The Emergence of Pseudonymous Attribution in Heikhalot Literature: Empirical Evidence from the Jewish "Magical" Corpora*

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Introduction

This paper provides empirical evidence for dating the emergence of Heikhalot literature *as a distinct and recognizable class of texts* to the early Islamic/geonic period (c. 650–950 C. E.).[1] Heikhalot literature forms the earliest ordered and extensive collection of Jewish ascent and adjurational sources from Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.[2] Although scholars increasingly take Heikhalot literature into consideration when assessing the diversity and scope of late antique Judaism,[3] this

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[1] The latter designation, often used by Jewish historians, refers to the institutional leaders (the *Geonim*) of the rabbinic academies that emerged in this period in both Palestine and especially Abbasid Baghdad. It is in this period, subsequent to the extended redaction of the Babylonian Talmud (very roughly 450–650 C. E.), that rabbinic literature and rabbinic institutional authority were assuming increasingly hegemonic status within Jewish culture.

[2] For the specific compositions that I include under the designation "Heikhalot literature," see fn. 5 below. Heikhalot literature is most usefully and comprehensively presented in Peter Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, in collaboration with M. Schlüter and H. G. von Mutius, TSAJ 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981). In addition, a number of Heikhalot fragments found in the Cairo Genizah are collected in Peter Schäfer, ed., *Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, TSAJ 6 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984). All references to Heikhalot literature refer to these editions. All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.

[3] On the implications of Jewish "mystical" and "magical" literatures for understanding Jewish society in Roman Palestine, see especially Oded Irshai, "The Priesthood in Jewish Society in Late Antiquity" (Hebrew), in *Continuity and Renewal: Jews and Judaism in Byzantine-Christian Palestine*, ed. L. I. Levine (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2004), 67–106, esp. 82–99. For the Babylonian case, see, e. g., Isaiah Gafni, "Ba-

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multifaceted body of texts continues to resist basic social, geographic, and chronological classification. Indeed, because of its thematic and formal diversity, its otherworldly subject-matter, and its complex transmission history, Heikhalot literature has long bedeviled scholarly efforts to develop even the most general dating scheme for the corpus as a whole or for its constituent compositions.[4]

In order to advance our understanding of the literary history of the Heikhalot corpus and, thus, of the socio-historical context out of which it emerged, this paper traces the development of one of the corpus' most structurally central and characteristic literary features – namely, its pervasive use of early rabbinic figures as its primary protagonists and spokesmen.[5] These heroes from the "legendary" rabbinic past – most commonly, the *tannaim* Rabbi Ishmael, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Neḥunya ben ha-Qanah (second century C. E.) – 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, which I refer to throughout this paper as "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 authenticity

bylonian Rabbinic Culture," in *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, ed. D. Biale, (New York: Schocken Books, 2002), 223–65, esp. 238–53.

[4] For a programmatic statement on the fluid nature of Heikhalot texts and the open-ended redactional processes that gave rise to them, see Peter Schäfer, "Tradition and Redaction in Hekhalot Literature," in *Hekhalot-Studien*, TSAJ 19 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 8–16; also idem, "Research on Hekhalot Literature: Where Do We Stand Now?" in *Rashi, 1040–1990: Hommage à Ephraïm E. Urbach*, ed. G. Sed-Rajna (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1993), 229–35. See also Schäfer's thorough-going critique of Gershom Scholem's various dating schemes for Heikhalot texts – both absolute and relative – in his "Merkavah Mysticism and Magic," in *Gershom Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism 50 Years After*, ed. P. Schäfer and J. Dan (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 59–78.

[5] I consider Heikhalot literature to comprise the various iterations of the following "macroforms": *3 (Hebrew) Enoch*, *Heikhalot Rabbati*, *Heikhalot Zutarti*, *Maʿaseh Merkavah*, and *Merkavah Rabbah*. I also include in my analysis a number of smaller, relatively independent textual units, such as *Shiʿur Qomah* material [§§ 375–386, 468–488, 939–973], the "Adjuration of the *Sar-Torah*" [§§ 281–306], and the "Adjuration of the *Sar-Panim*" [§§ 623–639]), which are often found embedded in or alongside these "macroforms" in the Heikhalot manuscript tradition. It should be noted that I intentionally exclude the works *Reʾuyyot Yeḥezqel* ("The Visions of Ezekiel"), *Seder Rabbah di-Bereshit* ("The Great Order of Creation"), and *Massekhet Heikhalot* ("Tractate of the Palaces") from the corpus, since, despite some general affinities, they differ in significant ways from this central group of works. My delineation of the boundaries of the Heikhalot corpus reflects the conclusions of Peter Schäfer in "Tradition and Redaction in Hekhalot Literature."

and legitimacy on the potentially problematic forms of religious piety and practice it prescribes. Simply put, this form of pseudonymity is so fundamental to the rhetorical and literary structure of Heikhalot texts that it would be methodologically problematic and likely also historically inaccurate to speak of "Heikhalot literature" as such apart from or prior to the development of this literary framework.

