

**Beyond Revealed Wisdom and Apocalyptic Epistemology:
The Redeployment of Enochic Traditions about Knowledge in Early Christianity**

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In recent years, the traditional distinction between “Wisdom” and “Apocalyptic” has been largely deconstructed, opening the way for new scholarly perspectives on the social settings, motives, and meanings of early Jewish apocalypses and their rich relationships to biblical and post-biblical Wisdom texts and traditions.¹ With intensification of research on Second Temple Judaism – pursued for its own sake and with a fresh focus on socio-historical contexts – scholars have begun to situate the differences between Wisdom and apocalyptic literature in terms of the commonalities and continuities between their authors/redactors. Rather than dramatizing their differences in dichotomous terms, studies have profitably read their points of contrast and conflict in terms of the dynamics of contact and competition among different Jewish circles, schools, and communities.² Among the results has been a new stress on the shared scribal and/or priestly settings that shaped many of the texts that scholars have typically sorted into the categories of “Wisdom” and “Apocalyptic.”³ Furthermore, the comparison of Wisdom and apocalyptic sources has helped us to recover a more nuanced understanding of early Jewish attitudes towards cosmology, eschatology, and epistemology – complex beyond the capacity of simple dichotomies to explain.⁴

The ramifications for research on Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins have already been amply explored. In this paper, I would like to push these insights a bit further, asking whether and how these new approaches to Wisdom and apocalyptic texts and traditions can shed light on second- and third-century Christianity, in general, and the

¹ This new perspective, of course, owes much to the on-going activities of the SBL Wisdom and Apocalyptic group and its members! See, most recently, the essays collected in L. M. Wills and B. G. Wright, eds., *Conflicted Boundaries in Wisdom and Apocalypticism* (Atlanta: SBL, 2005). Also seminal were M. E. Stone, “Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature,” in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, ed. F.M. Cross, W. Lemke, and P.D. Miller (Garden City, NY, 1976) 414-52 and J. Z. Smith, “Wisdom and Apocalyptic,” in *Visionaries and their Apocalypses*, ed. P. Hanson (IRT 4; Philadelphia, 1983) 101-20.

² Note esp. the lively and fruitful discussion of *1 Enoch* and ben Sira: R. Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative Literary and Conceptual Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation, and Judgment* (SBLEJLS 8; Atlanta: SBL, 1995); B. G. Wright, “Ben Sira and the *Book of the Watchers* on the Legitimate Priesthood,” in *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit*, ed. J. Corley and V. Skemp (CBQMS 38; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005) 241–54; idem, “Wisdom, Instruction and Social Location in Ben Sira and 1 Enoch,” in *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael E. Stone*, ed. E. G. Chazon, D. Satran, and R. A. Clements (JSJSup 89; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 105–21; idem, “Sirach and 1 Enoch: Some Further Considerations,” in *The Origins of Enochic Judaism: Proceedings of the First Enoch Seminar*, ed. G. Boccaccini (Turin: Silvio Zamorani, 2002) 179–87.

³ On questions of definition, see Nickelsburg and Tanzer in *Conflicted Boundaries*.

⁴ On the mixture of sapiential and apocalyptic traditions, see e.g. J. J. Collins, “Cosmos and Salvation: Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Age,” *History of Religions* 17.2 (1977) 121-42; S. Burkes, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Wisdom of Solomon,” *HTR* 95 (2002) 21-44; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “Enochic Wisdom: An Alternative to the Mosaic Torah?” in *HESED VE-EMET: Studies in Honor of Ernest S. Frerichs*, ed. J. Magness and S. Gittin (BJS 320; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 123–32; F. J. Murphy, “Sapiential Elements in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch,” *JQR* 76 (1986) 311-327.

redeployment of Second Temple Jewish texts and traditions by Christian apologists, in particular. I will focus on ideas concerning human and divine knowledge. Specifically, I will consider the combination of sapiential and apocalyptic attitudes towards knowledge in the Enochic *Book of the Watchers* (1 En. 1-36) and its redeployment by Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria in discussions about the profits and perils of “pagan” philosophy.

1. Sapiential and apocalyptic epistemologies in the *Book of the Watchers*

The *Book of the Watchers* is one of our earliest extant apocalypses and, moreover, exemplifies some of the inadequacies of traditional views of “Wisdom” and “Apocalyptic” to describe early Jewish literature. This third-century BCE apocalypse resists the reduction of the origins and motives of the genre to apocalyptic eschatology. The concerns that predominate in this apocalypse are cosmological, oriented towards space rather than time: its speculative, scientific, ethical, and even eschatological interests are expressed in terms of an overarching concern for the divinely-created structures of heaven and earth and the proper place of each of God’s creations – whether humans, angels, trees, winds, or stars.⁵ A close connection with biblical and post-biblical Wisdom literature is suggested by its pervading interest in ethics as well as its use of sapiential forms, themes, and language.⁶ Furthermore, the teachings within the *Book of the Watchers* are presented, above all, as revealed wisdom.⁷

In its approach to epistemology, the *Book of the Watchers* also blurs the boundaries between the attitudes towards knowledge traditionally associated with Wisdom and those traditionally associated with Apocalypticism. Wisdom literature is usually associated with insights gleaned from human experience and from observation of the natural world, as predicated on God’s status as Creator. By contrast, apocalypses emblemize claims to knowledge rooted in revelation.⁸ Whereas Wisdom texts often express ambivalence about

⁵ See e.g. L. Hartman, *Asking for Meaning: A Study of 1 Enoch 1-6* (Lund: Gleerup, 1979) 66-70; M. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993) 72-78; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 38-39.

⁶ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 38-39, 50-53, 58-61; Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 75-76. Argall and Nickelsburg have also noted the testamentary features in other Enochic books (*Astronomical Book*, *Book of Dreams*, *Epistle of Enoch*); Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 8-24; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 22-25. Personally, I am a bit skeptical about Nickelsburg’s reconstruction of an “Enochic Testament” at the core of *1 Enoch*, for reasons I explain in “The Textual Identity, Literary History, and Social Setting of 1 Enoch: Reflections on George Nickelsburg’s Commentary on 1 Enoch 1-36; 81-108,” *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 5 (2003) 279-96; see also M. Knibb, “Interpreting the Book of Enoch: Reflections on a Recently Published Commentary,” *JSJ* 33 (2002) 439-42. Following earlier scholarship, I here treat the *Book of the Watchers* as an apocalypse, rather than as the core of an evolving Testament. Whatever the precise genre, however, the testamentary features in Enochic literature remain significant for our understanding of the interlaced traditions of Wisdom and apocalypticism in Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity.

⁷ Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 50.

⁸ On the dynamics of the Jewish apocalyptic focus on revelation, understood in the broader Second Temple context, see e.g. Stone, “Lists”; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “The Nature and Function of Revelation in 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and Some Qumranic documents” in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. E. G. Chazon and M. E. Stone (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 96-99; *idem*, “Revealed Wisdom as a Criterion for Inclusion and Exclusion: From Jewish Sectarianism to Early Christianity” in “*To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, “Others” in Late Antiquity*,

the human capacity to know God's aims, deeds, and creations (esp. Job 38) and caution against the dangers of human speculation (esp. Qoh 3:21; Sir 34:1-8; 41:4), a number of apocalypses – both early and late, ranging from the early Jewish *Astronomical Book* to the late antique Christian *Apocalypse of Paul* and well beyond – enthusiastically speculate into realities beyond the visible world and far into the future; many, moreover, make totalizing claims about the capacity of certain humans to speak with angels and to learn about God's plans and the structure of His cosmos.

At first sight, the *Book of the Watchers* (*1 En.* 1-36) may seem to exemplify apocalyptic epistemology. The frame of this apocalypse locates its textual authority in a pseudonymous claim to the reception and transmission of heavenly secrets by Enoch. "From the words of the Watchers and holy ones," Enoch here claims, "I heard *everything*, and as I heard everything from them, I also *understood* what I saw" (1.2).⁹ In *1 Enoch* 14-16, Enoch physically ascends to heaven, into the presence of God, and he receives a divine commission to rebuke the fallen angels. In *1 Enoch* 17-36, moreover, he is taken by angels on a tour of earth and heaven, visiting the far corners of the cosmos. In the process, ethical and cosmological wisdom – and, secondarily yet significantly, insights into the eschatological judgment and the end of history – are conveyed to the reader/hearer of the apocalypse as knowledge vouchsafed by the otherworldly journeys of this antediluvian sage.

