The Study of Heikhalot Literature: Between Mystical Experience and Textual Artifact

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ABSTRACT

This essay outlines the fundamental methodological and empirical advances that the study of Heikhalot literature has experienced during the past 25 years with the aim of encouraging specialists and enabling non-specialists to approach this complex material with greater precision and sophistication. The field of early Jewish mysticism has been profoundly shaped by the increasing integration in the humanities of cultural and material histories, resulting in an increased focus on scribal practice and other material conditions that shaped the production and transmission of these texts. Against previous assumptions, recent research has shown Heikhalot literature to be a radically unstable literature. This article will review the research tools (editions, concordances, translations, etc.) that now allow for careful analysis of Heikhalot and related texts. Tracing recent research, I demonstrate how our new understanding of the fluid and heterogeneous nature of the Heikhalot corpus will better enable scholars to pursue the important work of understanding its social and religious significance, within the broader landscape of late antique and medieval religions.

Keywords: apocalyptic, Heikhalot literature, magic (early Jewish), Merkavah mysticism, reception-history, transmission-history.

Introduction

Heikhalot literature forms the earliest extensive and (semi-)systematic collection of Jewish mystical and magical sources. This loose body of texts, written primarily in Hebrew and Aramaic with a smattering of foreign loan

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words, took shape gradually during Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages (c. 300–900), and continued to be adapted and reworked by Jewish scribes and scholars throughout the Middle Ages and into the early Modern period (c. 900–1500). While Heikhalot literature does contain some material that dates to the 'classic' rabbinic period (c. 200–500 CE), this literature seems to have emerged *as a distinct class of texts* only at a relatively late date, most likely after 600 CE and perhaps well into the early Islamic period (Boustan 2006).

The term 'heikhalot' comes from the Hebrew word for the celestial 'palaces' (היכלות) within which God is said in this literature to sit enthroned and through which the visionary ascends toward him and his angelic host. This form of religious praxis and experience is often referred to as 'Merkavah mysticism' because of its general preoccupation with Ezekiel's vision of the divine chariot-throne (the *merkavah* of Ezekiel 1 and 10; also Daniel 7). Heikhalot literature presents instructions for and descriptions of human ascent to heaven and angelic descent to earth. In both cases, this movement between the earthly and heavenly realms is achieved through active human agency, that is, the meticulous performance of ritual speech and action.

Yet, Heikhalot literature also encompasses an eclectic range of other motifs, themes, and literary genres. In this respect, Heikhalot texts are characterized by the generic and rhetorical hybridity of Jewish literary production in Late Antiquity, including numerous classical rabbinic anthologies, in which a wide variety of discourses (e.g., legal, exegetical, narrative, and liturgical) are juxtaposed and often inseparably interwoven (Hezser 1993; Stern 2004). Much—perhaps even the majority—of the material transmitted as part of the Heikhalot corpus does not in fact belong within the category of 'Merkavah mysticism', if that term is understood narrowly to denote the visionary's heavenly ascent through the celestial palaces and/or his culminating vision of God sitting upon his chariot-throne. Magico-ritual techniques designed to gain the assistance of angelic intermediaries for concrete and often quite practical aims are equally central to the thematic structure of many Heikhalot compositions—and, in some cases, considerably more so. Moreover, we find in this corpus numerous other genres, such as detailed descriptions of the gigantic body of God and the ritual uses to which the names of his limbs can be put; cosmological or cosmogonic speculation; physiognomic and astrological fragments; and, perhaps most importantly, vast numbers of liturgical-poetic compositions, many in the form of *Qedushah*-hymns built around the *Trishagion* of Isaiah 6.3. Heterogeneity in both literary form and religious sensibility is a constitutive feature of all Heikhalot compositions.

To confuse matters further still, Heikhalot literature makes pervasive use of rabbinic figures from the 'legendary' rabbinic past as its primary protagonists and spokesmen. These figures—most commonly, the tannaitic authorities Rabbi Ishmael, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Neḥunya ben ha-Qanah (second century CE)—are not only the main characters in the narrative portions of this literature; Heikhalot texts directly attribute to these rabbis their instructional content as well. This literary conceit of what we might call 'pseudonymous attribution' constitutes an indispensable organizational technique for presenting the liturgical, instructional and narrative material of which Heikhalot literature is composed. Moreover, it functions as the primary authorizing strategy within Heikhalot texts, conferring legitimacy on the potentially problematic forms of religious piety and practice they prescribe (Schäfer 1992: 157-61; Swartz 1996: 173-229). This pseudonymous framework—and the anonymous, collective authorship that lies behind it—significantly complicates the task of gaining access, however obliquely, to the people behind these texts.

But, despite the formidable challenges created by the heterogeneity, fluidity and pseudonymity of Heikhalot texts, the study of Heikhalot literature—and of early Jewish mysticism more generally—has experienced far-reaching methodological and empirical advances over the past 25 years since the publication in 1981 by Schäfer and his team in Berlin of their influential *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (all citations of Heikhalot literature refer to this edition unless otherwise noted). This edition was soon followed by the publication of fragments of Heikhalot texts retrieved from the Cairo Genizah (Schäfer [ed.] 1984) as well as a series of related concordances and translations (Schäfer [ed.] 1986–88; Schäfer, *et al*. [trans.] 1987–95). The *Synopse* proved particularly significant because it departed fundamentally from the editorial practices traditionally applied to ancient texts, including rabbinic literature. Rather than trying to reconstruct the 'original' form (*Urtext*) of the individual Heikhalot compositions, indicating textual variants where appropriate, the *Synopse* presents a synoptic edition of seven of the best manuscripts containing the Heikhalot corpus in its entirety (for detailed discussion of the methodology and contents of the *Synopse*, see section 2 below).

This edition has succeeded in transforming the study of early Jewish mysticism in at least two fundamental ways. First and most practically, the *Synopse* made the various Heikhalot compositions available to scholars within a single volume, allowing for textually grounded analysis of individual textual units as well as of their relationship to the other components of this literature. But more importantly, the synoptic nature of the edition

disclosed for the first time the radically unstable and continuously evolving nature of the Heikhalot manuscript tradition. Attention to the highly protracted and complex redaction- and transmission-histories that shaped specific Heikhalot texts as well as the corpus as a whole have led to the revision of the long-standing assumption that Heikhalot literature reflects a relatively unified and continuous tradition of mystical practice and experience. It is the purpose of this essay to consider how renewed interest in the material history of Heikhalot texts has shaped the study of Heikhalot literature and, by extension, of early Jewish mysticism more generally.

