among other religious writings which are written, promoted and appreciated in order to strengthen what is considered as being the kernel of the religious tradition or—in a broader sense—of the cultural heritage. Admittedly, the BW is outstanding by presenting itself as a sort of revela-

⁴⁶ Cf. Heger, „1 Enoch,“ 54.

⁴⁷ Such a conclusion concurs to some extent with readings offered already by Marie-Theres Wacker, *Weltordnung und Gericht: Studien zu 1 Henoch 22* (FB 45; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1982), esp. 313–15, or Rainer Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte Israels in alttestamentlicher Zeit. Vol. 2: Vom Exil bis zu den Makkabäern* (Grundrisse zum Alten Testament 8; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 652–59. For a recent contribution stressing anew the BW’s historical context of hellenisation, see Annette Y. Reed, “The Origins of the Book of the Watchers as ‘Apocalypse’ and Its Reception as ‘Apocryphon,’” *Henoch* 30 (2008), 55–60. Whereas in her dissertation published in 2005, Reed still concluded that there were “few hints of any animosity towards Hellenistic culture or Hellenized Jews within the *Book of the Watchers*, and the polemical concerns that we do find speak less to the encounter between Judaism and Hellenism than to internal debates within the scribal/priestly stratum of Judaeon society” [idem, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 60], in this more recent article, she underlines that “the *Book of the Watchers*’ preoccupation with the corrupting power of false knowledge proves particularly poignant when read as a defense of Israel’s intellectual heritage in the face of the growing prestige of Greek wisdom.” (Reed, “The Origins of the Book of the Watchers,” 58.)

tory literature of mixed character which we can barely assign to any established genre due to the lack of contemporary parallels.⁴⁸ However, we will see below that even this formal peculiarity allows us to some degree to draw conclusions about the historical setting of the BW.

In sum, if we interpret the BW as a revelatory writing conveying a kind of salvific knowledge undergirding the importance of the basic salvific knowledge, to assume a competing relationship between Enoch's message and the latter becomes obsolete. Enoch's message pursues its own goal. Introduced and authorized as the blessing speech of one of the forefathers of all humankind, the writing can be understood as explaining to its readers that what appears to be good in present times—the “modern lure”—actually proves to be the fruit of the perversion once initiated by the Watchers' wrongdoing.

CONCLUSIONS

The above examination of the BW's way of presenting the present times as a “time out of order” and the book's notion of knowledge and law reveals that it is unnecessary to assume that the composers intended to polemically oppose two figures (be it Enoch and Moses). Once the antagonism of “Enochic” versus “Mosaic” is left behind, the literary context becomes the touchstone for determining the meaning and function of single textual elements. In many ways the resulting overall picture differs from the assumptions initially outlined.

Such a context focused reading prevents from attributing undue significance to the BW's understanding of the present as a time of disorder. This understanding indeed plays an important role, but first and foremost as one of the means for emphasizing the relevance of the traditional way of life.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the proposed reading sheds new light on the introductory chapters. On one hand, once an antagonistic reading is left behind, there is no further need for artificially cutting off the introductory chapters from the main body of the text. The introduction emerges as a crucial passage for the reading of the BW already in its 3rd century version. On the other hand, it is unnecessary to interpret the reference to Mount Sinai in 1 Enoch 1:4 as either evoking the “old Sinai traditions” or the story about the giving of the law to Moses. The meaning of the text is strengthened by both references: As we have seen above, the BW depicts God not only as the one who powerfully supports his people and creatures and who brings both of his and their enemies to justice. It also depicts God as the one who sets the

⁴⁸ See the discussion of the different proposals made by scholars in Bachmann, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand*, 47–62.

⁴⁹ For a more detailed examination of time related characteristics of the BW, see Bachmann, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand*, 150–70.

specific rules for every species (cf. 1 Enoch 2–5; 15:3–7) and who intervenes in case of transgressions. These three aspects are encompassed by both traditions.⁵⁰

As we have seen, presenting Enoch as a messenger addressing his distant descendants allowed the composers to revamp an old concern, the return to YHWH. The specific manner of revamping allows drawing further conclusions concerning the historical context and the purpose of the writing. The chosen form of the text and its rhetorical dynamics, the composers' choice to focus on the figure of Enoch as well as on the Story of the Watchers become meaningful in particular in the context of a historical setting in which the Jewish population was to a large part exposed to noticeable changes in mentality and practice. However, the strong appellative character of the writing suggests that these changes were not necessarily perceived negatively by the addressees. The readers were to be convinced that the time in which they lived was not a good one. It would therefore be inadequate to characterize the BW as a writing supporting its readers in overcoming an experienced crisis as it is often proposed, a view which has induced many scholars to describe the authors of the BW as members of a (geographically) peripheral and (ideologically) marginalized group.

