
THE LEGACY OF 1 ENOCH ON ETHIOPIAN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

1 Enoch disappeared centuries ago from the Jewish and the Christian world where it originated, and from where it spread widely gaining canonical authority. It survives in its entirety in the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewhahedo* Church (EOTC) to date. Hence, it is to be expected that traces of the book's legacy can still be detected in the church. Evidently, the book has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention in the last hundred years, more specifically since the landmark discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls. However, its legacy in the EOTC and its influence on the community that is credited with honouring it for many centuries, keeping its original authority and usage intact, have been largely omitted from the discussion. This article, therefore, asks what traces the influence of 1 Enoch has left in Ethiopia and in what its legacy consists. In its attempt to respond to these questions, the article focuses particularly on the literary influences the book has on Ethiopian literature. Though the influence and legacy of the book is not limited to the literary realm, the article limits itself to it alone. Subsequent discussions may go beyond this to consider ways in which the book may have contributed to the making of Ethiopia at large.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

In spite of 1 Enoch having disappeared from the regions where it originally emerged and developed, the book has gained "canonical" authority, maintained its momentum and survived to date in its entirety in Ethiopia. In addition to some Aramaic and Greek fragments, the text survived in Ethiopia in Ge'ez. For over a millennium at least (sixth/seventh to seventeenth/eighteenth centuries) the text has been kept alive and used only in Ethiopia. Not only did it survive, but 1 Enoch was one of the prominent biblical texts in the long history of the EOTC.

As a result, one would expect a certain influence and legacy of this book on the church which retains it as part of its authoritative scriptures. Even if 1 Enoch has in the

last hundred years attracted a considerable amount of scholarly attention, its legacy to, and influence on, the community that is credited with its survival by retaining the text for such a long time while upholding its original authority has largely been ignored. In the extensive scholarly discussion of the last century little mention is made of its survival in, and its influence on, the EOTC.

There are, however, a few exceptions where scholars have shown some interest in taking on the study of the influence of the book in Ethiopia. Some have boldly acclaimed 1 Enoch as a book that shaped not only religious aspects of the EOTC but that influenced a wide variety of aspects of the Ethiopian worldview which itself is closely tied up with religion.¹ Some academics acknowledge the scholarly neglect of the book's role in Ethiopian society and they attempt to fill the gap.²

The broad purpose of the present article, as part of a series of articles, is the identification of specific influences of 1 Enoch in Ethiopia. This central aim gives rise to several specific questions: Are all aspects of the religious traditions and worldviews in Ethiopia strongly influenced by this book as some scholars claim? To what extent is the Ethiopian Christian identity tied up with 1 Enoch? In which specific areas could one speak of 1 Enoch's influence and legacy as being evident? Does the book have an

¹ Such a bold claim was made first and unsurprisingly by one of the leading Ethiopian scholars, Isaac (1983:10), who states: "It is hardly possible to understand any aspect of the religious tradition and thought of Ethiopia, the country in which it survived, without an understanding of it [i.e. 1 Enoch]." He further argues, "What distinguishes Ethiopian Christian theology from that of either the Western or Eastern Christendom may well be the Ethiopian emphases on Enochic thought." Even if there are some elements of truth in this proposition, it has weaknesses and is overstated.

² For instance, one of the leading scholars of Enochic studies, George Nickelsburg (2001:104), admits to the irony of the neglect of the book's influence and legacy in the Ethiopian Church and breaks the silence in this regard. He notes that it is strange to see that "scholars of 1 Enoch have paid little systematic attention to the historical matrix of the Ethiopic version and to the book's ongoing role in the life and thought of Ethiopian Christianity". Nickelsburg (2001:104-108) devotes about five pages in the first volume of his massive commentary on the book to its influence in the Ethiopian church. He contributed further to the discussion in an article (Nickelsburg 2006:611-619). He also states that Milik has remarked at an earlier date on the neglect by scholars of the book's influence on the EOTC. He lists a few scholars and points out specific small contributions they made, including Ullendorff, Milik, Berger, Fuhs and Isaac. He is critical of the fact that 1 Enoch's influence has been studied "only in relation to early Jewish, texts and the literature of Western Christianity" (Nickelsburg 2006:611-619).

influence on other than religious and spiritual aspects of life in Ethiopia, or, to put it differently, does 1 Enoch have an impact on social, cultural, political, intellectual and other facets of existence in the broader Ethiopian society?

Although all these questions are important, the present article focuses on only one, namely the specific areas where 1 Enoch's influence and legacy in the EOTC are explicit. In addition to the wider influence of 1 Enoch on the EOTC in particular and on Ethiopia in general, its literary prominence and scriptural significance can be detected from two literary perspectives. First, evidence from manuscript(s) (ms(s)) positions 1 Enoch as one of the prominent biblical books in the transmission history of the scriptures in the EOTC.³ In the second place 1 Enoch has been employed as source material in other significant literary works produced in the later period of Ethiopian literary history. After discussing the manuscript evidence, we will turn to other Ethiopian literary works that depend heavily on, or have made use of, 1 Enoch as their source. Thus, while focusing particularly on the manuscript analysis and literary study to show 1 Enoch's legacy on Ethiopian literature, this paper gives a glimpse of indications that the book may have contributed to the making of Ethiopia at large, which may be discussed elsewhere in depth.