In particular, I wish to call attention to the emphasis in recent scholarship on the determinative role that scribal practice and other material factors played in the production of the Heikhalot corpus. The study of early Jewish mysticism—like numerous other fields of historical inquiry—is currently characterized by increasing attention to the dialectical relationship between cultural and material histories. In this, the field is being profoundly shaped by interests that currently characterize the humanities in general. This return to an emphasis on the material conditions of literary and cultural production is perhaps best exemplified by relatively recent transformations in the field of the 'History of the Book', especially as it has been reformulated under the rubric of the 'New Textualism' (for important statements of method, see especially Chartier 1994 and McKenzie 1986; also the seminal comments in de Certeau 1984: 165-76; the term 'New Textualism' was first coined in de Grazia and Stallybrass 1993). This scholarship has criticized the tendency in many branches of intellectual, literary and cultural history to treat 'texts' as disembodied or idealized entities, and not as physical artifacts that were produced, circulated, and, of course, read at specific historical moments by specific (types of) people through specific technologies of the written word. While this trend has had perhaps the greatest impact on the study of high medieval and early modern modes of cultural production—periods that saw radical changes in the dissemination of books in either manuscript or print form as well as in the reading practices of the consuming public (Chartier 1994: 1-23)—it has also begun to reshape the ways that scholars of antiquity approach their textual materials (for a recent, noteworthy example, see Grafton and Williams 2006). In this new scholarship, traditional philological erudition and other types of close textual analysis, while always essential, form just a part of the wider analytical arsenal necessary for understanding interrelated patterns of technological, cultural and sociological change.

I wish to argue here that the generic hybridity of Heikhalot texts and their highly fluid textual transmission, when taken together, call into question

previous scholarly efforts to offer a single, unitary classification of either the religious experiences represented in this literature or the historical location of its authors. Indeed, as we will see, Heikhalot literature encodes a range of conflicting and evolving points of view about the purpose of the various ritual techniques that it advocates and, in particular, about who may legitimately engage in these practices.

I will, therefore, suggest that scholars studying Heikhalot texts should not begin from the assumption that they are dealing with an internally coherent religious system or an integrated set of ritual practices. In this radically unstable literature, the meaning that individual compositional units carry is contingent upon the shifting literary contexts and thought systems within which they are deployed. Moreover, it is precisely the fluidity and diversity of Heikhalot literature that allows us to trace its literary development, thereby shedding light on the history of early Jewish mysticism. Thus, instead of teleological evolutionary schema, transhistorical categories, or cross-cultural comparison, a firm textual foundation must serve as the starting point for understanding Heikhalot texts as socially embedded and culturally meaningful documents. Yet my conviction that research on Heikhalot literature must attend to the minutiae of textual archaeology need not imply a narrow research agenda restricted to empirical description of its transmission- and reception-histories. In my view, only careful attention to textual archaeology, rhetorical texture and narrative structure can illuminate how religious authority and experience are represented in and constructed by Heikhalot literature—and perhaps, ultimately, also clarify the socio-historical context(s) of its producers.

1. *Heikhalot Literature and the Problem of Comparison*

While Heikhalot literature has come to play an increasingly central role in historical accounts of the character and diversity of late antique Judaism (e.g., Irshai 2004: 82-99; Levine 2004a), this multifaceted body of texts continues to resist basic social, geographic and chronological classification. Yet, far from inhibiting research, the often opaque nature of the Heikhalot corpus has made it especially attractive as a source for historical and phenomenological comparison. Scholars who study an exceptionally wide range of sources—Hebrew Bible, early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the New Testament, early Christian and 'Gnostic' sources, classical rabbinic literature, and Jewish and non-Jewish magical literatures—have mined the literary traditions found within the Heikhalot corpus to illuminate the religious ideas and practices on which they work. This comparative

perspective received special impetus from the pioneering work of the great scholar of Jewish mysticism Gershom Scholem, who emphasized the numerous thematic affinities between the late antique Heikhalot texts and earlier Jewish and Christian sources (1954: 40-79; 1965).

It would be both impossible and impracticable to offer here a comprehensive catalogue of the numerous fields for which Heikhalot materials have been used as comparanda for one purpose or another. But before proceeding with the main body of this essay, I would like to review briefly a few such examples in order to suggest to the reader what is at stake in arguing for a methodologically sound and sophisticated approach to Heikhalot texts.

Thus, for example, scholars disagree sharply about how the hymns that dominate much of the Heikhalot corpus might illuminate the historical development of Jewish 'mystical' poetry. On the one hand, it has often been argued that the 'numinous' style of many of these hymns reflects and continues long-standing liturgical traditions from the Second Temple period, such as those found in the Qumran *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (Scholem 1965: 128; Schiffman 1982, 1987; Baumgarten 1988; Nitzan 1994; Davila 1999) and the NT book of Revelation (Schimanowski 2004). At the same time, the apparent absence of a *direct* literary relationship between these corpora as well as important differences in their ritual-liturgical settings caution against drawing facile conclusions concerning socio-historical or even phenomenological continuities between them (Wolfson 1994b; Hamacher 1996; Swartz 2001: 184-90; Abusch 2003).

Similarly, the centrality of the motif of heavenly ascent within the Heikhalot corpus and early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature has led some to view both groups of sources as literary expressions of a common tradition of ecstatic mysticism (Scholem 1954: 40-79; Gruenwald 1980b; Morray-Jones 1992, 2002). The hypothesis that the same mystical-visionary impulse underlies the extensive tradition of *Merkavah*-speculation within Judaism has been taken as evidence for the existence of a continuous tradition of religious practice and lore preserved across the cataclysmic divide of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE (see especially Gruenwald 1981–82, 1988: 125-44; Elior 1995, 1997, 1998, 2004a, 2004b). In part drawing on this scholarly tradition, historians have regularly made use of Heikhalot literature to interpret NT and early Christian texts, especially such puzzling material as the Apostle Paul's heavenly ascent in 2 Cor. 12.1-4 (Scholem 1965: 14-19; Segal 1990: 34-71; Morray-Jones 1993a, 1993b), so-called 'Gnostic' forms of early Christianity (Segal 1977; Gruenwald 1988; Deutsch 1995, 1999; Fossum 1995; DeConick 1996), or the heavenly visions in early Christian martyrology (Munoa 2002).