Yet, in the *Book of the Watchers*, we also find hints of a concern to delineate the proper bounds of human speculation,¹⁰ akin to the assertion of the inscrutability of divine wisdom and the critiques of speculative wisdom in biblical and post-biblical Wisdom literature (e.g. Prov 30:1-4; Job 11:5-6; 28; 38-40; Qoh 3:21; Sir 3:21-22; 20:30; 34:1-8; 41:4). Even as this apocalypse celebrates Enoch's reception and revelation of heavenly secrets, it offers a negative paradigm for the transmission of heavenly secrets. It alleges that, when fallen angels descended to earth to take human wives (cf. Gen 6:1-4), they corrupted humankind by revealing knowledge about metalworking, cosmetology, spells, and celestial divination:

Asael taught men to make swords and weapons and shields and breastplates and every instrument of war. He showed them metals of the earth and how they should work gold to fashion it suitably, and concerning silver, to fashion it for bracelets and ornaments for women. And he showed them concerning antimony and all manner of precious stones and dyes. And the sons of men made them for themselves and their daughters and they transgressed and led the holy ones astray. And there was much godlessness on the earth, and they made their ways desolate. Shemihazah taught spells and the cutting of roots. Hermani taught sorcery for the loosening of spells and magic and skill. Baraqel taught the signs of the lightening flashes. Kokabel taught the signs of the stars. Ziqel taught the signs of the shooting stars. Arteqoph taught the signs of the earth. Shamsiel taught the signs of

ed. J. Neusner and E. Frerichs (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 74-77; J. C. VanderKam, "Revealed Literature in the Second Temple Period," in *From Revelation to Canon: Studies in Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (JSJSup 62. Leiden: Brill, 2000) 1-30.

⁹ Unless otherwise noted, English translations of *1 Enoch* follow Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1.

¹⁰ See Collins, "Wisdom, Apocalyptic," 172; Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*, 17-18; Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach*, 74-76, 250. Interestingly, similar "anti-speculative" tendencies can be found in a much later apocalypse, 4 Ezra, on which see P. Tiller, "Anti-apocalyptic Apocalypse," in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. R. Argall, B. Bow, and R. Werline (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2000), 258-65.

the sun. Sahriel taught the signs of the moon. And they all began to reveal mysteries to their wives and to their children.¹¹ (*1 En.* 8.1-3).

When the archangels are called upon to punish their fallen brethren, the teachings of Asael are singled out for rebuke:

You see what Asael has done, who has taught iniquity upon the earth and has revealed the eternal mysteries that are in heaven, which the sons of men were striving to learn! (*1 En.* 9.6)

And all the earth was made desolate by the deeds of the teachings of Asael. And over him, write all sins. (*1 En.* 10.8)

In parts of the *Book of the Watchers*, the rhetoric of secrecy and revelation thus takes on a negative valence rarely found in apocalyptic literature (cf. *1 En.* 10.2).¹²

In light of the composite character and complex literary history of this apocalypse, it is clear that the juxtaposition of different views of knowledge is a product of the redactional combination of different sources. Nevertheless, how can we account for these negative views of the revelation heavenly secrets?

To answer this question, most studies have investigated the origins of the tradition, paying particular attention to *1 Enoch* 6-11, a third-person account of angelic descent which seems to have originated independently and which may preserve some of the most ancient material in the *Book of the Watchers*.¹³ A number of scholars have suggested that traditions about the teachings of the fallen angels may reflect a response to Hellenistic culture, pointing to the thematic resonances between the fallen angels and the ambivalent culture-heroes of Greek mythology.¹⁴

The parallels prove particularly intriguing in light of the overlaps in the topics of their instruction. The teachings attributed to Prometheus and the Idaean Dactyls, for instance, also combine seemingly beneficial civilized arts with more socially marginal “magical” practices.¹⁵ Most scholars have focused specifically on the parallels with Prometheus.

¹¹ Note esp. *1 Enoch* 8.3h; 4QEnoch^a IV 5, 4QEnoch^b III 5: לַגְלִיָּה רִוּיָן; Gr^{Syn}: *anakaluptein ta mustêria*. Contrast *1 Enoch* 41:3, where Enoch learns the “secrets of heaven,” including “secrets of lightning and thunder,” “secrets of wind,” and “secrets of clouds and dew.” The use of the term רִוּיָן in *1 Enoch* 8.3h also contrasts with its positive use in early strata of the Book of Daniel (e.g. 2:16-19, 26-30, 47; 4:9). On the use of the rhetoric of secrecy and revelation in the apocalyptic literature, see M. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1990), 31-40.

¹² Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 77-78; A. Y. Reed, “Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent, and the Transmission of Knowledge in *1 Enoch* 6-16,” in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004).

¹³ On *1 Enoch* 6-11 and its sources see G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “Apocalyptic and Myth in *1 Enoch* 6-11,” *JBL* 96 (1977) 384-86; D. Dimant, “*1 Enoch* 6-11: A Methodological Perspective,” *SBL Seminar Papers*, 1978 (SBLSP 17; Chico: Scholars Press, 1978), 1:323-24, 329; P. Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in *1 Enoch* 6-11,” *JBL* 96 (1977) 195-233.

¹⁴ E.g. R. Barthelemy, *Heroentum in Israel und siener Umwelt* (Zurich, 1979) 161-66; Nickelsburg, “Apocalyptic and Myth,” 399, 403; idem, *1 Enoch* 1, 191-93; D. Suter, “Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest: The problem of family purity in *1 Enoch* 6-16,” *HUCA* 50 (1979) 115-35; F. Graf, “Mythical Production: Aspects of Myth and Technology in Antiquity,” in *From Myth to Reason? Studies in the Development of Greek Thought*, ed. Richard Buxton (New York: Oxford UP, 1999), 322-28.

¹⁵ In *Prometheus Bound*, Prometheus acts apart from Zeus and reveals a number of *technai* to humankind, including metallurgy, divination, and astronomy as well as brick-making, wood-working, numbers, and writing (see 446-504; cf. Hesiod, *Op.* 42-105). According to Diodorus Siculus, the fourth

Nickelsburg, for instance, sees the material associated with Asael in *I Enoch* 6-11 as shaped by Greek depictions of this figure, grounding the plausibility of this reading in his related theory that the fallen angels symbolize the Diadochi, whose wars ravaged the Mediterranean world in the fourth century BCE.¹⁶ David Suter is even more specific. With reference both to *I Enoch* 6-11 and to the later interpretation of these chapters in *I Enoch* 12-16, he proposes that the Enochic authors/redactors adopted and adapted the Prometheus myth as a deliberate “allusion to Greek mythology” that expresses “both knowledge of and disapproval of Hellenistic culture.”¹⁷

In my view, these connections are intriguing and no doubt point to the general cultural context of the authors/redactors of the earliest Enochic literature. In light of the quantity and diffusion of similar traditions throughout the Hellenistic world,¹⁸ however, I personally remain wary to press any specific connections or to draw from them any concrete socio-historical conclusions. In this regard, I am inclined to agree with Fritz Graf. When surveying a variety of Greco-Roman sources related to the teachings of metalworking and cosmetics by divine, semi-divine, and human culture-heroes, Graf suggests that *I Enoch* 6-11 more likely reflects its authors/redactors’ participation in “the eastern Mediterranean literary Koine,” as opposed to their dependence on a single and specific Greek myth.¹⁹ Rather than a critique of Hellenistic culture, this tradition may speak to its authors/redactors’ participation in a shared discourse shaped by a growing ambivalence towards technology and the origins of human culture.²⁰

Whatever the precise origins of this tradition, it is important to consider its place within the redaction-history of the *Book of the Watchers*. Elsewhere,²¹ I have suggested that the ambivalence towards knowledge in *I Enoch* 6-11 may point to the origins of this unit within Jewish scribal circles whose attitudes towards knowledge were more akin to Qohelet than to the scribes responsible for the rest of the *Book of the Watchers*. If so, then its inclusion in the *Book of the Watchers* stands as another important witness to the cultural proximity between scribes who created, redacted, and transmitted apocalyptic and Wisdom literature, contributing to our understanding of the transfer of traditions between competing groups in the scribal cultures of Second Temple Judaism.

century B.C.E. historian Ephorus of Cyme depicts the Dactyls as “sorcerers, who practiced charms and initiatory rites and mysteries” and taught humankind about the “use of fire and what the metals copper and iron are, as well as the means of working them” (V.64.4-5; see also Pliny, *NH* 7.61).

¹⁶ Nickelsburg, *I Enoch* 1, 170-71.

¹⁷ Suter also notes that the general association of priests with teaching and proposes that such an allusion could be intended to critique the mostly priestly Jerusalem aristocracy who were responsible for “the Hellenization of Jerusalem society in the third century B.C.E.” (“Fallen Angel,” 115, 132-35).

