

Studia Philonica Annual

Review

Orlov, Andrei A. (2005). The Enoch-Metatron Tradition. Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, xvii + 283pp.

In recent years, we have seen the first volume of G.W.E. Nickelsburg's major commentary on *1 Enoch* (Nickelsburg, G. W. E. 1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch Chapters 1-36; 81-108. Minneapolis, Fortress, 2001). In addition, the figure of Enoch has received a considerable, some might even say a disproportionate amount of attention. In the book being reviewed, Andrei Orlov has broached the issues raised by a later stage of the development of the tradition of Enoch than *1 Enoch*, focusing on *2 Enoch* and on the figure of Metatron. Metatron is found prominently in the Merkabah mystical work commonly known as *3 Enoch* as well as throughout the Merkabah mystical tradition and in some midrashim. In *3 Enoch*, Metatron is said to be Enoch who has been transformed into the chief being of the heavenly world, becoming God's right-hand angel, as it were.

By a study of the Enoch figure going as far back as Enoch's possible origin in the Mesopotamian ante-diluvian Enmeduranki, Orlov analyses Enoch's titles and functions and their contribution to the Metatron tradition. He readily admits the complexity of Metatron's origins, yet perceives Enoch to have played a major role in them. His interest in and access to Slavonic texts makes his work especially enlightening for those of us to whom that world is available only in translation. His results also bear on the active debate among students of early Jewish mysticism about its continuity or discontinuity with preceding speculative traditions, especially prominent (as Scholem maintained) in some Qumran texts, such as the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, and some Pseudepigrapha,

such as *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *Ladder of Jacob*, and *2 Enoch*. It is intriguing that such speculative traditions survive in Slavonic, whose Greek originals have been lost, and whose original context in the spectrum of the Jewish pseudepigrapha of the Second Temple Period is far from self-evident.

Dr. Orlov is to be congratulated on venturing into this difficult territory and in succeeding in casting distinctive light into a number of rather tenebrous corners.

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