Perhaps predictably, in all of these cases as well, fundamental methodological objections have been raised to the reading practices and historical assumptions on which claims of literary, cultural, and even sociological continuity have been built. In a programmatic essay on the problem of comparison, Schäfer argued that literary motifs or themes in Heikhalot texts cannot be properly understood outside of the specific—and often shifting—literary context(s) and thought-system(s) in which they are deployed. He, therefore, suggested that scholars should resist the temptation to make use of *decontextualized* literary parallels as positive evidence of continuity between sources, practices, or groups far removed from each other in space and/or time (1988f).

In a similar vein and at about the same time, Alexander pointed to the need for greater precision when scholars make use of comparative categories such as 'Gnosticism' to illuminate the history of early Jewish mysticism—and vice versa (1984). Himmelfarb, for her part, has not only questioned whether apocalyptic and Heikhalot texts can be read as more or less transparent representations of 'mystical' experience, but also pointed to a basic shift in the conception of heavenly ascent from the passive model of 'rapture' in the apocalyptic genre to the active ritual technique prescribed in Heikhalot texts (1988; 1993). And Reed has recently challenged the prevalent scholarly habit of appealing to the existence of otherwise unknown 'esoteric' channels of transmission to explain thematic or formal continuities between Second Temple apocalyptic and Heikhalot literature; she has instead suggested that, in at least some cases, Byzantine-period Heikhalot texts were in fact shaped by the active Jewish reappropriation of material that had been preserved and transmitted within the context of late antique Christian literary culture (2001, 2005: 233-72). What I think unifies all of these scholars is their sense that Heikhalot literature, despite its tortuous textual history and often obscure subject-matter, ought not be severed from the concrete social realities, material conditions and cultural processes that produced it.

It is not the aim of this essay to question the general validity of making use of Heikhalot texts for comparative purposes. Nor do I wish to reassess the historical conclusions drawn by various scholars in specific cases. Rather, I hope that, by focusing attention on Heikhalot texts as embodied artifacts with concrete textual histories, I will encourage specialists and enable non-specialists to approach this complex material with greater methodological sophistication and empirical precision. I believe that, just as scholars who utilize material from, say, the Pentateuch or the NT letters of Paul are expected to have at least a working knowledge of debates sur-

rounding the Documentary Hypothesis or the authentic Pauline authorship of individual letters, so, too, must research on Heikhalot literature be guided by basic insights into the history and nature of the material evidence. I do not think it unfair to say that not all scholarship on Heikhalot texts has consistently demonstrated this fundamental level of historical awareness or textual competence.

2. *The Scope, Content and Transmission of Heikhalot Literature*

The meager number of early textual witnesses to Heikhalot literature obscures the complexity of its literary and intellectual development in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. The task of mapping out this developmental trajectory is further hampered by the vast expanses of time that separate the initial stages of composition in Late Antiquity and compilation from the medieval manuscripts through which we seek to glimpse this process. In addition to the numerous problems created by limitations of material evidence, scholars must also grapple with the fact that no absolute criteria exist for delimiting the boundaries of the Heikhalot corpus. In this section, I review the textual evidence for Heikhalot literature and discuss the scope and content of this corpus.

I have argued above in the Introduction that the publication of the *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* served as a catalyst for fundamental reconsideration of the historical development and significance of the Heikhalot corpus. This edition presents in parallel columns seven manuscripts copied and edited by European Jews in the high Middle Ages that contain the full range of Heikhalot compositions, although often in considerably varying sequences and forms. The seven manuscripts are: MSS New York 8128, Oxford 1531, Munich 40, Munich 22, Dropsie 436, Vatican 228 and Budapest 228 (for full descriptions, see Schäfer [ed.] 1981: viii-x). These manuscripts date from approximately 1300–1550 CE. The oldest of these manuscripts are the German (Ashkenazi) MS Oxford 1531, which dates to around 1300, and the Byzantine MS Vatican 228, which dates to between the end of the fourteenth century and c. 1470. The youngest of the manuscripts are the Ashkenazi MS New York 8128 from around 1500 and the Italian MS Munich 22 from the middle of the sixteenth century.

Each of the manuscripts contributes in one way or another to our understanding of temporal and regional particularities in the transmission-history of Heikhalot literature, especially as it was gathered in the High Middle Ages as a relatively unified corpus. MS New York 8128, however, is particularly noteworthy: it is a capacious and idiosyncratic manuscript that

incorporates numerous narrative and magical traditions not found in the other major manuscripts and must, therefore, be used with great care (Herrmann and Rohrbacher-Sticker 1989, 1992). In general, scholars should not necessarily treat these manuscripts as the only—or even primary—versions of individual compositional units. Schäfer has assembled a near complete catalogue of 47 medieval and early modern manuscripts that contain Heikhalot materials in one form or another (Schäfer 1988e; further supplemented in Herrmann [ed.] 1994: 22-65). These other manuscripts also provide important data about the composition, redaction, transmission and reception of Heikhalot texts.

Indeed, by far the earliest witnesses to Heikhalot literature have turned up, as in so many other spheres of Jewish cultural life, among the haphazard remains of medieval and early modern Jewish documents retrieved from the text-repository (*genizah*) of the Ben Ezra synagogue in Old Cairo at the end of the nineteenth century (these fragments are collected most fully in Schäfer [ed.] 1984; also Gruenwald [ed.] 1968–69; 1969–70; on the history of the Cairo Genizah, see Reif 2000). Analysis of the physical characteristics and scripts of these 23 fragments (abbreviated in the scholarly literature G1-23) has placed all but one of these texts after the year 900 CE, and many of them are considerably later. Thus, while some Genizah fragments do predate the medieval manuscripts, they do not by definition reflect more original and thus 'better' textual readings; scholars must determine the relative value of textual witnesses on a case-by-case basis, in part depending on their specific research question (Leicht 2005). Still, it must be stressed that significant differences exist between the materials contained in the Genizah fragments and those that crystallized in the European manuscript tradition. Some of these fragments contain material known from the medieval manuscript tradition, though often with important differences (e.g., G1-6 contain sections of *Heikhalot Rabbati*; G7 and G18 contain *Heikhalot Zutarti*); other fragments contain distinct and otherwise unknown compositions (esp. G8, G11, G12 and G13-17). This disparity between the 'Oriental' and 'European' branches of the literary tradition strongly suggests that Heikhalot literature was transmitted along multiple regional trajectories (Dan 1987; Schäfer 1993).