¹⁸ As Nickelsburg himself admits (*I Enoch* 1, 193 n. 16), the limitation of the parallel between Asael and Prometheus is its inability to explain why other Watchers are also depicted as teachers. This, in my view, is why it is important to look at the whole complex of Greek traditions surrounding these themes. The Dactyls, for instance, provide an interesting parallel with regard to a group of semi-divine figures who teach both *technai* and “magic.”

¹⁹ F. Graf, “Mythical Production: Aspects of Myth and Technology in Antiquity,” in *From Myth to Reason? Studies in the Development of Greek Thought* (ed. Richard Buxton; New York: Oxford UP, 1999), 317-28 (quote on p. 322).

²⁰ For this, there are precedents, of course, in Gen 4:22-24 as well as Hesiod, *Op.* 109-201. For later examples, see A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas. *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore, 1997), esp. 24-31; S. Blundell, *The Origins of Civilization in Greek and Roman Thought* (London, 1986), esp. 105.

²¹ Reed, “Heavenly Ascent” and *Fallen Angels*, ch. 1.

For the integration of this material into the rest of the *Book of the Watchers*, *1 Enoch* 12-16 proves pivotal. The treatment of Enoch and the fallen angels in these chapters serve to situate any potentially “anti-speculative” sentiments in *1 Enoch* 6-11 within the context of an apocalyptic epistemology founded on claims to know and transmit heavenly secrets. These chapters read illicit angelic instruction in terms of a breach of the proper boundaries between heaven and earth. Most notable is God’s rebuke of the Watchers in *1 Enoch* 16.3:

“You were in heaven,
And there was no secret that was not revealed to you.
Unspeakable secrets you know,
And these you made known to women, in the hardness of your heart.
And, by these secrets, females and mankind multiplied evils on the earth.”²²

In the redacted form of the *Book of the Watchers*, the contrast between the Watchers and Enoch is thus used to explore the relationship between secrets in heaven and knowledge on earth. Whereas the Watchers descend to earth and wrongly reveal heavenly secrets that corrupt humankind and cause sin, Enoch ascends to heaven to receive heavenly secrets; his revelation of these secrets, moreover, encourages piety and steadfastness among humankind. In the redacted form, the result is a poignant reflection on the power of knowledge. The interweaving of different traditions has resulted in the depiction of heavenly and earthly knowledge as two distinct realms, the bridging of which is dangerous, if pursued apart from God’s guidance.

As our present purposes do not permit further investigation of these issues, it suffices to make two points. First: whether or not *1 Enoch* 6-11 draws specifically on a single Greek myth and/or is meant to critique Hellenistic culture, it does resonate with Greco-Roman traditions about culture-heroes; such resonances, as we shall see, were readily picked up and developed by later readers like Clement. Secondly: whether or not we can make plausible suggestions about the redaction-history of the *Book of the Watchers* on the basis of its combination of apocalyptic and sapiential traditions, it remains that the combination of different attitudes towards knowledge results in a poignant and evocative ambivalence in the redacted form of the text. The juxtaposition of different views surely reflects the redactional integration of distinct sources and traditions, but they operate together within the redacted form – the form in which later readers, such as Justin, Athenagoras, and Clement, seem to have encountered this text. As we shall see, the interpretations of the Enochic myth of angelic descent by early Christian apologists attest the rich range of possible meanings generated by the polysemy of the *Book of the Watchers*’ material about the fallen angels. They also testify to the enduring explanatory

²² Nickelsburg translates: “You were in heaven, and no mystery was revealed to you, but a stolen mystery you learned...” (*1 Enoch* 1, 267 and notes on p. 269). The above rendering is M. Black’s reconstruction and translation of this verse (*The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch: A New English Edition* [PVTG 3; Leiden: Brill, 1985], 155), which follows Gr^{Pan.Syn} and Clement, *Strom.* 5.1.10.2 (contrast the Ge’ez: “You were in heaven, and hidden things still were not revealed to you [*wa-xebu’āt ‘ādi ‘i-takaštu lakemu*], and worthless secrets [*mennuna meštira*] you knew...”); see my discussion of this verse in “Heavenly Ascent” and in chapters one and five of *Fallen Angels* on why I think it is more plausible that a statement about the fallen angels’ access to all knowledge was later changed to a statement about their lack of any authentic access to heavenly knowledge (compare, e.g., the textual history of Ezek 28:3, wherein later translations downplay the knowledge originally available to the fallen King Tyre).

power and flexibility of its combination of apocalyptic and sapiential approaches to knowledge.

2. Justin Martyr: The Logos, the fallen angels, and the wisdom of the Greeks

Research on the redeployment of Second Temple Jewish traditions in early Christian apology has dealt in detail with the adoption and extension of Hellenistic Jewish tropes. Studies have stressed the influence of Philo, Josephus, and other Greek-speaking Jews, exploring – most notably – how early Christians developed traditions about Moses’ influence on Plato, et al., in order to defend Christianity on philosophical terms – as well as to justify the integration of insights from ancient Greek philosophy in Christian theology.²³

Although the popularity of the early Enochic literature among second- and third-century Christians is well documented,²⁴ scholars have largely overlooked the place of this literature in shaping Christian attitudes towards the wisdom and learning of the Greeks.²⁵ Elsewhere, I have discussed in detail how Justin Martyr redeploys traditions about the fallen angels from the *Book of the Watchers* as part of his polemic against “pagan” culture.²⁶ For our present inquiry, what proves significant is that Justin also draws on early Enochic texts and traditions for epistemological aims; as we shall see, he uses traditions about illicit angelic instruction to propose a supernaturally-influenced line for the transmission of false and corrupting knowledge, which runs parallel and inverse to the transmission of divine wisdom by the Logos.

Justin’s views about the transmission of divine wisdom are well-known and much-discussed. On the one hand, he draws on Hellenistic Jewish traditions about Moses in the

²³ On these Hellenistic Jewish traditions and their place in early Christian apology and historiography, see esp. A. J. Droge, *Homer or Moses?* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989). Jewish examples of this trope include Aristobulus *apud* Clement, *Strom.* 1.15.72.4, 5.14.97.7, 5.14.99.3, Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 13.12.3-4; Philo, *Spec. leg.* 4.61; Josephus, *c. Ap.* 2.167-69; cf. Pseudo-Eupolemus *apud* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.26.1; on its function within Hellenistic Judaism, see E. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1998) esp. 154-60, 246-253.

²⁴ For surveys of the evidence, see H. L. Lawlor, “Early Citations from the Book of Enoch.” *JPh* 25 (1897) 164-225; idem, “The Book of Enoch in the Egyptian Church,” *Hermathena* 30 (1904) 178-83; J. C. VanderKam, “1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, ed. J. C. VanderKam and W. Adler (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996) 33-101; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 87-95.

²⁵ Some scholars, in fact, seem almost embarrassed that Christian philosophers like Justin and Athenagoras would appeal to the fallen angels. Writing of the latter, for instance, L. W. Barnard notes that “His account of the fallen angels is not so bizarre as that of Justin,” and he seeks to locate the tradition in “Greek Judaism” (*Athenagoras: A Study in Second Century Christian Apologetic* [Théologie Historique 18; Paris: Beauchesne, 1972] 114), following his argument that Justin himself drew on a pre-existing Jewish or Jewish-Christian tradition linking the fallen angels with the gods of the Greeks (*Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1967] 106-7). Against the theory that Justin’s knowledge of Enochic traditions were mediated through another source, see my comments in “The Trickery of the Fallen Angels and the Demonic Mimesis of the Divine: Aetiology, Demonology, and Polemics in the Writings of Justin Martyr,” *J ECS* 12.2 (2004) 148-54 and n. 17.

²⁶ See Reed, “Trickery of the Fallen Angels,” 141-71, and *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), ch. 5. See also H. Wey, *Die Funktionen der bösen Geister bei den griechischen Apologeten des zweiten Jahrhunderts nach Christus* (Winterthur: Keller, 1957) 7-10; E. Pagels, “Christian Apologists and the ‘Fall of the Angels’: An Attack on Roman Political Power?” *HTR* 78 (1985) 301-325.

course of explaining the commonalities between “pagan” and Christian beliefs (e.g. *1 Apol.* 69-70).²⁷ On the other hand, he interweaves Greek philosophy and Christian theology to assert that, prior to the Incarnation, Christ in his capacity as Logos spread seeds of truth amongst Greeks and Jews alike (e.g. *1 Apol.* 44; *2 Apol.* 8, 13).²⁸ Justin thus presents Christ as, always and everywhere, the sole source of true beliefs, proper practices, and pious ethics; not only is Christianity the true philosophy, but *all* true wisdom – whether found in Jewish scriptures or in Greek philosophical treatises – actually belong to Christians (e.g. *2 Apol.* 10, 13, 15). The ramifications are striking: even as Justin’s arguments are oriented towards defending Christian beliefs in terms comprehensible to Greek-educated “pagans,” they simultaneously serve to co-opt Greek philosophy for Christians and to establish its propriety for theological use, together with the Jewish scriptures. In his influential epistemological system, the truths contained in the former are presented as clouded but, nevertheless, as deriving from the same divine source as the latter (e.g. *2 Apol.* 13).