The discussion begins with an analysis of some ancient manuscript evidence of 1 Enoch's prominence in the transmission history of scriptures in Ethiopia. Confirming this prominence is the use of 1 Enoch by other literary works. Thus, a discussion of evidence from ancient Ge'ez manuscripts of 1 Enoch and its later usage by other major literary works in Ethiopia constitutes the core of the article. In connection to this, 1 Enoch's other influences in the Ethiopian Church and society will be highlighted.

EVIDENCE FROM BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS

It is believed that tens of thousands of mss have been produced in Ethiopia from the

³ For a discussion of the reception, translation and transmission history of Scriptures in Ethiopia, see Bruk (2013:358-375).

Christianization of the nation in the early fourth century AD to date.⁴ The production of the mss has been centred in the church and its institutions, mainly the monasteries. The court, both on institutional and individual levels, has also been extensively involved. In addition to natural disaster and the wearing out of manuscripts by poor handling, another unfortunate cause of the perishing of an inconceivable amount of ancient mss is the wars in the country. Most devastating as regards the deliberate destruction of mss were the wars and invasions in the ninth⁵ and the sixteenth⁶ centuries. In spite of all this destruction the production of manuscripts has continued in each and every period of the history of the EOTC in particular and of Ethiopia in general.⁷

The subject matter of Ethiopian mss comprises a wide range of subjects. Even if scriptural and religious books are among the more prominent works, there are also mss

⁴ For a discussion of the manuscript history of 1 Enoch in Ge'ez, see Erho and Stuckenbruck (2013:87-133).

⁵ The first major attack on the Christian empire of Abyssinia came from a discontented minority group of the so-called Falasha (in recent days designated also as Bete-Israel, i.e., house of Israel), led by Queen Judith, in the ninth century also called *Yodit Gudit* in Amharic, Esato in Tigrigna, and Ga'wa in Arabic. Once she had defeated the throne, she mainly targeted the church, setting fire to everything connected to it: its literature, arts, and its buildings, including monasteries. Her cruelty was legendary as she massacred thousands of clergy, princes and nobles all around the country. According to the records her reign extended over forty years, destroying what had been built over four centuries. For historical details of her invasion, see Gorgorios (1981/2:30); Mikre-Sellassie (2010:98-101); Ullendorff (1960:60f.). For English translations of two manuscripts from the Ge'ez on her offensives and on the motives behind them see Sergew (1972:226-230).

⁶ The second most devastating war as regards the Ethiopian literary treasure was the sixteenth century invasion by a remarkable general of the Adal army, Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, surnamed Gagn-the-lefthanded, who subdued the entire country. According to Taddesse (1993:42) this was the most destructive period in the whole history of the Ethiopian Christian kingdom and only a small part of the glorious cultural and religious heritage from ancient and medieval times survived "the destructive force of human history". Ullendorff (1960:73) calls the event a "holocaust". In his words, "the holocaust enveloped most parts of Ethiopia and brought in its train misery and murder, ruin and devastation. Much of the literary and intellectual heritage of Abyssinia was irretrievably lost, and the barbarism and brutality had an effect far transcending that age. To Ethiopians a good deal of their hard-won civilization was destroyed, while to the historian and *éthiopisant* precious documentation and irreplaceable evidence perished for ever."

⁷ Producing mss has continued to date, even after the invention of the printing machine centuries ago.

dealing with such topics as history, philosophy, law, mathematics and medicine (Pankhurst [2013a]).

Not only have Ethiopian mss been lost as a result of natural events and human action, but in the course of history thousands of ancient mss have been stolen or looted and sold. As a result they are today found all around the world. According to Pankhurst's "conservative" estimation that does not include the "privately owned MSS, or recent library acquisitions," there are about 5 000 Ethiopian mss currently owned outside Ethiopia ([2013a]).

The enormous task of cataloguing tens of thousands of Ethiopian mss started in the 1970s with a project known as the Ethiopian Manuscripts Microfilm Library (EMML) partnered by three institutions, namely the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML), the Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church, and Vanderbilt University.⁸ The EMML project correctly and proudly claims that it "is the world's richest resource for the study of Ethiopian manuscripts, with complete copies of more than 11,000 Ge'ez manuscripts in microfilm and digital formats" (HMML [2013]), but Pankhurst, while rightly praising the achievements of the EMML project, warns that the task is far from complete.⁹

Several hundred selected "biblical" mss from the highly regarded EMML catalogue¹⁰ and a dozen other biblical mss from the British Library are examined in

⁸ These are the three institutions who own the project as mentioned by HMML ([2013]). However, Pankhurst gives a slightly different description of the partnership involved. He writes: "The EMML project... was based on a partnership between three institutions: the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and St John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minnesota" (Pankhurst [2013b]). He later on mentions a key involvement of another institution, the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, in the EMML project (Ibid).