Schäfer offered a series of methodological guidelines that built on the results of his editorial labors (1988d, 1993). He concluded that the manuscript tradition is characterized by fluidity of both longer and shorter textual units, which he termed 'macroforms' and 'microforms' respectively. Schäfer's own definition of this specialized vocabulary runs as follows:

> I employ the term *macroform* for a superimposed literary unit, instead of the terms *writing* or *work*, to accommodate the fluctuating character of the texts of the Hekhalot Literature. The term *macroform* concretely denotes both the fictional or imaginary single text…as well as the often different manifestations of this text in the various manuscripts. The border between *micro-* and *macroforms* is thereby fluent: certain definable textual units can be both part of a superimposed entirety (thus a *macroform*) as well as an independently transmitted redactional unit (thus a *microform*) (1992: 6 n. 14).

In this view, it is not possible to reconstruct either a fixed *Urtext* or a finally redacted form of these larger textual units, and in all likelihood such stable beginning and end points of the transmission process have never existed. Heikhalot literature—and its constituent parts—cannot simply be divided into stable 'books' or 'works', but must be studied within the shifting redactional contexts reflected in the manuscript tradition. In particular, the dynamic relationships among single units of tradition as well as the relationships of those units to the larger whole should be considered.

In light of this complex transmission-history, scholars have not always been able to agree on a single definition of what constitutes a Heikhalot text or on how the corpus might best be delimited. Too expansive a definition would fail to differentiate between Heikhalot literature and certain sources that share some of its themes but in other respects differ significantly. Certainly, not all Jewish materials in Hebrew and Aramaic from Late Antiquity that deal in one way or another with the process of heavenly ascent or describe a visionary's encounter with angelic beings can be classed within a single category. For example, one can draw a distinction between texts that ground their reports of visionary experience in Scriptural citation or interpretation and the vast majority of cases in standard Heikhalot works in which revelatory discourse is self-authenticating (Goldberg 1997b).

Thus, despite certain shared features, the relatively late *Massekhet Heikhalot* (Herrmann [ed.] 1994), Byzantine-period Hebrew apocalypses like *Sefer Zerubbabel* (Lévi [ed.] 1914), and the post-talmudic martyrological anthology *The Story of the Ten Martyrs* (Reeg [ed.] 1985) cannot be considered Heikhalot texts, since none of these employs the ritual-liturgical framework that is so central to the religious ideology and practice of Heikhalot literature (Himmelfarb 1988; Boustan 2003: 326-34, 2005: 149-98). Similarly, one can distinguish on a variety of formal, generic or thematic grounds between Heikhalot literature proper and other associated but still distinct works (see especially Schäfer *et al.* [trans.] 1987–95: II,

vii-xiii; Naveh and Shaked 1993: 17-18). These 'related' works include the midrashic *Re'uyyot Yeḥezqel* (Gruenwald [ed.] 1972), magical handbooks such as *Sefer ha-Razim* (Margalioth [ed.] 1966), *Ḥarba de-Moshe* (Harari [ed.] 1997), and *Havdalah of Rabbi Akiva* (Scholem [ed.] 1980–81), and the cosmological treatise *Seder Rabbah di-Bereshit* (Schäfer 2004).

A more restrictive definition of Heikhalot literature would limit the corpus to a relatively narrow set of major compositions and textual fragments (I here follow Schäfer *et al.* [trans.] 1987–95: II, vii-xiii; Schäfer 1988d, 1992: 7-8; Davila 2001: 8-12). Thus, in addition to the 23 Genizah fragments published by Schäfer ([ed.] 1984), the Heikhalot corpus consists of the following major 'compositions' (it must be stressed yet again that the boundaries of the macroforms differ from manuscript to manuscript and various types of material are regularly interpolated within them; therefore, the paragraph ranges I have given below represents just one dominant recension of the macroform):

- *3 (Hebrew) Enoch* (*Synopse* §§1-79);
- *Heikhalot Rabbati* = 'The Greater [Book of Celestial] Palaces' (*Synopse* §§81-306);
- *Heikhalot Zutarti* = 'The Lesser [Book of Celestial] Palaces' (*Synopse* §§335-426);
- *Ma'aseh Merkavah* = 'The Working of the Chariot' (*Synopse* §§544-596);
- *Merkavah Rabbah* = 'The Great [Book of] the Chariot' (*Synopse* §§655-708).

In addition to these major macroforms, Heikhalot literature also includes a number of generically distinct compositions that are often embedded within or appended to other Heikhalot texts.

First, there are a number of relatively stable compositions that present ritual instructions for invoking various powerful angels to descend and aid the practitioner with some undertaking. The most notable of these adjurational texts is the *Sar ha-Torah* (Prince of the Torah) complex, which instructs the practitioner how to compel the *Sar ha-Torah* to help him learn and retain knowledge of Torah. This composition is often appended to *Heikhalot Rabbati* (*Synopse* §§281-306). The *Sar ha-Torah* complex is followed in a number of manuscripts by a number of smaller units of adjurational or liturgical material, namely: the *Chapter of R. Neḥunya b. ha-Qanah* (§§307-314); the 'Metatron piece' (§§315-317 [=§§147-149 of New York JTS 8218]); the 'Great seal/Terrible crown piece' (§§318-321); and a collection of laudatory prayers (§§322-334). Some manuscripts also contain the relatively stable and

independent *Sar ha-Panim* (Prince of the [Divine] Countenance) text, which likewise provides ritual instruction for adjuring a powerful angel to grant one's wishes (*Synopse* §§623-639; Schäfer 1988b).

Another independent class of texts are the *Shiʿur Qomah* compositions (best rendered 'The Measure of the Height [of the Divine Body]'). The *Shiʿur Qomah* should not be considered an independent composition, as once thought (Cohen 1983, 1985), but is better understood as a generic term for a relatively varied group of texts describing the body of God (Halperin 1988b: 364; Herrmann 1988). In any event, *Shiʿur Qomah* compositions—or fragments thereof—are incorporated into versions of most of the major Heikhalot macroforms (e.g., in *Heikhalot Rabbati* at *Synopse* §167, in *Heikhalot Zutarti* at §§375-386, and, most extensively, in *Merkavah Rabbah* at §§688-704).