Yet, efforts to describe how and when this defining literary feature developed face a basic problem: there exists little or no evidence external to Heikhalot texts themselves for studying the crystallization of this architecture of "pseudonymous attribution." By exploiting diachronic developments within early Jewish "magical" discourse – in particular, shifts in its relationship to Heikhalot literature – I hope to isolate the historical emergence of pseudonymity in the Heikhalot corpus.

The early Jewish "magical" tradition and Heikhalot literature share phenomenological affinities as well as concrete literary content, yet nevertheless form autonomous literary domains.[6] This paper analyzes the increasing utilization of the pseudonymous Heikhalot heroes within Jewish magical sources from Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The difference between the magical sources from the pre-Islamic period (e. g., Babylonian incantation bowls and Palestinian amulets) and the medieval sources from the Cairo Genizah is striking. The earlier sources do not contain even a single allusion to the pseudonymous figures of Heikhalot literature; when the Babylonian bowls do invoke the authority of rabbinic figures, they almost exclusively refer to R. Joshua ben Peraḥya and R. Ḥanina ben Dosa, who are not generally associated with Heikhalot literature. In contrast, the magical documents from the Genizah considerably expand their range of references to rabbinic figures to include the pseudonymous heroes of Heikhalot literature. Moreover, in a number of the Genizah texts, the practitioner invokes the names of these figures in an attempt to appropriate their expertise, experiences, or powers for his own ritual purposes. Some of these texts even make explicit reference to narrative traditions that link these figures to their

[6] In my use of the term "magic," I follow Michael Swartz, "Scribal Magic and its Rhetoric," *HTR* 83 (1990): 163–80, esp. 164–67, which treats the label "Jewish magical texts" strictly as a pragmatic literary designation to delineate a more or less coherent grouping of texts that share specific semantic and conceptual characteristics. These texts generally entail the cultivation of efficacious power through ritual speech and action for various (often practical) ends. It should be stressed that, in this anti-essentialist usage, both the conceptual and the substantive boundaries that separate the literary domains of "magic," "liturgy," and "mysticism" remain continuously in flux. At the same time, since each of these terms maps onto relatively discrete, if permeable, bodies of texts, they remain heuristically essential.

capacity to travel to or behold the divine chariot-throne (*merkavah*). Thus, once the Jewish magical sources are broken down according to temporal and geographic provenance, they provide compelling evidence for the relatively late emergence of Heikhalot literature's pseudonymous framework.

I conclude that Heikhalot literature – at least in its fully developed form – exerted a negligible impact on Jewish magical discourse before the early Middle Ages. The evidence from the Jewish magical corpora thus serves as external support for my hypothesis that the particular rabbinic figures that are so central to the "mystical" discourse of certain Heikhalot texts were introduced into in this literature only toward the end of Late Antiquity (after 650 CE).[7] This data fundamentally challenges the pre-Islamic dating of Heikhalot literature that continues to inform much academic work on early Jewish mysticism.

Before I proceed, it is perhaps worth stating quite plainly what this paper does *not* set out to accomplish. This paper does not explore how Jewish magical practice in Late Antiquity and the early Middle ages might illuminate the possible ritual dimensions of Heikhalot ascent-traditions. Nor does it analyze the ways in which the themes of heavenly ascent and magical adjuration are juxtaposed, differentiated, or combined within the Heikhalot corpus. Nor, finally, does it seek to determine the nature of the social relationship – if any – between the creators of Heikhalot literature and the ritual practitioners who composed or used the various types of Jewish magical literature in our possession. While questions such as these must represent the ultimate goal of research on early Jewish mysticism and magic, the scope and aims of this paper are considerably more modest. I believe, however, that the analysis presented here is, in many respects, an essential first step towards situating Heikhalot literature accurately within the broader history of Jewish literary culture.

I. The Pseudonymous Architecture of Heikhalot Literature

The discursive structure of Heikhalot literature is built around a scaffolding of "pseudonymous attribution." The closely related terms "pseudonymity" and "pseudepigraphy" are conventionally used by scholars to

[7] See Raʿanan S. Boustan, *From Martyr to Mystic: Rabbinic Martyrology and the Making of Merkavah Mysticism*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 112 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005). I address the relationship between these two mutually-reinforcing arguments below in section four of this paper.

designate a text's (or a compilation's) "false" ascription of its own authorship to an earlier writer or legendary figure.[8] This authorizing strategy was deployed in a wide range of ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern literary cultures, including Jewish and Christian, but also Greek, Latin, Babylonian, Egyptian, and Persian.[9] While no definitive consensus exists concerning the historical origin(s) or rhetorical function(s) of this practice, at the very least it entails an implicit appeal to the authority-conferring power of certain events or figures from the past.