⁹ Pankhurst ([2013b]) comments that "Though microfilming of manuscripts was carried on fairly exhaustively for almost two decades in much of the country, manuscripts in many other areas, including Tegray, let alone Eritrea, have still not been touched by the project at all." Despite the fact that much has been done after Pankhurst made this comment more than a decade ago, to complete the exhaustive cataloguing of Ethiopian mss remains a huge task.

¹⁰ Pankhurst ([2013b]) points out that "The EMML project ... won the admiration of virtually all scholars in the field (Leslau, Ullendorff, Strelcyn, Hammerschmidt, Chojnacki, Tubiana et al) and is widely quoted in works of scholarship."

the following section.

Analysis of selected “biblical” manuscripts from EMLL

The manuscript analysis includes about 220 mss from EMLL described by Stuckenbruck, who computed the list, as a provisional “sampling of manuscripts that obviously were attempting to collect a number of texts together, including some that many would call ‘biblical’”.¹¹ The dates of the mss range from the twelfth to the twentieth century, with mss from the fifteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries predominant.¹²

A general characteristic of the mss in question is that the books are not ordered according to a dominant pattern as is the case in the Jewish or Christian “canons”. For instance, Sanders (2003:249) remarks that “no matter how the content differs among the several Christian canons, the structure and message of the Christian canons, as a group, contrast significantly with those of the Jewish canon. The Tanak provides a way to move on to Mishnah and Talmud, while the First or Christian Old Testament provides a way to move on to the New Testament.” We do not, however, see in these EOTC mss such a broad structure arise from the order and, hence, it doesn’t reflect a sequential theologically nuanced shape or composition of parts. There is no specific pattern or rule to define the number of books in a manuscript. Any given manuscript may include a single book,¹³ two books, three, four or almost the entire Old Testament. In some cases, a manuscript may include a few biblical books as well as commentaries and portions of other books without any regular order. Potentially, any

¹¹ The list of the mss and the biblical books each ms contains in a table form has been computed by Loren Stuckenbruck and graciously given to me during our meeting in Munich in June 2013. I am deeply grateful for his willingness to share this information with me.

¹² Even if the dates for the mss as they appear in the catalogue are not conclusive, one ms is from the twelfth century, three are from the fourteenth, 32 from the fifteenth, 12 from the sixteenth, 31 from the seventeenth, 77 from the eighteenth, 13 from the nineteenth and another 13 from the twentieth century. About 38 undated mss appear in the catalogue.

¹³ In most cases, Octateuch or Pentateuch, Kings, and the Twelve, are considered as single books. In the meantime, as they may appear as single books or joined together, the connection between Daniel and its associates (Susana and Bel), and Proverbs and *Tegsas*, is unclear.

book may appear on its own, together with another book, or as a first, middle or a last book of any given ms. For example, among the analysed 220 mss, 43 are single books,¹⁴ while only one twentieth century ms (EMML# Cer75) contains almost all of the OT books as well as the NT.¹⁵

One may therefore conclude that there was no established tradition as regards a recognized order or tradition of biblical books in Ethiopian scriptural mss, at least until the beginning of the twentieth century, when printing started. Rather, the evidence from the collected mss speaks for itself, telling us that the EOTC, until the early twentieth century, has not followed any convention of tripartite or quadripartite structures for its biblical scriptures.¹⁶

This does not imply, however, that the order or the structure of the mss examined does not provide, implicitly or explicitly, other information of importance. One of a number of conclusions drawn from the structure of mss is that those connected to 1 Enoch appear to be more explicit than others. Based on (1) the frequency of appearances, (2) precedence in the order and (3) appearance as an independent ms, we may confirm the unique place of this book and its significance in the transmission history of scriptures in the EOTC, especially from the fifteenth to the twentieth century.

Among the 220 mss analysed, 1 Enoch appears sixty-seven times which makes it the most frequently published book of the listed mss. It is followed by the

¹⁴ Among the books that appear as a single book of a given ms are: Enoch, Jubilees, Kings, Octateuch, Sirach, Ezekiel, Song of Songs, and Isaiah.

¹⁵ The order of books in this ms may draw some attention as it tries to follow the traditional order of the Pentateuch/Octateuch, historical books, wisdom or poetic books, and prophets. However, there are a number of variations if one closely looks at the place of each book; for instance, Sirach is the last book of the OT in one ms, EMML #Cer75, where almost all the OT books are included.