Justin’s positive view of Greek philosophy, however, cannot be understood apart from its negative complement. Lest any Christians amongst his readers take his words as a license to embrace all “pagan” wisdom, Justin also traces another supernatural source behind Greek literature and learning: he argues that some “pagan” traditions – particularly mythological and ritual traditions – are demonically inspired (e.g. *1 Apol.* 5, 9-10, 14; *2 Apol.* 5). It is here that Justin draws on Enochic traditions about corrupting knowledge, weaving them together with other Jewish, Christian, and “pagan” traditions into a distinctively Christian epistemology grappling with Greek *paideia*.²⁹

Interestingly, in *2 Apology* 5, we see hints of Justin’s dependence both on the cosmology of the *Book of the Watchers* and on its traditions about the fallen angels (cf. *Dial.* 79). He begins by celebrating the order [*taksis*] of the cosmos created by God and governed by divine law. In a manner reminiscent of the nature poem that begins the *Book of the Watchers* (*1 En.* 2-5), Justin establishes that the cosmos is governed by a divine intelligence by appealing to the elements of heaven, the fruitfulness of agricultural produce, and the predictable rotation of the seasons (*2 Apol.* 5.2; cf. *1 En.* 5.1-2). It is in this context that he outlines the distinct realms of angelic and human responsibility: God subjected earthly things [*ta epigeia*] to human beings, while entrusting “the care of humankind and the things under heaven [*tên men tôn anthrôpôn kai tôn hupo ouranon pronoian*]” to the angels (*2 Apol.* 5.2).

Justin thus describes the fall of the angels as a transgression of the divine order of the cosmos:

²⁷ See further Droge, *Homer or Moses*, 59-65.

²⁸ Hence, even prior to Jesus’ life, Justin purports that there were Christians. In the *Apologies*, the paradigm of the pre-Christian Christian is Socrates (esp. *1 Apol.* 5, 46; *2 Apol.* 3, 7, cf. 10), consistent with its ostensibly “pagan” intended audience (see, however, discussion in R. M. Price, “Are there ‘Holy Pagans’ in Justin Martyr?” *Studia Patristica* 31 [1997] esp. 168-71). Enoch looms large among pre-Christian Christians described in *Dialogue with Trypho*, where the focus falls on pre-Abrahamic patriarchs and prophets (e.g. *Dial.* 19, 45, 92); in fact, Justin sometimes calls this entire set of righteous men simply “Enoch and the rest” or “Enoch and those like him” (*Dial.* 23, 43).

²⁹ On the Greek philosophical critique of Greek religion and its influence on early Christian apologetics, see R. P. C. Hanson, “The Christian Attitude to Pagan Religions Up to the Time of Constantine the Great” in *Studies in Christian Antiquity* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985), esp. 157-58, and Droge, *Homer or Moses*, 54-55 on Justin in particular.

But the angels [*angeloi*], transgressing this order [*parabantes tēnde tēn taksin*], succumbed to intercourse with women and begat children, who are those called “*daimones*” [*hoi legomenoi daimones*]. (2 *Apol.* 5.2)³⁰

This approach to angelic sin recalls *1 Enoch* 15.3-7, which stresses the Watchers’ improper adoption of human prerogatives.³¹ Likewise, his description of the results of the angelic sin echoes *1 Enoch* 15.8-16.1 in its assertion that the children of the fallen angels are the demons that now roam the earth.

In describing the ramifications of these events, Justin may also draw on Enochic traditions about illicit angelic instruction:

...they afterwards subdued the human race to themselves, partly by magical writings [*diā magikōn graphōn*] and partly by fears and the punishments they occasioned, and partly by teaching them to offer sacrifices, and incense, and libations, of which things they stood in need after they were enslaved by lustful passions, and among humankind they sowed [*espeiran*] murders, wars, adulteries, intemperate deeds, and all wickedness. (2 *Apol.* 5.3-4)

Justin’s assertion of the enslavement of humankind through magical writings recalls the *Book of the Watchers*’ description of the revelation of knowledge about sorcery, spells, and celestial divination by the fallen angels (*1 En.* 7.1; 8.3; 9.7).³² Furthermore, just as Justin’s reference to their sowing of murders and wars echoes the descriptions of Asael’s teachings of “swords of iron and weapons and shields and breast-plates and every weapon for war” in *1 Enoch* 8.1, so his reference to their sowing of “adulteries and intemperate deeds” resonates with this Watcher’s teachings about jewelry, cosmetics, and other accoutrements of feminine vanity in *1 Enoch* 8.2. It may also be significant that Justin here accuses the fallen angels of sowing “all wickedness [*pasan kakian*]” – an accusation that echoes the *Book of the Watchers*’ condemnation of Asael and other Watchers for teaching “all iniquity on the earth” (*1 En.* 9.6) and revealing “all sins” (10.8), so that the whole earth became “filled with iniquity” (10.9).

Some precedent for Justin’s view that the fallen angels taught humankind the ways of improper worship may also be found in *1 Enoch* 19.1. When Uriel there shows Enoch the prison of “the angels who mingled with the women,” he warns him that “their spirits [*pneumata*], taking on many forms, will harm humankind and lead them astray, to sacrifice to demons [*epithuein tois daimoniois*], until the great judgment” (Gr^{Syn}). Interestingly, *1 Enoch* 19.1 does not equate fallen angels directly with demons; consistent with the link between the souls of the dead Giants and the “evil spirits” that still roam the earth in *1*

³⁰ Translations of Justin and Athenagoras are revised from ANF, with reference to the Greek in E. J. Goodspeed, *Die ältesten Apologeten* (Göttingen, 1915).

³¹ In adopting the interpretation of angelic sin as a breach of cosmic order, Justin was no doubt influenced by Platonic precedents as well (e.g. *Timaeus* 41-42); see Wey, *Die Funktionen der bösen Geister*, 7-10. In light of Justin’s apparent familiarity with the *Testament of the 12 Patriarchs* or related traditions (on which see O. Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr’s Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* [Leiden: Brill, 1987] 253-55, 270-72, 281, 291, 344-45, 428-29), it is likely that he also draws from an interpretation of angelic descent akin to that found in *Testament of Naphtali* 3. Justin departs from the *Testaments*, however, in adopting the Enochic view of the supernatural origins of earthly sin and cosmic disorder.

³² Cf. Plato, *Symposium* 202e-203a on “magic” and *daimones*; also R. Gordon, “Imagining Greek and Roman Magic,” in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. B. Ankarloo and S. Clark (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 178-81.

Enoch 15.8-16.1, the spirits of the fallen angels are here said to lead humankind astray to worship demons. In *2 Apology* 5, Justin appears to retain this distinction. He explains how the fallen angels taught the practice of improper worship to humankind, who then used these skills to serve their demonic sons. The fallen angels may have introduced false ritual knowledge to humankind, and they may continue to inspire idolatry, but their sons are the ones who masquerade as the gods of the Greeks (cf. LXX Ps 95.5).³³

The importance of these traditions for Justin's broader epistemology is signaled by his use of the language of "sowing" [*speirô*] to describe the angels' acts of teaching. This language recalls his famous doctrine of the *spermatikos Logos*, whereby he explains all pre-Christian truth – both Jewish and Greek – in terms of the revelations of Christ-Logos. In *2 Apology* 13, for instance, Justin explains the nature of the truths in Greek philosophy by asserting that "All the writers were able to see realities darkly through the sowing [*sporas*] of the implanted Logos [*emphutou logou*] that was in them." A parallel is thus drawn between the Logos, who reveals all true wisdom, and the fallen angels, who transmit false and corrupting teachings. Throughout the *Apologies*, Justin warns that false knowledge can be deceptively similar in appearance to true knowledge, and he stresses that the similarity of appearance is the product of demonic efforts to trick humankind and to frustrate the search for the Christian truth (e.g. *1 Apol.* 9, 14, 23, 54-56, 62; *2 Apol.* 5-6, 9).³⁴ Just as the redacted form of the *Book of the Watchers* juxtaposes proper and improper knowledge about celestial bodies (e.g. *1 En.* 2.1 vs. *1 En.* 8.3), so Justin here warns his readers that false knowledge about Christ, the cosmos, and religious belief and practice can resemble true knowledge in form, even though it differs in origin.