Strictly speaking, I do not here employ the notion of "pseudonymity" in this customary sense. Heikhalot texts neither explicitly trace their own authorship nor do they recount the circumstances of their own composition. Nevertheless, *all* Heikhalot texts ascribe their discursive content – both narrative and instructional – to a small group of named rabbis, who serve as both speakers and actors in these texts. In this regard, Heikhalot literature bears a strong resemblance to classical rabbinic texts, which regularly attribute brief sayings and teachings to named rabbinic figures, while remaining virtually silent about the "authorship" of the larger compositions in which these micro-units are embedded.[10]

Thus, a typical unit of Heikhalot literature frames the ritual instructions and ecstatic experiences it records as follows: "R. Ishmael said: 'For three years R. Neḥunya ben ha-Qanah saw me in great anguish and in great affliction …"[11] The passage then recounts how R. Neḥunya ben ha-Qanah taught his pupil the appropriate ritual words and actions,

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[8] See the basic definition provided in the entry "Pseudonymity and Pseudepigraphy" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:540–41.

[9] Within the vast secondary literature on this phenomenon, see especially the important, if at times flawed, comparative analysis of pseudonymity in Western antiquity in Wolfgang Speyer, "Religiöse Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im Altertum," in *Frühes Christentum im antiken Strahlungsfeld*, WUNT 50 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 21–58; idem, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum: Ein Versuch irher Deutung* (München: Beck, 1971). On the social function of pseudonymity, see John J. Collins, "Pseudepigraphy and Group Formation in Second Temple Judaism," in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. E. G. Chazon and M. E. Stone, STDJ 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 43–58.

[10] For recent reflection on pseudonymity in rabbinic literature within the context of Jewish and Christian culture in the Second Temple Period and Late Antiquity, see Marc Bregman, "Pseudepigraphy in Rabbinic Literature," in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. E. G. Chazon and M. E. Stone, STDJ 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 27–41. See also Sacha Stern, "The Concept of Authorship in the Babylonian Talmud," *JJS* 46 (1995) 183–95; idem, "Attribution and Authorship in the Babylonian Talmud," *JJS* 45 (1994) 28–51.

[11] Schäfer, *Synopse*, § 308 (*Pereq R. Neḥunya ben ha-Qanah*).

and concludes: "R. Ishmael said: Every student of a scholar who repeatedly recites this great mystery, his stature will please him and what he says will be accepted."[12] Such attributions are often embedded in relatively elaborate narrative frameworks, as here.

At other times, however, the pseudonymous framework consists of basic speech-formulae such as "Rabbi X said …," "Rabbi X said Rabbi Y told me …," or "Rabbi X said Angel Z told me …" that are affixed to relatively brief units of text. In such cases, the sequence of introductory phrases does not belong to or advance a larger narrative context, but is used (merely) as a rudimentary literary backbone from which to suspend distinct units of liturgical, instructional, or revelatory discourse. Thus, for example, the collection of *Qedushah*-hymns found at *Synopse* §§94–106 (*Heikhalot Rabbati*) is introduced with the phrase: "R. Ishmael said: What is the difference/interpretation (*hefresh*) of the hymns that a person sings when he descends to the divine chariot-throne (*merkavah*)?"[13] The series of hymns that follows is then bracketed by a concluding remark: "R. Ishmael said: All these hymns R. Akiva heard when he descended to the *merkavah* …"[14] This literary framework, built around pseudonymous attribution, is so pervasive that compiling even a partial catalogue of cases would be impossible; a cursory glance at any passage of Heikhalot text will reveal its structural importance within Heikhalot literature.

But at what point in the evolution of Heikhalot literature did this form of pseudepigraphy become integral to its literary structure? And, perhaps more importantly, what ideological valence does pseudonymity carry in these texts? Analysis of the relationship between Jewish magical texts and Heikhalot literature will help shed light on the history and meaning of the pseudepigraphic architecture of Heikhalot literature. In the next section, I provide an overview of the different types of ancient and medieval Jewish magical sources and their specific formal, geographic, and chronological characteristics. I then describe the shifting uses of rabbinic figures in Jewish magical discourse and how they differ across these various textual groupings.

[12] Schäfer, *Synopse*, §311 (*Pereq R. Neḥunya ben ha-Qanah*).