¹⁶ Sanders (2003:245-249) shows that, even if the content of the Protestant OT and the Jewish Hebrew Bible is the same, their structure conveys different messages serving the theology of each group. He writes (2003:245): "A careful look at the Tanak as we have inherited [it] from the Masoretes shows that its tripartite structure makes a very different statement from that of the Christian quadripartite First (Old) Testament. In the case of comparison of the Jewish and Christian Protestant canons ..., the two structures (*normanormata*) are quite different, although the texts of the two are essentially the same." For a comparison of the structures and contents of the two canons, see the table in Hauser & Watson (2003:34-35).

Octateuch/Pentateuch in its entirety, which appears sixty-six times. As producing a book was a significantly costly enterprise, it may be argued that the copying of mss was primarily based on the importance and the usage of the text by the contemporary faith community as a group or as individuals and specifically by members of the nobility and royal families.¹⁷ It would seem that it is the prominence of 1 Enoch that led to the considerable investments made to copy and produce it again and again throughout the centuries.

If the order of precedence of any given ms is taken as a criterion, in this respect as well 1 Enoch occupies first place as the work that appears most frequently as the first book in the mss examined. In fifty-one cases of its sixty-seven appearances, 1 Enoch is the book with which mss open. It is followed, again, by the Octateuch/Pentateuch that features as the first book in only forty of its in total sixty-six appearances. In other words, whereas traditionally the Pentateuch has precedence, in the EOTC scriptural mss it is surpassed by 1 Enoch.¹⁸

As concerns 1 Enoch in relation to the Octateuch/Pentateuch, there are fifteen mss in which both appear and 1 Enoch comes first in ten of these whereas the Octateuch/Pentateuch comes first in only two. In the remaining three mss 1 Enoch is positioned between the books of the Pentateuch. This may be a further indication of the prominence of 1 Enoch in the EOTC over the Pentateuch which is traditionally recognized as the first set of books of any Christian scriptures.

Taking a closer look at the order of books on our list of mss, one striking aspect is that in twenty-three mss, the book of Job immediately follows on 1 Enoch. This could be an indication of the long held belief of the EOTC that 1 Enoch is the first book of the scriptures, as Enoch precedes Moses (Hailemariam, M; personal communication, 19 December 2011) and Job is understood to be among the most ancient scriptural writers (see Ezekiel 14:14). In accordance with this view, 1 Enoch's prominence is not only functionally but also chronologically or historically expressed. With regard to

¹⁷ For a detailed discussion on the entire process of bookmaking or manuscript writing in Ethiopia from ancient to modern times, see Sergew (1981).

¹⁸ For a manuscript with one of the largest collections from the fifteenth century see EMLL #1768, with nearly the entire OT, where 1 Enoch appears as the first book.

mss limited to single books, there are ten mss entirely devoted to 1 Enoch, in number surpassed only by Octateuch/Pentateuch productions. The Octateuch/Pentateuch set is numerically in the advantage because its books feature both singly and collectively as mss, i.e., there are mss of individual books belonging to the Pentateuch/Octateuch as well as of Pentateuch/Octateuch books collected in a single ms.¹⁹ Hence, except Octateuch/Pentateuch, 1 Enoch as a single book occurs more frequently than any other biblical books.

Considering the above points, 1 Enoch's prominence in the mss of EOTC "biblical" scriptures, particularly those dating from the fourteenth to the twentieth century, is fairly convincing. The same trend is apparent from the Ethiopian manuscripts present in the British Library, to which we now turn.

Analysis of twelve biblical manuscripts from the British Library

The books analysed in this section are biblical Ge'ez mss in the British Library, selected for their inclusion of 1 Enoch.²⁰ Nine of the twelve mss date from the eighteenth century whereas the remaining three are from the sixteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth century.²¹ Even if these last three mss may lead to findings that apply over a longer period, they could provide us with a clearer understanding of the situation in the eighteenth century.

As they have been selected as Enochic mss, 1 Enoch appears in all of the twelve. 1 Enoch appears nine times as the first book of the mss and one ms contains only Enoch.

¹⁹ For example, a manuscript can be either only the book of Genesis, or a couple of books from the Pentateuch/Octateuch, or only the Pentateuch, or the entire Octateuch. So, the comparison is between just one book, 1 Enoch, and eight books.

²⁰ For the purpose of this study I have limited my research to these twelve mss, all of which contain 1 Enoch.

²¹ Almost all the dates of the mss, as assigned by Wright (1877:7-19, 209) and Strelcyn (1978:4-5) are debatable since no carbon tests have as yet been done. The dates may be accepted as only relatively reliable. Based on recent findings concerning the dates of some ancient Ethiopian illuminated gospel mss that have been carbon tested and found to be much older than expected, I assume that the mss involved in the present research may also be of an earlier date than is indicated in the catalogues of Wright (dates of ten mss) and Strelcyn (dates of two mss). But until scientific research brings about consensus as regards the dates of the mss, I tentatively adopt the dates as assigned in the catalogues.