A number of manuscripts of *Heikhalot Rabbati* also include—embedded within this macroform—one or more brief apocalyptic compositions. These units include: the 'David apocalypse' (§§122-126); the 'Aggadah of R. Ishmael' (§§130-138); and the 'Messiah Aggadah' (§§140-145). Not only are these units found in only some recensions of *Heikhalot Rabbati*, but they often circulated together as an independent macroform of apocalyptic sources that concentrate on the figure of R. Ishmael. For example, MSS Jerusalem 8^0 5226 (printed in Habermann 1975: 86-88) and New York JTS ENA 3021 both contain all three units. This material is often integrated with accounts of R. Ishmael's miraculous conception and the special visionary powers that result from it (Boustan 2003, 2005: 99-148). I have elsewhere argued that, while these units clearly belong to the wider literary context of Heikhalot literature, they differ in fundamental ways from it (2005: 43-45 and 113-21). As is typical of the apocalyptic genre, these units characterize heavenly ascent as a passive process, often bestowed only on people of special status, rather than as a consequence of ritual action available to any properly-trained adept. Although these apocalyptic compositions enhance our picture of the expressive and ideological range of late antique Jewish ascent texts, their distinctive thematic emphasis and transmission-history puts them solidly outside of the mainstream of Heikhalot literature.

Careful study of the major Heikhalot macroforms reveals an obvious and quite significant degree of variation in content, emphasis, and even basic theological orientation, some of which I will touch on below. Nevertheless, these works do share (1) a more or less stable cast of human and angelic characters, (2) a concern for the proper performance of magico-ritual practices aimed at gaining access to the heavenly realms and/or assistance from

angelic intermediaries, (3) an abiding emphasis on the acquisition and preservation of revealed knowledge, especially of the Torah but also of other kinds as well, (4) a general cosmological scheme, most often centered on a seven-layered heaven, and (5) an interest in the cosmic role played by both the liturgical activities of the angelic host and of Israel on earth. But beyond this minimalist catalogue of basic themes, the internal heterogeneity of the Heikhalot corpus must be allowed to stand—and to serve as one of the primary data requiring interpretation.

My preference for restricting the term 'Heikhalot literature' to this smaller group of sources should certainly not be taken to mean that the boundaries of the corpus can or should be fixed in absolute terms. Indeed, we find in numerous cases that textual units not generally found in the dominant form of Heikhalot compositions have been integrated within Heikhalot material in meaningful, if redactionally secondary, ways. Thus, for example, §151, a unit embedded in *Heikhalot Rabbati* describing R. Ishmael's encounter with Akatri'el Ya in the Jerusalem Temple, appears in only one Heikhalot manuscript (New York 8128) and was clearly taken over by the copyist-scribe of this late and capacious manuscript from its canonical placement in the Babylonian Talmud (*Berakhot* 7b) where it appears in precisely the same form, almost word-for-word.

Similarly, works such as *Ḥarba de-Moshe* and *Seder Rabbah di-Bereshit* were transmitted alongside Heikhalot works within several of the main manuscripts of the corpus and cannot always be extracted cleanly from the surrounding Heikhalot material (Schäfer *et al.* [trans.] 1987–95: II, xi); recensions of these compositions are, therefore, included in Schäfer's synoptic edition of the Heikhalot corpus (*Ḥarba de-Moshe* = *Synopse* §§598-622, 640-650; *Seder Rabbah di-Bereshit* = *Synopse* §§518-540, 714-727, 743-820, 832-853). In such cases, however, transmission-history tells us more about how medieval Jews understood their literary heritage and what categories they used to organize knowledge than about literary affinities and historical connections. The significant differences between these works and the more typical Heikhalot compositions—issues of internal form and content—clearly outweigh the belated redactional choices of medieval copyists.

More importantly, it is not my intention to discourage investigation into the interrelationship among the various species of Jewish mystical, magical and cosmological sources—or, for that matter, into how all of this literature is related to other forms of early Jewish and Christian religiosity. On the contrary: one of the central questions that remains profoundly unresolved is where Heikhalot literature fits into the larger landscape of Jewish liter-

ary culture, especially the vast corpora of synagogal poetry (*piyyut*) and classical rabbinic sources. I do, however, wish to caution strongly against the scholarly habit of viewing the Heikhalot corpus as an open-ended and timeless repository of early Jewish 'mysticism' and 'esotericism', whatever exactly these terms might be understood to denote.

3. *From Textual to Thematic Heterogeneity in the Study of Heikhalot Literature*

Schäfer's insights into the composite and fluctuating state of the material evidence went hand in hand with his rejection of attempts to harmonize the diverse materials represented in the corpus. Schäfer does not regard the two principal themes of the corpus—narratives in which a human actor ascends to heaven, and adjurational material designed to bring angelic beings down to earth—as serving a uniform function within a larger conceptual whole. He contends instead that those who seek uniformity 'suffer from the desire to find one explanation for the entire Heikhalot literature, which then assigns all other parts to their places, thus ignoring the extremely complex relations of the texts and the various literary layers within the individual macroforms' (1992: 152).

But beyond merely insisting on the formal and conceptual heterogeneity of these different strands of material, Schäfer's research has called into question the long-held assumption that it is possible to reconstruct the mystical experience that the 'Merkavah mystics' were believed to have cultivated (cf. Scholem 1954, 1965). Instead, he argues that it is 'quite improbable that we can get behind the state of the Heikhalot literature to Merkavah mysticism as an ecstatic phenomenon' (1988f: 249). Schäfer, therefore, called for research that analyzes Heikhalot literature *qua* literature.

Himmelfarb, through her extensive study of ascent narratives in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature, has arrived at a similar assessment of Heikhalot literature. She concludes from the descriptions of the ritual use of ascent narratives found within the Heikhalot texts themselves (e.g., §335, §419) that there was 'no need for the mystic to ascend, for telling the story was enough. The actual performance of the acts is attributed to a mythic past, the era of the great rabbis of the Mishnah; recitation itself has become the ritual' (1993: here 113; see also Himmelfarb 1988, 1995; Halbertal 2001: 18-26). Therefore, while not *a priori* illegitimate, interpretation of the socio-historical realities and religious world-views reflected in the corpus must be undertaken with great care.