In effect, *2 Apology* 5 uses Enochic traditions to explain how such a situation came about: just as the *Book of the Watchers* contrasts the true wisdom revealed to Enoch with the corrupting revelations of the fallen angels, so Justin's epistemology appeals to two conflicting supernatural sources, each claiming to purvey heavenly knowledge: the Logos, on the one hand, and the fallen angels and their demonic sons, on the other. In Justin's system, the truths in the teachings of Greek philosophers derive from the former (*1 Apol.* 46), while the lies of the Greek mythographers emblemize the falsities and trickeries of the latter (*1 Apol.* 23).³⁵

Whether or not we find allusions to Hellenistic culture already in the *Book of the Watchers*, Justin clearly found these traditions helpful for understanding and explaining the patterns of similarity and difference between "pagan" and Christian traditions in his own time. Greek poets, after all, told myths of gods dead and risen (*1 Apol.* 21); Greek philosophers spoke of the immortality of the soul and the unity of God (*1 Apol.* 13-14, 20), and Greco-Roman mystery cults practiced rituals that looked a lot like baptism and the Eucharist (*1 Apol.* 62, 66). Justin's redeployment of the Enochic myth of angelic descent helps to explain how Christians should approach Greek texts, traditions, and teachings, by contributing to his construction of an epistemological system entailing the cautious

³³ See also *2 Apol.* 7.1. At times, of course, Justin lumps together the wicked angels and demons when discussing the present-day ramifications of angelic descent (e.g. 5.5-6), but it remains significant that his retelling of the angelic descent myth retains this distinction.

³⁴ Reed, "Trickery of the Fallen Angels"; Droge, *Homer or Moses*, 57.

³⁵ On the early Christian critique of "the poets" and its relationship to Greek philosophical arguments, see Hanson, "Christian Attitudes," 158-60.

acceptance of Greek philosophy, on the one hand, and the radical rejection of Greek mythology and Greco-Roman religion, on the other hand.³⁶

3. Athenagoras: Cosmological wisdom and the truths and falsehoods of the Greeks

For second- and third-century Christians, Justin's reinterpretation of the Enochic myth of angelic descent proved a powerful polemical tool, buttressing the denunciation of Greco-Roman culture and Roman rule as demonic.³⁷ His association of the fallen angels and Giants/demons of the Enochic tradition with the gods of Greco-Roman polytheism was picked up and developed by many Christian authors, including Tatian, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, Cyprian, Commodian, and Minucius Felix.³⁸ Most relevant, for our purposes, are the approaches of Athenagoras and Clement, each of whom extended – in distinctive ways – Justin's redeployment of early Enochic traditions about knowledge in order to discuss whether and how Christians should draw on the fruits of Greek learning. Whereas authors like Tertullian and Cyprian focused on the ethical implications of angelic descent (esp. vis-à-vis gender and sexuality),³⁹ Athenagoras and Clement explore its epistemological ramifications in relation to Greek philosophy and mythology.

In Athenagoras' *Embassy for the Christians* (ca. 176-180 CE), early Enochic traditions about the fallen angels here serve as a nexus for discussions about proper and improper knowledge. Moreover, Athenagoras' retelling of the angelic descent myth occasions the articulation of a Christian cosmology in contradistinction to Greek mythological and philosophical traditions.

In the *Embassy*, the main concern is to defend Christians against the charge of atheism, by calling upon the witness of "pagan" philosophers and poets alike (e.g. *Embassy* 5-6). Athenagoras proposes that their writings contain hints of their awareness both of the unity of God and of the true nature of the Greek pantheon as merely a myriad host of *daimones*, material forces, and deified men:

What need is there, in speaking to you who have searched into every department of knowledge, to mention the poets, or to examine opinions of another kind? Let it suffice to say this much: if the poets and philosophers did not acknowledge that there is one God and, concerning these gods, were not of the opinion that some are *daimones*, others are matter [*hulês*], and others were once men, then there might be some show of reason for us [i.e., Christians] being harassed as we are, since we employ language which makes a distinction between God and matter and between the natures [*ousias*] of the two. (*Embassy* 24.1)⁴⁰

³⁶ See further O. Skarsaune, "Judaism and Hellenism in Justin Martyr, Elucidated from His Portrait of Socrates" in *Geschichte–Tradition–Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag, Band III: Frühes Christentum*, ed. H. Cancik, H. Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), esp. 587-89 for a survey of scholarship on this topic.

³⁷ See Pagels, "Christian Apologists," on the political ramifications.

³⁸ For a survey, see Reed, *Fallen Angels*, ch. 5; R. J. Bauckham, "The Fall of the Angels as the Source of Philosophy in Hermias and Clement of Alexandria," *VC* 39 (1985) 319-21, 323-25; L. R. Wickham, "The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: Genesis VI 2 in Early Christian Exegesis," in *Language and Meaning: Studies in Hebrew Language and Biblical Exegesis*, ed. J. Barr, W. A. M. Beuken, et al. (Oudtestamentische Studiën 19; Leiden: Brill, 1974), 135-47.

³⁹ See Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 177-80.

⁴⁰ On the continuities between "pagan" and early Christian views of *daimones*, see Hanson, "Christian Attitudes," 164-66 and citations there.

To explain how Christians can both believe in the unified rule of a single God and acknowledge other forces, Athenagoras outlines a Christian theology, demonology, and cosmology in the language of Greek science and philosophy:

Just as we acknowledge a God, a Son his *Logos*, and a Holy Spirit, united in essence – the Father, the Son, the Spirit, because the Son is the Intelligence [*Nous*], Reason [*Logos*], Wisdom [*Sophia*] of the Father, and the Spirit an effluence, as light from fire – so too do we apprehend the existence of other powers [*dunameis*], which exercise dominion over matter and by means of it [*peri tēn hulēn echousas kai di' autēs*]⁴¹ – and one in particular, who is hostile to God. Not that anything is really opposed to God... It is to the good that is in God, I say, that the spirit [*pneuma*] who is concerning matter, who was created by God, just as the other angels were created by Him and entrusted with the control of matter and the forms of matter, is opposed. (*Embassy* 24.2)

To explain the presence of evil, disorder, and multiplicity on earth, he turns to the Enochic myth of angelic descent. Like Justin, he prefaces his account with a re-assertion of the divine order established in heaven:

This is the constitution [*sustasis*] of the angels – to exercise Providence [*pronoia*] for God over the things created and ordered by Him, so that God may have the universal and general Providence of the whole, while the particular parts are provided for by the angels appointed over them (cf. *Embassy* 10.5). Just as with human beings, who have freedom of choice as to both virtue and vice... so it is among the angels. (*Embassy* 24.3-4)⁴²

Athenagoras then outlines a two-fold angelic fall,⁴³ corresponding to Christian and Jewish traditions about the fall of Satan and the fall of the angels before the Flood. He first appeals to the rebellion of a single figure, the prince of matter, who was entrusted by God with the regulation of the material world but then strayed from his role.⁴⁴ He then discusses the fall of other angels, the fathers of the Giants/demons. Both are presented as breaches of the divine cosmic order by supernatural beings endowed, like humankind, with free will:

Some, free agents, you will observe, such as they were created by God, continued in those things for which God had made them and over which He had ordained them. But some outraged both the constitution of their nature [*ousias*] and the government entrusted to them: [1] this ruler of matter and its various forms [*tē archē houtos te ho tēs hulēs kai tōn en autē eidōn archon*] and [2] others of those who were placed about this first firmament [*stereōma*] – you know that we say nothing without witnesses, but state the things which

⁴¹ Cf. *Embassy* 10.5, where Christian beliefs in the Trinity and angels are used to deny the charge of atheism; in the process, Athenagoras makes similar assertions about the angelic role in maintaining the cosmic order: “Who, then, would not be astonished to hear people who speak of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and who declare both their power in union and their distinction in order, called atheists? Nor is our teaching in what relates to the divine nature confined to these points, but we recognize also a multitude of angels and ministers, whom God the Maker and Framer [*dēmiourgos*] of the world distributed and appointed to their several posts by His *Logos*, to occupy themselves with the elements [*stoicheia*], the heavens [*ouranous*], the world [*kosmon*], the things in it [*ta en auto*], and the good ordering of them all [*tēn toutōn eutaksian*].”

⁴² The free will of the angels is also asserted by Justin, *Dial.* 102, 141; 2 *Apol.* 6; Lactantius, *Inst.* 25; see Fergusson, *Demonology*, 119-20.