In the one ms that contains both 1 Enoch and the Octateuch, 1 Enoch is the first book followed by the Octateuch. The book of Job appears in four of the mss and always immediately follows on 1 Enoch. Except for these patterns we have not found any other constant order of books in these mss and any given ms could include any number of books.²² If we compare the two mss with the largest number of books, MSS# Orient. 484 and MSS# Orient. 492, each containing sixteen books, they have eleven books in common but in an entirely different order.²³

These conclusions strengthen those drawn from the EMMML mss discussed above. We may conclude the following. (1) The number of appearances as the first book in nine out of twelve mss in addition to the fact that it precedes the Octateuch in the only ms in which the Octateuch is found, appears to be strong evidence that 1 Enoch has in the last five hundred years been one of the most influential “canonical” books of the EOTC. (2) 1 Enoch appears as the first book so frequently – and in many cases immediately followed by Job – that it demonstrates the EOTC’s view of 1 Enoch as the first and most important book of the EOTC scriptures followed by Job. (3) There has been no definitive order of scriptural books in the EOTC in its long history of scriptural reception and transmission.²⁴

THE USE OF 1 ENOCH IN OTHER ETHIOPIAN LITERARY WORKS

Modern scholars have studied the use of 1 Enoch by writers of other Ge’ez literary works, mainly in search of older textual evidence of its influence. The works of three scholars relevant to this matter will be briefly discussed as evidence that 1 Enoch had

²² For example, the number of books in each ms is 1, 2, 4 (3 mss), 5 (2 mss), 6, 8, 11, and 16 (2 mss) books.

²³ For example, both mss contain Sirach, Judith, Esther, and Tobit, where one of the mss has this order, while the other follows an almost reversed order – Tobit, Judith, Esther, and Sirach. Whereas one of these mss includes Octateuch and various portions of Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel, the other ms has Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom, Isaiah, and Song of Songs.

²⁴ One of the mss (Orient. 743), for instance, includes all the following items together: (1) Hymns and Prayers, including the Athanasian Creed; (2) “The Song of Songs, concerning the Son and the Christian Church, and His Mother,” an exposition of words and phrases in the Song of Songs; (3) expositions of some passages of the Old and New Testaments; (4) a long series of expositions, commencing with Enoch, where the Book of Enoch is also cited.

a significant influence on ancient ecclesiastical literary works in Ethiopia.

Milik was the first scholar to recognize Ge'ez quotations from 1 Enoch as these appear in Ethiopian literary works. He used them for text criticism and for dating extant Enochic Ge'ez mss. As part of his discussion of Aramaic fragments, he drew up a provisional list of quotations in certain Ge'ez literary works and used them in his notations on the Aramaic texts.²⁵

Berger has taken the approach of underlining the significance of the Ge'ez quotations in other Ethiopian literary works for 1 Enoch's textual history. Based on the work of Milik, Berger has made three important contributions. In the first place he added several commentaries to the list provided by Milik. Secondly, he added further quotations to Milik's list and thirdly he identified which literary works among those containing quotations from 1 Enoch are of interest for the dating of the oldest mss (Berger 1980:100-109).

After Berger's work over about three decades, Knibb discussed the quotations in 2009, basing himself on the studies done by Milik and Berger. Knibb's critical analysis of works by the two scholars engages with their contributions and limitations mainly from the text-critical point of view and as regards the dating of the oldest mss. He affirms the presence of a significant amount of quotations from 1 Enoch in the Ge'ez writings of mainly the fifteenth century.²⁶

We mention some of the quotations from 1 Enoch as identified by Milik, Berger and Knibb, so as to validate our point that the influence of 1 Enoch in other Ge'ez writings in the EOTC is evident. As the extant manuscripts of 1 Enoch date mainly from the fifteenth century onwards (Knibb 2009:177), prominent books using texts from 1 Enoch and influenced by it are primarily from this period that has been labelled "the Golden Age of the [Ge'ez] literature" (Harden 1926:22). Knibb classifies three categories of Ge'ez writing from the fifteenth century that made use of 1 Enoch, namely "doctrinal writings, hagiographical texts, and prayers" (Knibb 2009:179).

²⁵ For Milik's detailed discussion and the list of quotations, see Milik (1976:85-88).

²⁶ Knibb devotes one full chapter to this issue (Knibb 2009:176-187). In his analysis of quotations of 1 Enoch in Ge'ez writings, Knibb includes the works of some other scholars in languages other than English.

Among these, three doctrinal books – *Metshafe Berhan* (the Book of Light), *Metshafe Milad* (the Book of Nativity),²⁷ and *Metshafe Mistire Semay Wameder* (the Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth)²⁸ – are exceptionally important, both for the extent of their quotations and for the theological influence they had on the church. For instance, in addition to other passages, *Metshafe Milad* quotes “the complete text of 1 Enoch 46:1-51:5 and 62:1-16 – exactly the passages that have attracted the interest of modern scholars concerned with messianism” (Knibb 2009:180). Other texts quoted by *Metshafe Milad*, also reflecting contemporary Christological debates,²⁹ include 1 Enoch 61:6-8; 63:11-12; 69:26-70:3; and 71:12-17 (Knibb 2009:181).