An emphasis on these two complementary types of literary heterogeneity—textual and thematic—has had far-reaching implications for the study of early Jewish mysticism. Before Schäfer, the study of the Heikhalot corpus had long been primarily concerned with the search for a single, unifying framework that could encompass its enigmatic plurality of perspectives and motifs. I believe that, in a very real sense, Schäfer accomplished a systematic revision of the paradigm that Scholem had established in his research on the early history of the Jewish mystical tradition—or what he termed 'Merkabah Mysticism and Jewish Gnosticism' (1954, 1965).

Scholem's groundbreaking work, which united deep philological erudition with a highly developed phenomenological-comparative sensibility, had discerned a cohesive stream of mystical practice and experience in the diverse material found in Second Temple apocalyptic, classical rabbinic literature, and the Heikhalot corpus. Indeed, working in conscious opposition to nineteenth-century German *Wissenschaft* scholarship, which had presented early Jewish mysticism as a late and aberrant development of the early Islamic era (esp. Grätz 1859; also Bloch 1893), Scholem situated Heikhalot literature at the very heart of early rabbinic Judaism. Moreover, he interpreted this 'peculiar realm of religious experience' within the broad comparative framework of the history of ideas in Late Antiquity, emphasizing its general affinities and concrete textual links to various strands of 'apocalyptic' and 'gnostic' forms of religiosity and literary expression. Scholem's powerful thesis that Heikhalot literature was only the latest reflex of a continuous, stable, and largely subterranean tradition of ecstatic mysticism reaching back to biblical prophecy (esp. Ezekiel) and Second Temple apocalypticism continues to exert a tremendous influence (e.g., Gruenwald 1980b, 1988; Elior 1995, 1997, 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Morray-Jones 2002).

While Scholem does distinguish among the diverse literary forms and thematic interests contained in the Heikhalot and related literatures, he subordinates this diversity to an evolutionary model of religious history (one in large measure predicated on a strictly hierarchical typology of religious experience). His analysis of Heikhalot literature thus accords temporal and thematic priority to ecstatic journeys to the otherworld, while relegating the magical and theurgic elements of the corpus to secondary status. In fact, Scholem went so far as to propose a relative dating scheme for the individual works in the corpus based primarily on the proportion of each type of material (1954: 46-47; 1965: 12-13). As I noted above, it is precisely such overarching and homogenizing schema that Schäfer cautions against, at least before systematic and synchronic analysis of the various redactional layers of the corpus has been undertaken (1988f).

Schäfer was not the first to begin chipping away at the edifice erected by Scholem. Several decades earlier Maier, although largely adopting Scholem's categories as well as his insistence on the basic continuities between Second Temple apocalypticism and later Jewish mystical traditions, argued that the earliest stratum of this tradition was speculative and exegetical, not experiential (1963; 1964). Maier viewed the ecstatic practices and theurgic techniques described in the Heikhalot texts as late developments within an essentially textual tradition. This position was in part corroborated by Urbach, who a few years later made the case that tannaitic references to the 'works of the chariot' (*maʿaseh merkavah*) depict it strictly as an exegetical discipline (1967).

Following the insights of Maier and especially Urbach, Halperin mounted a sustained and comprehensive critique of Scholem's account of the development of Jewish mysticism in the rabbinic period. In his monograph study of the term *maʿaseh merkavah* in rabbinic literature, Halperin drew a fundamental distinction between the esoteric interpretation of Ezekiel 1 found in earlier Palestinian rabbinic sources and the subsequent development of a tradition of ecstatic mysticism, which he argues is reflected only in the relatively late redactional layer of the Babylonian Talmud (1980). Indeed, having driven a wedge between exegetical and mystical practice, Halperin set out in his next project to account for the evolution of this exegetical tradition into the heavenly ascent of the later and more fully developed mysticism of the Heikhalot corpus (1987, 1988a, 1988b).

In response to Urbach and Halperin's reassessment of the Scholem paradigm, scholars more recently have begun to question the very terms of the debate, which is predicated on the dichotomy between exegesis and ecstatic experience. Alexander has thus argued for bridging what he terms the 'socio-historical' and the 'midrashic' approaches to early Jewish mysticism through a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between textual activity and religious mentality (1984). Working in a somewhat different analytical mode, Wolfson has also offered a brilliant deconstruction of the regnant dichotomies that he believes have plagued analysis of early Jewish mystical literature, such as the distinction between the 'psychological' and the 'real' or between 'exegetical' activity and 'ecstatic' experience (1994a: 74-124). He has argued that late antique Judaism in fact saw a fundamental convergence of interpretative activity and revelatory experience that produced a new and distinctive hermeneutics of vision. Wolfson's deconstructive project suggests important new avenues of research. In particular, he rightly emphasizes the generative relationship between discursive and embodied practices in the formation of mystical experience.

4. *Early Jewish Mysticism from the Perspective of Material Culture*

In recent years, a number of scholars have built upon Schäfer's insights concerning the epistemological limits posed by the shifting nature of the literary evidence for Heikhalot literature. Their careful descriptions of the constant reconfiguration of textual units within the medieval manuscript tradition have demonstrated that Heikhalot literature is the product of centuries of scribal reworking. Indeed, this research has underscored the similarities between the textual processes that shaped Heikhalot literature and those operative in the wider body of medieval Jewish texts (Ta-Shma 1985). Literary evidence cannot, therefore, simply be used for naïve reconstruction of late antique Jewish mystical techniques and practices—let alone an experiential core. I wish to suggest here, however, that a careful literary approach to early Jewish mysticism need not relinquish its concern for the historical, social, cultural, and perhaps ideological context in which certain Heikhalot works were initially produced—provided, of course, that proper attention is paid to the textual stratigraphy of this literature.