⁴³ We may also find attempts to correlate traditions about the rebellion of Satan with traditions about the angels who fell before the Flood in Justin, *Dial.* 45, 100, 102, 141, and Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.* 1.15.6.

⁴⁴ As Barnard notes, this figure is never called Satan, the devil, or any other proper name of the sort; *Athenagoras*, 112.

have been declared by the prophets [*ha tois prophêtais ekphônêtai*]! – fell into impure love of virgins [*eis epithumian pesontes parthenôn*] and were subjugated by the flesh, and each became negligent and wicked in the management of the things entrusted to him [*amelêsas kai ponêros peri tèn tòn pepisteumenôn genomenos dioikêsin*]. (*Embassy* 24.5)

The Watchers are described as lower celestial beings, who properly dwell in the first firmament but who abandoned their posts to descend into flesh for the sake of fornication. From the content of this passage, it is possible that Athenagoras' knowledge of Enochic traditions has been mediated by Justin. What is intriguing, however, is that he defends the veracity of his cosmology and demonology, not with appeal to Genesis 6:1-4 or to its purported author Moses, but rather with reference to the declarations of "the prophets" (cf. *Embassy* 9). Especially in light of Jude 14-15, which uses the phrase "Enoch prophesied" to introduce a quotation from *1 Enoch* 1.9, it seems plausible that – as James VanderKam suggests – Athenagoras may be appealing specifically to the *Book of the Watchers* (esp. *1 En.* 15.3) and that he, like Jude, may have understood this text as preserving the authentic writings of the antediluvian prophet Enoch.⁴⁵

Throughout the *Embassy*, Athenagoras cites passages from Greek poets and philosophers to defend Christian beliefs and to argue against the Roman persecution of Christians. Here, however, he addresses the epistemological quandaries raised by these parallels. *Why* are some Christian beliefs similar to those found in the writings of Greek poets and philosophers? And, if they are indeed so similar, are Gentile Christians free to draw upon the texts and traditions in which many of them were educated, in combination with – or in place of – the Jewish scriptures?

Athenagoras' answer is occasioned by his reference to the Giants. He anticipates that many of his readers might notice the parallels with Greek mythology.

From these lovers of virgins, therefore, were begotten those who are called Giants. And if something has been said by the poets, too, about the Giants, do not be amazed! Worldly wisdom and divine differ as much from each other as truth and plausibility: the one is of heaven and the other of earth. And indeed, according to the prince of matter: "We know we often speak lies that look like truths" (Hesiod, *Theog.* 27).⁴⁶ (*Embassy*, 24.6)

Here, it becomes clear that Athenagoras does not simply treat "pagan" and prophetic literature as two sources of the same divine wisdom. Nor does he seek to offer an historical explanation for their points of intersection. Rather, he draws a sharp contrast between the two, which corresponds to his understanding of cosmology, ouranology, and the differences between earth and heaven.

Christian beliefs are placed on the side of the true wisdom that comes from God in heaven, as found particularly in the writings of prophets. Prophets, as he notes earlier in the *Embassy*, did not pen words of their own accord; rather, "lifted in ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of the divine Spirit, [they] uttered the things with which they were inspired, the Spirit making use of them just as a flute-player breathes into

⁴⁵ VanderKam, "1 Enoch," 42. Notably, whereas Justin seems at times to categorize Moses among the prophets, Athenagoras distinguished between Moses, on the one hand, and "Isaiah and Jeremiah and the other prophets," on the other (*Embassy*, 10).

⁴⁶ On earlier Greek uses of this line to critique "the poets," see e.g. E. Belfiore, "'Lies Unlike the Truth': Plato on Hesiod, *Theogony* 27," *Transactions of the APA* 115 (1985) 47-57.

a flute” (*Embassy* 9).⁴⁷ Greek poets may similarly claim to be inspired by the Muses, but their writings are merely “worldly wisdom.” Their assertions might strike some readers as plausible. Yet, however much their wisdom might look like the truth, it remains ontologically and epistemologically distinct. Just as Justin associates false knowledge with the fallen angels and their demonic sons, so Athenagoras puts its source in the wayward steward of the material world. The difference between poets and prophets is underlined by his allusion to the famous words of the Muses at the beginning of Hesiod’s *Theogony* (27), here framed as the words of the prince of this world.⁴⁸

Like Justin, Athenagoras then goes on to describe the ramifications of angelic descent for the present day. Yet, in contrast to Justin, he does not make any explicit appeal to traditions about illicit angelic instruction. Rather, Athenagoras’ approach develops an element in the *Book of the Watchers* that is less prominent in Justin’s interpretation: he articulates the results of angelic descent with a focus on its cosmological significance (cf. *I En.* 15.7-10; 18-19, esp. 18.14-15, 19.1). First, he notes how the fallen angels “haunt the lower air [*aera*] and the earth [*gên*] and are no longer able to rise to the upper heavens [*huperourania*]” (*Embassy* 25; cf. *I En.* 13.5; 14.5).⁴⁹ He then identifies “the souls of the Giants” with “the *daimones* who wander about the cosmos [*peri ton kosmon*]” (*Embassy* 25.1; cf. *I En.* 15.11-16.1).⁵⁰

For Athenagoras, the present location of these various beings is important for an understanding of their purpose and roles. From his assertion that the material realm is now ruled by a fallen angel and from his placement of the rest of the fallen angels and *daimones* on the earth and in the air below the firmament, a reader might conclude that the earthly realm is governed apart from God’s heavenly gaze and guidance. Towards countering this conclusion, Athenagoras begins by admitting that disorder appears, to many, to reign in the earthly realm. For this, he quotes an otherwise non-extant fragment from Euripides: “Often the anxious thought has crossed my mind, whether it is chance [*tucha*] or a *daimon* that rules the small affairs of men... How then, while seeing these things [i.e., earthly injustice and disorder], can we say ‘There is a race of gods,’ or yield to laws?” (*Embassy* 25.1-2).⁵¹ Unlike Justin, he refrains from drawing a contrast between Greek poets and Greek

⁴⁷ At the beginning of this passage (i.e. *Embassy* 9), he notes that if Christians only reasoned about God’s unity from “pagan” sources, then “our doctrines might by some be looked upon as human”; he brings in the divine inspiration of Moses and the prophets in this context.

⁴⁸ Tacit in this and similar citations is the belief that a reader who already knows the truth may be able to see it hidden, albeit in obscured and inverted forms, in even the most pernicious of “pagan” writings. Through these writings, we glimpse the perspective of the ruler of the material world, who once dwelt in heaven but now rebels from God’s goodness.

⁴⁹ See Nickelsburg, *I Enoch* 1, 88, on these parallels. Compare later Jewish traditions about the fallen angels being suspended between heaven and earth as punishment; e.g. praef. *AggBer*; *DeutR* end; *Midrash Petirat Moshe Rabbenu*.

⁵⁰ Especially in light of Athenagoras’ quotation of Hesiod in *Embassy* 24, it is interesting to note the resonance with the assertion in *Op.* 122-26 that the men of the Golden Age became, after their death, *daimones* who protect humankind. In general, apart from the consistently negative valence, Athenagoras’ view of *daimones* is consistent with Greek ideas about these figures; in W. Burkert’s words, “*Daimon* is occult power, a force that drives man forward when no agent can be named” (*Greek Religion*, trans. J. Raffan [Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1985] 180).

⁵¹ See E. T. Sage, “The Quotations of Athenagoras and the Text of Euripides,” *Classical Philology* 1 (1906) 292-293.

philosophers. Rather, Athenagoras cites Aristotle as emblematic of the view that “the things below the heaven are not under the care of Providence.”⁵²

These “pagan” perspectives serve as foils for Athenagoras’ subsequent assertion of God’s true rule over the cosmos. He proclaims the divine order that underlies the entire cosmos, including the apparent disorder in earthly affairs. In his view, the influence of *daimones* and the weaknesses imbedded in matter are to blame for the mistaken impression that the earthly realm is one of disorder, irrationality, and chance:

But because the demonic movements and energies, proceeding from the adverse spirit, produce these disorderly affects and, moreover, move men – some in one way and some in another, as individuals and as nations, separately and in common, in accordance with the tendency of matter on the one hand, and of the affinity for divine things [*ta theia*] on the other, from within and from without – some who are of no mean reputation have therefore thought that this universe is constituted without any definite order and is driven hither and thither by irrational chance [*alogō tuchē*]. (*Embassy* 25.3)

Appearance of disorder is thus contrasted with the reality of order; what appears to be earthly disorder, Athenagoras asserts, is actually governed by a divine plan:

They (i.e. Euripides and Aristotle) do not understand that, of those things which belong to the constitution of the whole world, there is nothing out of order or neglected. Rather, each one of them has been produced by Reason [*logō*], and therefore they do not transgress the order [*taksin*] prescribed to them. (*Embassy* 25.3)

Just as Athenagoras had earlier explained the present-day actions of the fallen angels and their demonic sons with respect to their natures and deeds, so he now asserts that humankind too “is well ordered, by his original nature [*phusei*], which has one common character for all, by the constitution of his body, which does not transgress the law imposed upon it, and by the termination of his life, which remains equal and common to all alike.” It is, in fact, “according to the logic [*logon*] peculiar to himself,” together with “the operation of the ruling prince and of his followers, the *daimones*,” that human beings are “impelled and moved in this direction or that” (*Embassy* 25.4).

