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Recovering the Unity of Second Temple Judaism:
The *Journal Henoah* and the Enoch Seminar Websites

Since its emergence in the sixteenth century, the field of Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins has always been on the verge of collapsing into the plurality of its sub-fields. In the past it was largely religious concerns that created a clear separation between Jewish and Christian studies and relegated the non-canonical into a subordinate status. Now the problem seems primarily to be the high degree of specialization required to master one subject or one body of literature, and the contemporaneous process of democratization and globalization of knowledge that has multiplied the bibliography into an untamable monster.

As a result, the fragmentation of Second Temple Jewish Studies has become endemic. We scholars of the field are increasingly reluctant to cross boundaries and venture in the other's domain. The constant temptation is to retreat into the more manageable boundaries of our own specialization. Not surprisingly, the sub-fields of Dead Sea Scrolls Studies, Josephus Studies, Philo Studies, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha Studies, New Testament Studies, and the like, have grown increasingly separated from one another, sometimes with odd results. The uncomfortable feeling is often that the right hand does not know what the left hand does.

In the summer of 2005 virtually all world specialists in Enoch literature met at Camaldoli for the Third Enoch Seminar and agreed that the book of the Parables of Enoch is a Second-Temple Jewish text foretelling the coming of a heavenly Messiah "Son of Man." The volume of the Proceedings (*Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man*) was published in 2007 by Eerdmans and presented in the summer at the SBL international meeting in Vienna. The very same year, the two most recent contributions produced on the subject by New Testament scholars – Delbert Burkett's *The Son of Man Debate: A History and Evaluation* (Cambridge 2007²) and Mogens Müller's *The Expression "Son of Man" and the Development of Christology: A History of Interpretation* (London 2007) – reiterated the non-titular understanding of the phrase "son of Man" in the early Christian literature as the shared opinion among New Testament specialists. The problem is not the obvious and legitimate contrast of opinions; the problem is the vicious circle generated by a chronic lack of communication

In a passionate speech at the meeting of the Association of Jewish Studies in Toronto in December 2007, Eileen Schuller pleaded for Dead Sea Scrolls specialists not to follow the same pattern of isolation and self-sufficiency that for centuries has marred the study of the New Testament; but to make a greater effort to share the results of their research with Second Temple and New Testament scholars

We could not be *more* sympathetic with such a call. The journal *Henoah* was born with exactly this goal—bringing together scholars from different fields and tearing down the artificial boundaries of separation among the *corpora* of the period. We have made it the motto of our journal in a long series of editorials.

The solution is obviously not to advocate a superficial and simplistic approach that would only downplay the great sophistication reached in our analysis of the period

and of its sources. On the contrary, the rediscovery of Jewish diversity in the Second Temple period, as well as the variety of scholarly methodologies applied to the field, must be considered among the major achievements of contemporary research. In the last fifty years we have seen the eclipse of the concept of normative Judaism and the emergence of a new world, populated by new characters: Sapiential Judaism, Mosaic Judaism, Enochic Judaism, Qumran Judaism, and the like.

In a recent article, endorsing Enochic Judaism as “a distinctive form of Judaism,” John J. Collins reminds us that Second Temple “Judaism... was not uniformly Torah centered, even among those who were familiar with the Torah and respected it as one source of wisdom among others” (J.J. Collins, “How Distinctive Was Enochic Judaism,” in *Meghillot: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls V-VI. A Festschrift for Devorah Dimant*, ed. M. Bar-Asher and E. Tov, Haifa/Jerusalem: University of Haifa/Bialik Institute, 2007, p.33). No one misses the time in which Judaism was perceived as a monolith. None of us is nostalgic for the time when the non-canonical Jewish literature of the period was dismissed as a marginal and bizarre phenomenon of decadence. No one can go back to the time when the study of the period was an elitist phenomenon and the paucity of published studies and research tools made it manageable. The democratization, globalization and diversification of contemporary scholarship are precious assets of contemporary research.

Should we then resign ourselves and restrict our dreams to the goal of finding a comfortable niche for ourselves? Should we repress the spirit of adventure that would lead us to explore the marvelous building, made of so many beautiful rooms, of which we all are tenants under the same roof? Is not the desire to overcome boundaries an unquenchable fire in the human heart?

The solution, then, can rest only in a renewed commitment to share the diversity of our approaches and the plurality of our fields of specialization. Each of us will continue to be concerned primarily with a certain corpus (be it the New Testament, the OT Apocrypha, the OT Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo Josephus, and so forth) and will use the tools of a particular methodology (intellectual history, literary criticism, archaeology, material culture, social studies, and the like). Yet we all should be more sensitive to the duty of communicating to each other the results of our work; and listening to each other.

The *Journal Henoah* and the Enoch Seminars are all devoted to this cause. While we need journals, groups and research tools aimed to serve particular sub-fields or research interests, the *Journal Henoah* and the Enoch Seminars were not born to promote Enoch Studies or the knowledge of Enochic Judaism. On the contrary, Enoch was picked up as our hero and patron as he is the trans-canonical character par excellence, a conspicuous intruder in all sub-fields of Second Temple Judaism.

The *Journal Henoah* publishes contributions that deal with all aspects of Judaism and Christianity, from Second Temple to Late Antiquity, giving preference to those that bridge different *corpora* and reach out to specialists of different sub-fields. The presence of six national Boards aims to highlight the contribution of national identities to the common goal of international research. Todd Hanneken (University of Notre Dame, USA) has skillfully designed a website <www.henoahjournal.org> that is not only a source of information for its visitors about the past, present and future activities of the journal but an “online office” where the members of the numerous staff of the journal can work

together, review the submitted articles, read the proofs and together project the future of a truly collective and international enterprise.

The experience of the Enoch Seminars also would fail if it were merely another sub-group of Enoch specialists, or “believers” in Enochic Judaism. The Enoch Seminar was born and will remain a neutral forum open to all specialists in the field of Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins regardless of their particular sub-field of specialization and of their methodological approach. Consistently, the new website of the Enoch Seminar <www.enochseminar.org>, beautifully built by Pierpaolo Bertalotto (University of Bari, Italy), provides not only detailed information about the meetings of the Enoch Seminar (and of the Enoch Graduate Seminar) but also a general picture of the status of studies in Second Temple Judaism. The “International Scholarship” page includes, country by country, a comprehensive Directory of Specialists who are currently working in the field. Second, it gives biographical and bibliographical information on the history of research in the field from the time of the invention of the printing press (late fifteenth century) to the present. Finally, it gives a list of the major works of art (paintings, dramas, operas, novels, movies, and the like) inspired by the subject throughout the period. This information is not available anywhere else, yet this is the historical memory that is the foundation, the rock, on which alone a solid house can be built. As soon as all basic data will be put online, the possibility will be offered to all members of the scholarly community to edit and add, creating a sort of living encyclopedia of knowledge to be continuously revised and updated. In this way, the website itself will become an ideal place in which we can meet and share our work and learn from each other, breaking national and specialization boundaries without abandoning or betraying them.

The more sophisticated we make the study of our own sub-fields of specialization and the stronger we make the commitment to our national identities, the more difficult we make them to access. The task of keeping our own national and scholarly identity and pursuing our own particular specialization, however, is not contradictory to the cosmopolitan goal of building international and comprehensive scholarship in Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins. It depends only upon our motivation for sharing who we are and what we have accomplished. It depends upon the time and commitment we will devote to this mutually enriching exercise of listening and comprehending the achievements of one another.