Besides these Christological texts, *Metshafe Milad* quotes 1 Enoch 89: 19-30 in another context. Texts including 1 Enoch 91:12-13 and 15-17 are quoted in connection with incarnation and the last judgment. *Metshafe Milad* quotes 1 Enoch 72:33-34 and 78:15-17 indicating the authority of Enoch as the first prophet who announced the coming of Christ (Knibb 2009:183).³⁰

In its fourth part, the Book of Mysteries of Heaven and Earth rephrases portions from the Apocalypse of Weeks aiming to show that the sixth to the tenth weeks are connected with the coming of Christ, and the last week with the Antichrist (Isaac 1983:10, Nickelsburg 2001:105). *Metshafe Mistire Semay Womeder* also quotes 1 Enoch 93:8 in relation to the end of the world. The book further refers to 1 Enoch 3:1;

²⁷ According to Knibb (2009:180), these two books, *Metshafe Berhan* and *Metshafe Milad*, are attributed to the famous Emperor Zer’a Yacob (1434-68), “during whose reign there was a flowering of Ethiopian literature. However, it is more likely that they were composed by high-ranking clergy under the auspices of the king in order to give expression to his views. They reflect the Christological and ecclesiastical controversies of the day.”

²⁸ Knibb (2009:180) maintains that *Metshafe Mistire Semay Wameder*, a book with an apocalyptic character, is also from the time of Zer’a Yacob, the fifteenth century CE. For an English translation of this book, see Budge (1935).

²⁹ For a detailed discussion on Christological debate in the fifteenth and sixteenth century in Ethiopia, see Gnisci (2012:31f.).

³⁰ An important question discussed in *Metshafe Milad*, as presented by Knibb (2009:183), is that these texts were possibly directed against those who questioned the authority of 1 Enoch. The argument assumes that these opponents accepted the astronomical and calendrical computations based on the book, and asks why they then failed to accept Enoch’s prophetic authority. This question recurs a number of times among Ethiopian Christians at the time and needs further study so as to assess this issue in relation to 1 Enoch and other similarly regarded books.

18:22, the Parables, the Book of the Luminaries, and the Animal Apocalypse.³¹

Besides the quotations, the strong presence of 1 Enoch behind *Metshafe Mistire Semay Womeder* and the depth of its dependence on the book of Enoch have led some European explorers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to assume that this work was the actual text of 1 Enoch – in which they were later disappointed.³²

One of the monumental literary works of thirteenth and fourteenth century Ethiopia³³ is the *Kebra Nagast*,³⁴ the Glory of Kings,³⁵ an epic possibly produced from, and expanding on, earlier originals in order to legitimize the Solomonic dynasty and that also makes use of 1 Enoch.³⁶ This influential book has incorporated the story

³¹ For the literature discussing the usage of various texts in *Metshafe Mistire Semay Womeder*, see Nickelsburg (2001:105, notes173-176).

³² Isaac describes how a Capuchin monk took a text of the book of *Metshafe Mistire Semay Womeder* from Ethiopia to Europe, thinking that it was a manuscript of 1 Enoch. Isaac continues: “This manuscript, which aroused great excitement in Europe, drew the attention of the first great European Ethiopian scholar, Ludelfus Hiob, who traced it to the Bibliotheca Regia in Paris in 1683. He was disappointed to learn that the manuscript was not of 1 Enoch but that of an unknown Ethiopian work called the Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth” (Isaac 1983:8).

³³ Even if most modern scholars tend to agree with the thirteenth century dating of *Kebra Nagast*, some plausibly argue that the work’s origins go back to the sixth and seventh century AD. For instance, Irfan Shahid (1976:174ff.) pleads for the sixth century as the correct date. For a discussion on the date of *Kebra Nagast*, see Munro-Hay (2001).

³⁴ The high regard for *Kebra Negest* in Ethiopia is described by Ullendorff (1960:144) as follows. “The *Kebra Nagast* is not merely a literary work, but – as the Old Testament to the Hebrews of the Koran to the Arabs – it is the repository of Ethiopian national and religious feelings, perhaps the truest and most genuine expression of Abyssinian Christianity.”

³⁵ For an earlier English translation of *Kebra Nagast*, see Budge (1922), though criticized by Piovanelli (2013:7) as a translation with “notorious flaws”. For a latest English translation of the *Kebra Nagast*, see Brooks (1996). For a discussion on the influence of *Kebra Nagast* on the Rastafarian movement, see Hausman (2005). Piovanelli (2013:7) helpfully notes that *Kebra Nagast*, besides its critical Ge’ez edition by Bezold (1905) is now translated into six languages: (1) French: Colin (2002); Mahler (2007; Beylot (2008); (2) Amharic: Sergew Gelaw 92007/8); (3) Italian: Raineri (2008); (4) Hebrew: HaCohen 2009; (5) Portuguese: Pedro Paez’s translation of chapters 12-86 and now translated to English, Boavida, Pennec, and Ramos (2011:80-91); and (6) English: Budge (1922). For an up-to-date bibliography, see Bausi (2012:lvi-lix).