It is only after this consideration of the meaning of angelic descent for the nature of God’s governance of the cosmos that Athenagoras reveals that “those who draw people to idols are the aforementioned *daimones*, who are eager for the blood of the sacrifices, and lick them” (*Embassy* 26.1; cf. *1 En.* 19.1; Justin, *2 Apol.* 5).⁵³ This appeal to the demonic inspiration of idol-worship allows him to explain why some people have claimed to see evidence of these gods. He is thus able to answer the question first posed in *Embassy* 23.2:

⁵² The view that Aristotle limited Providence to the heavenly domains above the moon is voiced by a number of “pagan” and Christian authors, e.g. Diogenes Laertius 5.32; Clement, *Strom.* 5.14, Hippolytus, *Ref. omn. haer.*; Epiphanius, *AH* 3.31. For discussion, see A.-J. Festugière, *L’idéal religieux des grecs et l’Évangile* (Paris: Cerf, 1932) 221-63, esp. 232-33 on Athenagoras; D. T. Runia, “Festugière Revisited: Aristotle in the Greek Patres,” *VC* 43 (1989) 1-34; A. P. Bos, “Clement of Alexandria on Aristotle’s (Cosmo-)Theology (Clem. *Protrept.* 5.66.4),” *The Classical Quarterly* 43 (1993) 177-88.

⁵³ Interestingly, Athenagoras harmonizes Justin’s equation of *daimones* and “pagan” gods with euhemeristic approaches to Greek gods. He suggests that “the gods who please the multitude and whose names are given to the images, were men, as may be learned from their history” (*Embassy* 26.1), and he posits that the names of these men were only later adopted by *daimones*. See Wey, *Funktionen*, 33-60, 226-51, and on “pagan” and Christian euhemerism, Hanson, “Christian Attitudes,” 172-81.

“How is it that some of the idols manifest power, if those to whom we erect the statues are not gods?”

Athanagoras explains how such visions result from the weakness inherent in matter and the *daimones* who take advantage to mislead humankind:

...this happens to a soul especially when it partakes of the material spirit and becomes mingled with it, looking not at heavenly things and their Maker, but downwards to earthly things, wholly at the earth, as being now mere flesh and blood and no longer pure spirit. These irrational and fantastic movements of the soul, then, give birth to empty visions in the mind, by which it becomes madly set on idols... Then the *daimones* – who hover about matter, greedy of sacrificial odours and the blood of victims and ever ready to lead people into error – avail themselves of these delusive movements of the souls of the multitude. Taking possession of their thoughts, they cause to flow into the mind empty visions, as if coming from the idols and the statues. When, too, a soul of itself, being immortal, moves in accordance with Reason [*logikôs*], either predicting [*promênousa*] the future or healing the present, the *daimones* claim the glory for themselves. (*Embassy*, 27.1-2)

The *daimones*, in other words, take advantage of humankind’s earthly nature as flesh and blood to inspire false visions in those who are oriented towards the material world and who forget to look towards heaven and the Creator. Lest we imagine that Athenagoras here dismisses all visionary knowledge as demonic in origin, however, he adds that all people, by virtue of the immortality of the human souls, are able by themselves to see true visions of the future and that all also have the power to heal. Even though the *daimones* try to take credit for these wonders, their true source is God, who has implanted these powers as part of humankind’s nature.

Like Justin, Athenagoras uses the Enochic myth of angelic descent to discuss true and false knowledge. Yet, interestingly, Athenagoras stands in continuity with the *Book of the Watchers* in somewhat different ways than did Justin. Rather than appealing to the teachings of the fallen angels, Athenagoras locates the origins of false knowledge in the prince of the material world and his demonic followers. Yet, just as the redacted form of the *Book of the Watchers* juxtaposes the assertion of divine cosmic order (esp. *1 En.* 2-5) with traditions about the angelic disruption of this order (e.g. *1 En.* 15; 18-19), so Athenagoras appeals to angelic descent to explain why the appearance of disorder mars God’s truly orderly cosmos (cf. *1 En.* 18.15). His epistemology, moreover, is tightly tied to his cosmology. Whereas Justin concedes some truths in Greek philosophy, Athenagoras dismisses Greek philosophers along with “the poets” as purveyors of earthly wisdom that is tainted by its origins in a material world ruled by a wayward prince and populated by hungry *daimones*. In his view, any appearances of similarity thus mislead; for him, the contrast is stark with the heavenly wisdom seen by prophets in ecstatic visions. Much like the *Book of the Watchers*, then, Athenagoras asserts that the most trustworthy source of wisdom is the prophet with special access to knowledge from heaven.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ In Athenagoras’ epistemology, God is the only source of truth, and prophecy the main criterion for truth. Another path to heavenly knowledge, however, is the rationality that God implanted in humankind, which also allows for the perception of truth through the examination of the divinely-created cosmos. This path, however, is often obscured by the weakness of flesh and the pernicious activities of *daimones*. See further Barnard, *Athenagoras*, 135-39.

4. Clement of Alexandria: Prometheus, fallen angels, and the bad theft of good truths

Lastly, we must touch briefly on Clement of Alexandria. Clement redeploys these traditions in yet another manner, which draws on other elements from the *Book of the Watchers* and which results in yet another perspective on the relationship between Christian truth and Greek philosophy. Inasmuch as his application of the Enochic myth of angelic descent to Greek philosophy has already been richly discussed by Richard Bauckham, it will suffice to outline its contours and consider how Clement's redeployment of the Enochic myth of angelic descent relates to those of Justin and Athenagoras.

In the *Stromata*, Clement presents four explanations for the sparks of truth found in "pagan" philosophy. Bauckham describes them as follows:

- (a) that common human reason has enabled philosophers to discern some truth, (b) that divine inspiration, mediated by the angels of the nations, has given truth to the barbarian sages, (c) that the Greek philosophers have 'stolen' knowledge from Moses and the Hebrew prophets, and (d) that the fallen angels stole philosophy from heaven and taught it to humankind.⁵⁵

For the first three, precedents and parallels abound. The fourth, however, appears to an innovation on Clement's part. Whereas Justin defends philosophy by distinguishing it from "pagan" ritual and religious traditions that are demonically inspired and whereas Athenagoras associates both philosophy and mythology with fallen angels, Clement here puts a surprisingly positive twist on Enochic traditions about illicit angelic instruction: he uses them to posit the heavenly origins of Greek philosophy.

In *Strom.* 1.7.81, Clement asserts that "philosophy was not sent by the Lord, but came stolen, or given by a thief" (cf. John 10:18) when "some power or angel – who had learned something of the truth but did not remain therein – inspired these things and, after having stolen them, taught them." Interestingly, he goes on to argue that "the theft that reached humankind had some advantage." Although those who stole this knowledge should be condemned, their actions were nonetheless in keeping with God's will: "Providence directed the products of this audacious deed to utility."⁵⁶ As a result, "there is, then, in philosophy – although stolen like the fire by Prometheus – a slender spark capable of being fanned into flame, a trace of wisdom and an impulse from God."⁵⁷ When Plato and other Greek philosophers plagiarized Moses, they were thus replicating the deeds of the founders of Greek philosophy, namely, the fallen angels who stole knowledge from heaven.

Clement's comments in *Strom.* 1.16.80.5 may provide some clues as to the background to this theory. There, he refers to some of his contemporaries who denounce philosophy as inspired by Satan (see also 6.8.66.1; 6.17.159.1), in a manner reminiscent of Athenagoras' association of "pagan" wisdom with the prince of the material world. Others, he notes, claim that "certain powers descended and inspired the whole of philosophy," apparently referring to the angels who fell before the Flood and extending Justin's association of the

⁵⁵ Bauckham, "Fall," 323. References to Clement follow *Stromateis*, ed. and trans. M. Caster (SC 30, 38, 278-9; Paris, 1951-81).