If we go further and pose the question of who could have promoted such a text, it seems less convincing to speak of “priestly dissidents” or even a (proto-)sectarian group within Judaism.⁵¹ In contrast, we have to think of a group of people who might have had good reasons to be concerned about a loss of influence observing that social and cultural values were changing and who therefore aimed for a broad audience.⁵² Carrying further this conclusion, the

⁵⁰ As regards the story about Moses and the other Israelites at Mount Sinai, we shouldn't, for instance, ignore Ex 32, the incident with the golden calf. Further biblical passages (cf. Deut 9:8–21; Ps 106:19–23; Neh 9) as well as post-biblical texts prove its perception as a quasi archetypal rebellion against God [cf. Pekka Lindqvist, *Sin at Sinai: Early Judaism Encounters Exodus 32* (Åbo: Åbo Akademis Förlag, 2006)].

⁵¹ Cf. Pierluigi Piovanelli, “Was there Sectarian Behaviour Before the Flourishing of Jewish Sects? A Long-Term Approach to the History and Sociology of Second Temple Sectarianism,” David J. Chalcraft (ed.), *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances* (Bible world; London: Equinox, 2007), 156–79 who, building on Bryan R. Wilson's typology on religious sectarianism, adheres to a “community behind the Enoch literature” as a group “clearly proto-sectarian (...) displaying revolutionist, manipulationist, thaumaturgical, and spiritualist attitudes” (ibid., 166) and which is not to be located “among the members of the Jerusalem clergy” (ibid., 165) due to a differing approach to the sacred, for instance. It would have been interesting to know more about Piovanelli's ideas about the nature of a “proto-sectarian group” and about the term's heuristic value.

⁵² It might be further explored whether the fact that the BW was written in Aramaic could support such an assumption. Cf. in that direction in a general sense Elias Bickermann, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cam-

religious establishment itself comes into consideration. Even the course of history as it is depicted in the BW may now be historically contextualized.⁵³ Reworking Nickelsburg's proposal to a certain extent to link 1 Enoch 6–11 to the experience of the wars of the Diadochoi (323–302 BCE),⁵⁴ we could assume more than just a link of the “present time of latent corruption” to the era under Ptolemaic dominion, a time entailing many changes on both the economic and cultural level. As Nickelsburg proposes, we might indeed see the violent turn in history as mirroring the experience of the wars mentioned. However, in the context of the final form of the BW, this violent era now clearly turns into a past event. The ideal era before the angel's transgressions may eventually be interpreted as reflecting the positive (nostalgically idealized?) perception of the Persian second temple period from a priestly perspective.⁵⁵ Such an analogy would imply the statement that the Jerusalem temple will figure again as the unchallenged centre of the world in the future (cf. 1 Enoch 25:5–6; 26), as it did in Persian times.⁵⁶

bridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 51, related to the BW and to 1 Enoch respectively Bachmann, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand*, 222 (esp. note 297), 259; Heger, “1 Enoch,” 43. Heger confidently states that it is “evident that the Aramaic text was created for the masses and the Hebrew writing for the intellectual segment of society” (ibid. 43–44, note 53).

⁵³ The following proposal admittedly reaches a highly hypothetical level. It mainly provides an answer to the common proposals of historical contextualisations of the BW. For a further discussion of the proposal presented here, see Bachmann, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand*, 169–70, 261.

⁵⁴ Cf. George W. E. Nickelsburg's characterization of the angels' prayer in 1 Enoch 9 as “more than a literary device by which the author makes an academic statement on the problem of evil. It is the bitter and desperate cry of our author's own people, who query about the problem of evil because they are experiencing it. It is they who are the victims of the giants of this earth—the mighty who devour the fruits of the earth, murder them, and make war on one another.” [Idem, “Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6–11,” *JBL* 96 (1977), 383–405, (388–89); cf. idem, *1 Enoch 1*, esp. 168 and 170]. Unfortunately, some scholars adopted this view without further noticing that Nickelsburg is referring to an early version of the BW, not to the BW in its final form.

⁵⁵ Cf., for instance, the depiction of such a positive stance on the Persian period in Konrad Schmid, *Literaturgeschichte des Alten Testaments. Eine Einführung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2008), 144–45.