³⁶ According to Ullendorff (1960:143), besides quoting and paraphrasing texts from the Old and New Testaments, *Kebra Negest* uses the Book of Enoch and many other writings including the Book of Pearl, the Christological and patristic writings in Coptic, Syriac, Arabic, and Greek, the Testament of Adami, rabbinical literature and the Qura’an.

of the fallen angels in its account of primeval history³⁷ and its cosmological explanations.

The Ethiopian hagiographical works³⁸ prefer free rendering of, or alluding to, 1 Enoch to the use of direct quotations. For instance, the “*Acts of Ezra of Gunda Gunde*, in a passage about the cross, give[s] a free rendering of [1 Enoch] 25:5 and, in a passage about the death of Ezra, uses the phrase ‘the first ram’ from [1 Enoch] 89:46-47 to refer to Ezra” (Knibb 2009:180).

Another important literary work that makes use of portions of 1 Enoch is *Metshafe Seneksar*, the Ethiopian Synaxarium,³⁹ a liturgical book presenting a compilation of readings for each of the year’s saints’ days. The ascension of Enoch to heaven is commemorated on the 27 *Tir* (Feb. 04)⁴⁰ and for the reading of that day the book “summarizes the first four books of 1 Enoch, quoting from the Introduction (1:3-5), the Book of the Watchers (13:7-8; 14:10-18 briefly; 18:7-8), the Parables (40:2; 46:1; 48:3-4),⁴¹ the Book of the Luminaries (72:1), and the Animal Vision (85:3; 90:28-29, 32-33)” (Nickelsburg 2001:105).⁴²

To highlight an example of quotations in prayer texts, 1 Enoch 46:1-6 and the entire chapter 62 are quoted in a manuscript in the British Library (Add. 11,678) in which various prayers are assembled.

In addition to these prominent works that quote from, and allude to, 1 Enoch a study by Ralph Lee discloses the influence of 1 Enoch as a hermeneutical key in some

³⁷ As Nickelsburg (2001:104) maintains, in addition to presenting the angel story as told in 1 Enoch 6-11, *Kebra Negest* uses sources such as Pseudo-Clementine Homily 8, which in turn is influenced by 1 Enoch.

³⁸ These texts from the same period are concerned with local saints of contemporary period or a little earlier. For a discussion of Ethiopian hagiology in a broader context, see Harden (1926:73-91).

³⁹ For the English translation of the text of *Metshafe Synkisar*, see Budge ([2014]). There are some differences in pagination between this electronic version and the hard copy Nickelsburg (2001:105, n.177) refers to.

⁴⁰ Nickelsburg (2001:105) mistakenly refers to Feb 1, instead of 4 as equivalent to *Tir* 27.

⁴¹ Nickelsburg (2001:105) further notes that “the material from the Parables is identified as a prophecy of Christ, and the description of the New Jerusalem in the Animal Vision is interpreted to refer to the church.”

⁴² For more references from 1 Enoch for other days of commemoration see Nickelsburg, (2001:105).

ancient biblical commentaries, in this case, the book of Revelation. In his study of Ethiopian commentaries on the book of Revelation, Lee concludes that, among other strategies, three hermeneutical approaches are employed in interpreting the traditional commentaries, where 1 Enoch is the first one (Lee 2013:6).⁴³

According to Lee, the fifteenth century writer of the *Terguame Qalamsis* (Interpretation of the Apocalypse), who was familiar with the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, frequently quoted from and alluded to it (Lee 2013:7).⁴⁴ As regards the importance of these quotations and allusions for the interpretation of the commentary Lee (2013:7) writes: “Enoch is used primarily as a source to explain references to angels in Revelation in a manner that sees the two books almost as a single unit.” In his analysis of Enoch’s influence on the interpretation of the *Terguame Qalamsis*, Lee discusses more than half a dozen quotations and allusions leading him to the conclusion that Enoch is a prominent figure and should be considered as one of the witnesses in the book (Lee 2013:7-9).

Also the *andemta*⁴⁵ commentary writers employed 1 Enoch, but they preferred to use allusions rather than quotations (Lee 2013:11).⁴⁶ The influence and place of 1 Enoch in these works is best summarized in Lee’s (2013:11) words:

Enoch is regarded, along with St John and others, as a special kind of prophet, who conversed with God, and gives special information about the roles of angels, with the Enoch angel passages being regarded as complementary to those in Revelation. Enoch’s important role, at least in later Ethiopian thought, is demonstrated by his association with one of the enigmatic witnesses, although this idea is not consistent in Ethiopian

⁴³ The two others Lee mentions are “Mohammed and Muslims, and the historical framework”.