The reception history of Heikhalot texts has been most fully analyzed by Herrmann and Rohrbacher-Sticker, who have illuminated in a series of articles the way that circles associated with the Jewish Pietist movement in medieval Germany (*ḥasidei ashkenaz*) reshaped Heikhalot literature in the course of its transmission in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries (Herrmann 1988, 1994; Herrmann and Rohrbacher-Sticker 1989, 1992; also Kuyt 1993, 1998; Abrams 1998). Herrmann has also demonstrated that the active refashioning of this material continued even into the early modern period (2001). This analysis has led Herrmann to the synthetic conclusion that 'the over-creative medieval copyist is a danger to the over-creative scholar of today' (1993: 97). Indeed, Beit-Arié, in his monumental research on the history of the Hebrew book, has stressed the activist nature of scribal activity in medieval Hebrew textual culture more generally (1993, 2000). Their insights call into question interpretative approaches that do not reckon with the constraints imposed by textual considerations.

The literary methodology advocated by Schäfer, Herrmann, and others has not served to foreclose interpretative possibilities, but, on the contrary, has generated surprising, new avenues of research on Heikhalot literature. Most notably, Swartz has applied both form-critical and redaction-critical methods to one macroform of the corpus, *Maʿaseh Merkavah*, in order to illustrate how textual meaning is generated through diachronic processes of literary transmission and refashioning (1992; also 1986–87, 1989).

Because of his attentiveness to the dynamics of textual elaboration that shaped *Maʿaseh Merkavah*, Swartz is able to trace within this single macroform a profound conceptual evolution, as more conventional forms of liturgical poetry were redacted together with ecstatic prayers that reflect the mystical and theurgic sensibilities of the later strata of the text (1992: 211-23; compare the holistic reading of the text in Janowitz 1989). According to Swartz, the achievement of the text's redactors was to use a narrative of heavenly ascent like that found in *Heikhalot Rabbati* as a literary framework to unite these chronologically *and* phenomenologically distinct styles of prayer.

In his subsequent work, Swartz has attempted to bring the literary history of the Heikhalot corpus to bear on the task of reconstructing its socio-cultural context within late antique Jewish society. He argues that the centrality of scribal activity in shaping Heikhalot literature suggests an interpretive key to the scholastic ideology of the *Sar ha-Torah* (Prince of the Torah) texts (1996: 209-29; also 1994a, 1994b, 1995). These adjurational texts invoke various angels to aid the practitioner in acquiring knowledge of Torah—and in perfecting his capacities to retain this wisdom. Swartz argues that this emphasis on memory and textual knowledge reflects the ethos of 'circles of non-elite intellectuals', who coupled scribal activity with ritual expertise to become minor ritual functionaries (1996: 229). These 'secondary elites' sought to claim for themselves the authority associated with mastery of Torah learning and, thereby, to appropriate rabbinic values. More recently, applying a shamanic model of religious experience to the people who produced the Heikhalot corpus, Davila has come to many of the same conclusions reached by Swartz about their social location (2001). Davila argues that, although normally found in pre-literate societies, shamanic forms of ritual power are fully compatible with the sociological profile suggested by Swartz. Swartz's singular attempt to apply sophisticated sociological thinking to Heikhalot literature demonstrates the salutary value of combining attentiveness to rhetorical and verbal texture with an awareness of the historically situated processes of composition through which this literature was fashioned.

5. *The Limits of Reception-History*

It has recently been argued that the emphasis placed by Schäfer and his students on the fluid reception history of Heikhalot literature runs the risk of drawing attention away from the formative literary and ideological processes that shaped its constituent sources in Late Antiquity and the early

Middle Ages. In an extensive historical survey of critical editorial practice in the field of Jewish mysticism, Abrams articulates what he considers both the successes and failures of Schäfer's *Synopse*. On the one hand, he writes that 'Schäfer's edition has taught us much about critical editing in the last fifteen years for while it was previously considered to be the best method for uncovering what was the earliest state of complex texts, it now can be seen as a statement of their later reception' (Abrams 1996: 43). On the other hand, Abrams notes critically that the editorial principles on which this work was based have the potential to create a new set of dogmatic assumptions concerning the formation and significance of this literature:

> Schäfer's edition, which was said to present the manuscript texts without any (significant) intervention of the editors, was nevertheless based on a very definite set of assumptions which second-guessed the outcome of their research, a point which was missed by every one of the volume's reviewers. Schäfer assumed that individual works did not exist and so chose manuscripts from within a pool of manuscripts which contained the whole corpus… Today we understand that these particular manuscripts do not contain the somewhat amorphous collection of what once was the early collection of Hekhalot traditions, but rather these manuscripts preserve the various medieval attempts to edit the separate works (1996: 38-39).

Abrams is surely correct that the *Synopse* represents a highly selective sample of Heikhalot texts. And, indeed, the manuscripts chosen for this edition do not necessarily represent the 'best' witnesses to the individual literary compositions that they contain. Most importantly, Abrams rightly insists that some—or perhaps many—of the texts gathered in these manuscripts existed in recognizable forms well prior to their transmission to European centers of Jewish culture in the high Middle Ages.

His assessment, however, misses an essential point: Schäfer never claimed that research should be limited to evaluating Heikhalot literature as it is instantiated in the relatively few 'corpus-length' manuscripts gathered in the *Synopse*. Rather, in his writings, he treats his own edition as no more than a valuable gateway into the enormous pool of European medieval manuscripts—and his synoptic method as nothing other than a practical strategy for presenting an enormous amount of material in as clear a way as possible (see especially Schäfer *et al.* [trans.] 1987–95: II, vii). That some have enshrined the *Synopse* as a definitive edition of Heikhalot literature, in my view, testifies to their great desire to establish an authoritative textual basis for their work. While analysis of the extraordinary variation in the manuscripts of Heikhalot literature remains an important corrective in a

field fixated on origins—and a valuable project in its own right—researchers must, wherever possible, seek to observe earlier processes of literary composition and crystallization.