⁵⁶ As my conclusions indicate and as further explained in Bachmann, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand*, 245–48, 261, I don't think that the composers of the BW should be geographically located in the region of Galilee as many scholars suggest. According to the BW, the region around Mount Hermon has a clear negative connotation: not only is it the place where the Watchers started to spread their negative influence on earth (1 Enoch 6:6). It is also the region where Enoch reveals God's irrevocable verdict about their deeds to them (1 Enoch 13:7–9). Historical data reveal that the place has a long “sacred history” (cf. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 238–47). In

As a last point, I would like to return to the notion of law in the BW. As outlined above, for many scholars the BW's rather unspecified notion of law is a sign of its non-mosaic character. Although he generally tends to agree with this view, Collins cautiously takes into consideration the possibility that the BW may link the commandments given to Israel to the law of creation or nature, respectively, which figures prominently in the writing. Or as he writes, "...the law emanating from Sinai may be viewed as a formulation of the law of nature, as appears to be the case in Ben Sira 24 and in Philo."⁵⁷ Indeed, we should not hastily disregard this option. On one hand, we saw that for pragmatic reasons the BW emphasises the notion of God as the great creator and sovereign ruler of the universe. On the other hand, we saw that "God's rules," when addressing humans, are to be linked to the traditional "Jewish way of life." Accordingly, the notion of "(Jewish) law" and the notion of the "order of creation" must be closely connected under the BW. Other than Jubilees, the BW does not yet present an elaborate solution of how such a connection should be envisioned. Neither is this its point. As scholars noticed, attempts of grasping the revealed Torah in a universal way do not first emerge with Ben Sira, Jubilees, or Baruch (cf. Baruch 3:9–4:4), but may already be detected within pentateuchal texts.⁵⁸ Having this overall picture in mind, the

the early Hellenistic times, a strong Phoenician influence can be observed. In my view, the BW's negative portrayal of the region as well as the fact that the region figured as a prominent place of "foreign sacredness" speak less to a polemic attitude against the Jerusalem temple than to polemics against a site appropriated by wrong numinous forces. Against this background, the report about Enoch's incubation experience of being brought from Dan directly before the throne of the Jewish God (1 Enoch 13:7–14:24) shows an audacious trait. Such a scenario must have questioned the power of the local cults—and might have impressed a Jewish audience.

⁵⁷ Collins, "How distinctive was Enochic Judaism?" *30; cf. idem, "Theology and Identity in the Early Enoch Literature," *Henoch* 24 (2002), 57–62 (62). A similar point has already been made by Christoph Münchow, *Ethik und Eschatologie: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der frühjüdischen Apokalyptik mit einem Ausblick auf das Neue Testament* (Berlin: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981). According to Münchow, the BW clearly witnesses an understanding of Torah "als ethisches und zugleich kosmisches Gesetz" which can be explained as a "Weiterbildung weisheitlicher Vorstellungen unter Aufnahme von Gedanken der stoisch-platonisch geprägten Popularphilosophie" (ibid. 25).

⁵⁸ Cf. John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox, 1997), 54–55; Thomas Krüger, "Gesetz und Weisheit im Pentateuch," Irmtraud Fischer et al. (eds.), *Auf den Spuren der schriftgelehrten Weisen: Festschrift für Johannes Marböck anlässlich seiner Emeritierung* (BZAW, 331; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 1–12; Thomas Krüger, "Weisheit/Gesetz," Angelika Berlejung and Christian Frevel (eds.), *HGANT* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006), 60–65.

BW turns into an important writing among the sources we still know: After all, it appears to be the first writing basing its overall message on the notion of such a close tie between law and creation.⁵⁹

If we compare the BW with older and contemporary writings, it is without doubt that in the BW, we encounter a writing which conveys rather unfamiliar contents in an unfamiliar manner. But does this fact allow for the conclusion that “the Enoch literature reflects a distinctive form of Judaism”⁶⁰? I propose that it does not. In my view, it is less helpful to search for distinctive forms of Judaism when interpreting the BW than to raise the question why the BW appears rather untraditional in spite of its purpose of actually promoting traditional values and a traditional way of life.⁶¹ Given the situation in which “tradition” loses its significance and even its credibility, I would say that the composers had few choices: They had to find new ways to draw attention to their message. And they were brave enough to break new ground.

⁵⁹ As discussed in Bachmann, *Die Welt im Ausnahmezustand*, 196–203, 244–45, 256, the engagement with Hellenistic thoughts might have played a major role prompting such innovation.

⁶⁰ Collins, “How distinctive was Enochic Judaism?” *33.

⁶¹ See also Martha Himmelfarb’s answer to the question whether the BW ignores or even rejects the Torah, concluding that the BW’s “reticence about the laws of the Torah is a function of genre, not of distance or discomfort.” [Martha Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests: Ancestry and Merit in Ancient Judaism* (Jewish culture and contexts; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 41.]