⁴⁴ For a brief, but notable, background and description of *Terguame Qalamsis* see Lee 2013:3-5.

⁴⁵ For a clear and precise discussion of the background of *andemta* commentary, see Lee 2013:5.

⁴⁶ The two main reasons, according to Lee (2013:11), for such preference could be “a greater familiarity of the book [i.e., *1 Enoch*] by the time the *andemta* was written, or it may simply reflect the fact that the *andemta* is a corpus of works, and so detailed quotations are not felt necessary.”

interpretation.

In conclusion, both the manuscript analysis, indicating a degree of prominence of 1 Enoch among the EOTC scriptures, and the case studies on some Ge'ez literature influenced by the book, can be considered as strong evidence of 1 Enoch's significantly superior and influential status among literary works in the history of the EOTC. Even if the levels of this influence before the fifteenth century are yet to be assessed (and remain unclear for the moment), its prominent place after the fifteenth century at a time when the literary renaissance of the church occurred is evident from its presence in various literary dimensions. There remains, however, much research to be done on various Ethiopian literary works in order to determine why and to what extent they used, and have been influenced by, texts from 1 Enoch,⁴⁷ as well as which particular texts were used in what periods.

OTHER AREAS OF 1 ENOCH'S INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA

As the evidence gathered from manuscripts covers only a small part of the broader influence of 1 Enoch on the EOTC and in the total Ethiopian context, it is appropriate to include, at least, a list of areas where such influence can be detected. This can be done on two levels. First, there are areas already directly or indirectly studied by researchers and, secondly, there are topics that are still in need of first-hand research to determine whether 1 Enoch's influence can be proved and argued objectively. Thus, what follows is a brief recommendation for further study.

In areas where a limited amount of research has already been conducted, namely the Ethiopian Church and society, the influence of 1 Enoch is apparent from

⁴⁷ In an informal discussion between Enochic scholars, the large majority of them Ethiopians, facilitated by Stuckenbruck, a number of possible research areas were mentioned in relation to quotations from and allusions to 1 Enoch. Among the various Ethiopian literary works that are perceived as using 1 Enoch and that were singled out as requiring close study are: *Mashafa Mestir*, *Mashafa Mestira Samay waMedr*, *Mashafa Milad*, *Ledata Henok*, *Mashafa Kidan*, *Mashafa Berhan*, *Kebrā Nagast*, *Fetha Nagast*, *Hexameron*, *Falasha* use of *Henok* in versions of the book, hagiographical writings (*Walatta Petros*, *a Re'ya Maryam*), *Degwa*, borrowed motifs in homilies (e.g., on heaven, on the angels), *gedla* (e.g., *Gedla Haymanot*, *Gedla Manfas Qedus*), names of angels (good and bad) in magic books (Stuckenbruck 2013).

theological, spiritual and cultural perspectives.⁴⁸ For instance, from a theological point of view, the concept of sin and salvation, a highly developed angelology and demonology, and Christology, strongly indicate a 1 Enoch influence. As concerns the spiritual realm and spiritual practices in Ethiopia, the unique computation of the Ethiopian calendar as well as a number of other social aspects, especially the practice of using amulets and the place of 1 Enoch in Ethiopian iconography, reflect the legacy of 1 Enoch. Areas where initial research is needed to assess the levels and the extent of the book's influence in the wider Ethiopian society include geography, cosmology, hymnology, science, medicine, history and astrology.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This article attempts to show that the prominence of 1 Enoch in the literary history of Ethiopia and its legacy in many Ethiopian literary works is evident. As these literary works which are influenced by 1 Enoch include a number of disciplines, its legacy in turn is wide ranging, including doctrinal, political, hagiographical, and theological aspects in the Ethiopian context. The article, however, also makes clear that studies on the influence and legacy of 1 Enoch in a country where its texts have survived in their entirety are far from making any conclusive arguments as to the level of this influence and that the door is open door for extensive further research.

The evidence of the manuscripts' and other literary dependence on the book strongly points to 1 Enoch's influence on Ethiopian literature and proves that 1 Enoch significantly influenced the theology, spirituality, and practice of the EOTC. This influence in turn widely contributed to the Ethiopian worldview and to various aspects of Ethiopian thought.

In conclusion, what is of great importance in studying the significance of 1 Enoch for Ethiopia, as Nickelsburg states, is that, besides being cited as sacred scripture, in most of the relevant aspects "1 Enoch functions for the Ethiopians as it had earlier, in one place or another, in Mediterranean Christianity" (Nickelsburg 2001:106), among

⁴⁸ For a discussion on some of these aspects and references see chapter seven of my forthcoming PhD thesis (Bruk 2014). See also Nickelsburg (2001:104-108).

which Jude's circle is notable. Thus the book, esteemed and influential in at least some early Jewish and Christian circles, is honoured, highly valued and of influence in at least one of the Christian churches today, namely the EOTC, which has preserved 1 Enoch in its entirety.

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