In an article on the literary identity of *Heikhalot Rabbati*, one of the most studied texts in the corpus, Davila anticipated Abrams's systematic critique of the use to which the *Synopse* has been put (1994). Davila argues that Schäfer's edition in no way exempts the scholar from the obligation of establishing—prior to interpretation—a text-critical version of whatever text-units are under consideration. Otherwise, he cautions, the relevant material simply 'remains unreconstructed in the individually more or less corrupt MSS' (1994: 213). Davila illustrates his point effectively with reference to a *merkavah* hymn contained in the various manuscripts at *Synopse*, §253. He writes that the problem of textual variation in this case is 'compounded by the treatment in Schäfer's German translation', which leaves the reader 'with the erroneous impression that the MSS present three different recensions, if not three different hymns in this spot. The hymn itself still eludes us' (1994: 213). Since the task of settling on a text suitable for analysis cannot be endlessly deferred, Davila argues that the production of eclectic critical editions of certain, suitable portions of Heikhalot literature remains a *desideratum*. This, he believes, is particularly true for the textual core of *Heikhalot Rabbati* (*Synopse*, §§81-277 with various omissions), which represents a 'common archetype behind all the complete extant MSS' of this literary composition (1994: 215). A similar case could be made for *3 (Hebrew) Enoch*, which despite having circulated as numerous distinct 'macroforms' likewise possesses a literary 'core' (i.e., §§4-20) that was redacted toward the end of Late Antiquity (Alexander 1977; Schäfer *et al.* [trans.] 1987–95: IV, l-lv).

One might well dispute the practicality of producing eclectic text editions of Heikhalot texts. Nevertheless, Davila's observations about the stability of *Heikhalot Rabbati* are extremely important insofar as they confirm that the medieval manuscripts that contain Heikhalot literature are not merely repositories of wholly open-ended configurations of loosely related textual units. In some—though not all—cases, the manuscript tradition reflects the existence of previously extant textual units that crystallized prior to their transmission by medieval scribes and attests to at least some degree of constraint on scribal creativity.

I think it worth stating explicitly the methodological principles that I have outlined here. In my view, the degree of a given text's literary stability over time must be assessed on a case-by-case basis; and each individual textual unit or complex must be investigated on its own terms without

any prior assumptions about either its stability or its variability. Indeed, Schäfer himself stresses that the distinction between the various Heikhalot compositions is *relative*: 'it appears that although *Hekhalot Rabbati* has been submitted to redaction to a larger extent than, for example, *Hekhalot Zutarti*, we must nevertheless be wary of speaking of it as if it were a homogeneously composed or redacted "work"' (1988d: 12; see also Schäfer 1988g; Goldberg 1997a). The *Synopse*—in conjunction with all other manuscript data—should be seen not only as a tool for tracing later scribal interventions, but *also*, wherever possible, for working back from textual artifacts to earlier stages of literary development.

This pragmatic approach has been formulated in a more general way by Alexander and Samely in their Introduction to a special edition of the *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* entitled 'Artifact and Text' (1993). They caution against any form of methodological dogmatism when approaching all forms of late antique Jewish textual artifact, including Heikhalot literature. Where it is possible to reconstruct an *Urtext*, it is the scholar's responsibility to do so; but where over-active modern editorial work would only serve to obscure the dynamism of compositional, redactional and scribal processes—and thus efface the complexities of textual stratigraphy—an editor must be prepared to forgo the creation of a misleading 'finished product'.

The limitations of a reception-historical approach to Heikhalot literature in no way brings us full circle to the old paradigm in which the scholar's task is to interpret a number of autonomous literary works with stable titles and a coherent redactional purpose. The continuous process of literary production revealed by the manuscript data forecloses the possibility of retreating to naïve and ahistorical methodologies. A literary-historical approach to Heikhalot literature, while still governed by the constraints of the material evidence, must set as its aim the description of the processes by which its constituent parts emerged as distinct literary—and, thus, ideological—formations.

Conclusion

Throughout this essay, I have traced recent developments in the study of Heikhalot literature that challenge those reading practices, still quite prevalent in the field, that primarily relate to these sources as disembodied 'texts' rather than as material artifacts. The work of Schäfer and others has shown that Heikhalot literature, perhaps more than most textual traditions, continued to be susceptible to scribal intervention long after the initial stages

of composition. The boundaries between the roles of author, redactor and copyist were never firm. The literary activity that shaped Heikhalot literature often took the form of archival work, in which this textual tradition was continuously mined for raw materials.

I have suggested that this decidedly 'materialist' or 'textualist' perspective has raised significant epistemological problems for scholars wishing to relate to Heikhalot texts as more or less transparent representations of individual religious experiences. In his pointed assessment of scholarship on medieval Kabbalah, Anidjar has criticized scholars of Jewish mysticism more generally for their tendency to 'read through' mystical texts in the hopes of gaining access to 'deeper' levels of symbolic or psychological meaning, while invariably ignoring the very textuality of this literature (1996: 100-104). In sharp contrast to this tendency identified by Anidjar, the renewed focus on the material history of early Jewish mystical literature that I have examined here aims to demystify Heikhalot literature, normalizing it as a mode of human discourse that is subject to the same formal, social and technological constraints as any other. Indeed, in my view, scholars should instead work toward a variegated literary and sociological understanding of Heikhalot literature without reducing its heterogeneous set of textual artifacts—and the variety of discursive practices represented in them—to a unitary expression of a timeless Jewish mystical sensibility.

The research tools necessary for analyzing the evolving literary forms, socio-historical contexts and religious significance of Heikhalot literature are now available to specialists and non-specialists alike. Schäfer's *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* and *Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, along with the various concordances and translations, allow for both a general overview of the Heikhalot corpus as a whole and in-depth textual analysis and comparison. I have argued, however, that the *Synopse* should not become enshrined as some kind of fixed 'critical' edition of Heikhalot literature. Scholars wishing to determine the historical status of specific textual readings or configurations will need to make ongoing reference to the other—often less extensive—manuscripts, many of which have their own very important stories to tell about the history of specific Heikhalot compositions or genres and their relationship one to the other.

Of course, important historical and phenomenological questions concerning the place of Heikhalot literature within the broader landscape of ancient and medieval religiosity, both Jewish and non-Jewish, remain. Happily, however, the same period that saw these significant advances in our access to and understanding of the sources for early Jewish mysticism has also seen the profound revision—and, in some cases, the total

dismantling—of a whole range of problematic categories long used by students of ancient religions. The utility of viewing 'Gnosticism', 'heresy', 'mysticism', 'magic', and even 'Judaism' and 'Christianity' as essentially static entities has been fundamentally undermined (see, e.g., Smith 1995; Williams 1996; Boyarin 1999, 2004; Becker and Reed [ed.] 2003). The more variegated and dynamic picture of Hekhalot literature that is emerging is perfectly at home within this new historiographic tradition. The work of comparing and contrasting Heikhalot literature with other ancient and medieval religious discourses and practices will no doubt now yield ever more interesting and surprising results, provided that it is pursued with a modicum of care and caution.

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