⁵⁶ The appeal to Providence proves particularly fitting, since he later suggests that the teachings of the fallen angels account for the existence of the doctrine of Providence among the Greeks (*Strom.* 5.1.10.2).

⁵⁷ See above on scholarly theories about the possible influence of the Prometheus myth on the depiction of Asael in the *Book of the Watchers*.

fallen angels and “pagan” mythology to include philosophy.⁵⁸ Clement, in effect, accepts the content of such traditions while inverting their significance. The association with fallen angels becomes, in his interpretation, an explanation for how some heavenly knowledge came to reside among the Greeks – and for why Greek philosophical can be helpful for Christians.

Clement’s indebtedness to the *Book of the Watchers* becomes clear in *Strom.* 5.1.10.2:

We showed in the first *stromateus* that the philosophers of the Greeks are called thieves, inasmuch as they have taken without acknowledgment their principal dogmas from Moses and the prophets.

To this we shall also add that the angels who had obtained the superior rank, after having sunk into pleasures, told to the women the secrets which had come to their knowledge [*hoi angeloι ekeinoι hoι ton anō klēron eilēchotes katolisthēsantes eis hēdonas ekseipon ta aporrēta tais gunaiksin, hosa ge eis gnōsin autōn aphikto*], whereas the rest of the angels concealed them – or rather, kept them until the coming of the Lord.

From there emanated the doctrine of Providence and the revelation of high things and, since prophecy had already been imparted to the philosophers of the Greeks, the treatment of dogma arose among the philosophers.

VanderKam and others have suggested that this passage paraphrases God’s rebuke of the Watchers in *1 Enoch* 16.3.⁵⁹ Perhaps not surprisingly, *Strom.* 5.1.10.2 seems to presuppose a Greek translation similar to that found in the fifth- or sixth-century Egyptian Codex Panopolitanus.⁶⁰

If so, then Clement’s understanding of illicit angelic instruction proves particularly intriguing. His overall approach, after all, recalls *1 Enoch* 12-16 in its choice to read angelic sin primarily in terms of the transgression of the epistemological boundaries that properly separate heaven from earth and angels from humankind. To assert their transgression of this boundary, however, is also to imply the knowledge that they knew and transmitted was actually heavenly in source and nature. This issue is not addressed in the *Book of the Watchers*. Yet Clement is able to extend its ramifications in interesting directions, inasmuch as he reads *1 Enoch* 16.3 through the lens of a Christian salvation-history. Whereas the *Book of the Watchers* drew a clear line between heavenly and earthly knowledge, Clement implies that this line was temporary: from his description, it seems that the very secrets stolen by the fallen angels were meant to be revealed on earth, albeit only later. Clement notes that the other angels continued to conceal this wisdom from humankind, but he specifies that they did so only “until the coming of the Lord” (*Strom.* 5.1.10.2); now, knowledge once limited to the angels is freely accessible to Christians. Following Clement’s epistemological schema, then, Christians can feel free to draw on the

⁵⁸ Bauckham points to Hermias’ assertion that philosophy “took its beginning from the apostasy of the angels” (*Irrisio* 1) as further evidence for this view; “Fall,” 313, 325.

⁵⁹ Vanderkam, “1 Enoch,” 47. Clement’s familiarity with the *Book of the Watchers* and its account of angelic teachings is suggested by his other references to Enoch and the fallen angels. Note esp. *Ecl.* 53.4: “all the demons knew that it was the Lord who arose after the passion, for Enoch already said that the angels who sinned taught humankind astronomy, divination, and the other arts.”

⁶⁰ “You were in heaven. And every secret that was not revealed to you and secrets that were from God you knew [*kai pan mustērion ho ouk anekalupsthē humin kai mustērion to ek tou theou gegnēmenon egnōte*]. And this you informed [*emēnusate*] the women, in your hard-heartedness. And by these secrets, females and mankind multiplied (c. pl.) evils on the earth.”

truths in Greek philosophy, since the philosophical knowledge stolen by the fallen angels and their Greek students was actually meant, in the first place, to be openly revealed after the Incarnation.

Whereas Justin develops the depiction of illicit angelic instruction as corrupting humankind in *1 Enoch* 6-11 and whereas Athenagoras builds on its description as a breach of cosmic order in *1 Enoch* 12-16, Clement explores the ramifications of the revelation of heavenly secrets by fallen angels who once dwelt in heaven with appeal to *1 Enoch* 16.3. In the process, however, he inverts the negative use of the rhetoric of secrecy and revelation in the *Book of the Watchers* and reads the teachings of the fallen angels through Greek traditions about Prometheus: just as Prometheus transmitted stolen skills and knowledge that proved beneficial to humankind, so the fallen angels are here understood as thieves whose pilfering of heavenly wisdom had happy results. Whereas Justin and Athenagoras associate the fallen angels with corrupting knowledge and earthly wisdom respectively, Clement posits that their knowledge was actually heavenly. Their sin was to remove it from heaven and to reveal it to humankind at the wrong time, but even this transgression could not occur apart from the governing guidance of God's Providence.

5. Concluding reflections

It is intriguing, in my view, that Greek-educated converts to Christianity, writing many centuries after the redactional formation of the *Book of the Watchers*, seem to have found the Enochic myth of angelic descent to be so relevant for their own situations. Although living at times of persecution and seeking to defend Christianity on philosophical grounds, Justin and Athenagoras simultaneously tackled the challenge of forging a Christian epistemology that [1] allowed for apologetic arguments on the basis of the similarities between Christian and "pagan" beliefs, while [2] remaining true to Christian claims to a uniquely true understanding of the heavenly knowledge that brings salvation. In defense of Christian philosophy, Clement later takes up the same task. For this, as we have seen, each drew on the angelic descent myth in different ways in order to understand how the wisdom of the culture in which they were educated relates to the wisdom of the religion to which they converted.

Why this myth and not another? And why did it not suffice merely to follow Philo, et al., in simply stressing Plato's indebtedness to Moses? Important, in my view, is the combination of different approaches to knowledge in the *Book of the Watchers*, wherein traditions about the corrupting power of knowledge wrongly gained are interwoven with traditions celebrating human access to secrets about the cosmos, the future, and God. Whatever the precise origins of what seem to be "anti-speculative" sentiments in the *Book of the Watchers*, it remains that the redactional integration of these traditions with material expressing a more classically "apocalyptic" epistemology has resulted in a richly polysemous text, the insights of which were readily re-applied to new circumstances when questions about the precise nature and sources of true knowledge became – once again, for new reasons – a matter of pressing concern.

In this paper, I have only dealt with those Christian apologists who can be plausibly thought to have known the *Book of the Watchers* in some form and who use the Enochic myth of angelic descent in the context of discussions about the wisdom of the Greeks. To get a fuller sense of the Christian *Nachleben* of the different approaches to knowledge in

the *Book of the Watchers*, one would have to consider other apologists, like Tatian and Minucius Felix, who seem to have known the angelic descent myth primarily via Justin.⁶¹ Perhaps also relevant is the evidence of authors, such as Irenaeus, Origen, and Tertullian, who drew on Enochic texts and traditions for other purposes (e.g., heresiology, exegesis, sexual ethics). Happily, catalogues of early Christian references to Enochic literature are plentiful and comprehensive. More needs to be done, however, to understand how such traditions function within the theologies, cosmologies, and eschatologies of specific authors.

This type of work has already been pursued, to some extent, in relation to the early Christian redeployment of eschatological and historical elements from early Jewish apocalypses. The above survey suggests that more could be learned from exploring the influence of the epistemological and cosmological elements as well. Past research had tended to downplay such elements when studying early Jewish apocalypses, not least because they did not fit with traditional views about the distinctions between “Wisdom” and “Apocalyptic” worldviews. With the emergence of more integrative perspectives in the study of Second Temple Judaism, however, we may also be able to shed new light on the early Christian reception, re-interpretation, and redeployment of these traditions.

⁶¹ Tatian, interestingly, transposes Justin’s account of angelic descent from the antediluvian era to the time of Creation; he equates pagan gods with demons and credits them with introducing astrology to humankind but calls them the host of the Serpent/Satan (*Orat.* 7-9). Minucius Felix equates the demons with pagan gods and credits them with corrupting humankind through prophetic mimics, divination, magic, and idolatry, but he nowhere makes explicit their connection to the fallen angels (*Oct.* 26-27). Note also the interesting approach of Lactantius, who develops the Christianized version of the myth with appeal to *Jubilees*. Here, God sent the angels to earth to counter the influence of Satan, but Satan tempted them into following him instead (*Inst.* 25); like *Jubilees*, Lactantius limits his account of their teachings only to magical arts (*Inst.* 27).