[13] Schäfer, *Synopse*, §94. For my purposes, the precise meaning of this phrase, which turns on the enigmatic term *hefresh*, is not important. For detailed consideration of this passage, see Annelies Kuyt, *The "Descent" to the Chariot: Towards a Description of the Terminology, Place, Function, and Nature of the Yeridah in Hekhalot Literature*, TSAJ 45 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 146–49.

[14] Schäfer, *Synopse*, §106.

II. Early Jewish Magic and Heikhalot Literature

A mass of textual and material data attests to the vitality of Jewish magical discourse and practice in Antiquity and the Middles Ages.[15] A considerable portion of this evidence comes from literary sources, such as historical-ethnographic works (e. g., Josephus, *A. J.* 8.45–49), imaginative narrative literature (e. g., Tobit 6 and 8), and the legal-normative writings of the rabbis (e. g., *bPes* 110a–114a). Yet, because such sources offer rhetorically stylized and often highly polemical representations of Jewish ritual specialists ("magicians") and their practices, they frequently pose serious methodological challenges for the historian of ancient Jewish magic.[16]

But, at least from the second century C. E. onwards, a range of sources exist that together provide more direct evidence for the practice of Jewish magic.[17] These sources encompass two basic types of materials: (1) artifacts that were apparently used in actual rituals (e. g., amulets and curse-tablets), and (2) magical books or treatises that belong to a more theoretical-pedagogical sphere of activity (e. g., *Sefer ha-Razim*). Of course, proper interpretation of these sources likewise demands careful attention to their generic conventions and rhetorical aims, which complicate any overly facile effort to bridge the gap between prescription and practice.[18] Thus, while these textual artifacts that were pro-

[15] The most helpful general overview of Jewish magical materials is still Philip S. Alexander, "Incantations and Books of Magic," in *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B. C.–A. D. 135)*, ed. E. Schürer, G. Vermes, et al., 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1985), 3.1:342–79. For a concise outline of the various rhetorical forms, genres, and aims of ancient Jewish magical texts, see Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked, eds., *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, in collaboration with M. Jacobs, R. Leicht, B. Rebiger, C. Rohrbacher-Sticker, G. Veltri, and I. Wandrey, 3 vols., TSAJ 42, 64, 72 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994–1999), 1:5–10. For general discussion of Jewish magical literature in early Judaism and especially rabbinic literature, see Giuseppe Veltri, *Magie und Halakha: Ansätze zu einem empirischen Wissenschaftsbegriff im spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Judentum*, TSAJ 62 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997); Peter Schäfer, "Magic and Religion in Ancient Judaism," in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, ed. P. Schäfer and H. G. Kippenberg, SHR 75 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 19–43; idem, "Jewish Magic Literature in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages," *JJS* 41 (1990): 75–91.

[16] On the interpretative challenges presented by representations of "magic" in ancient literary sources, see Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 175–204.

[17] Alexander, "Incantations and Books of Magic," 343–46, discusses the paucity of "magical" artifacts dated before 135 C. E. and the attendant methodological problem for reconstructing Jewish "magical" practice in earlier periods.

[18] On the gap between the ideal and the real in ritual performance, see Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Bare Facts of Ritual," in *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), 53–65.

duced, circulated, and, in some cases, used by Jewish ritual practitioners certainly do not give us unmediated access to Jewish magical practice, they do provide direct evidence concerning the historical development of Jewish magical discourse in Late Antiquity and Middle Ages and, by extension, its place within the broader Jewish literary tradition.

Scholars now generally agree that Heikhalot literature and Jewish magical texts share a wide variety of common rhetorical features and ritual practices, and it has even been suggested that these two bodies of texts reflect the literary and ritual activities of groups sharing a common social profile.[19] Moreover, Shaul Shaked has convincingly shown that "Heikhalot-style" liturgical compositions – that is, compositions exhibiting formal and thematic affinities with the types of hymnic units that make up a sizeable portion of the Heikhalot corpus – were deployed for ritual purposes within some late antique Jewish magical artifacts.[20] It is evident that Heikhalot-style literary traditions and perhaps even concrete compositional units that would later be incorporated into Heikhalot texts were in circulation throughout Late Antiquity. Yet, while the boundary between Jewish "magical" and "mystical" literature is highly permeable, the distinction between them should not be collapsed entirely. For the specific purposes of the present analysis, it is essential that we draw a firm distinction between "Heikhalot-style" motifs or compositional units and Heikhalot literature proper, with its highly distinctive formal and narrative structure.

In their important overview of Jewish magical sources from Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked describe the complex and dynamic relationship between Heikhalot literature and Jewish magical texts with appropriately nuanced terms:

> It may be stated at the outset that not all magical texts show an awareness of this (i. e., the Hekhalot) literary tradition, and it may be assumed that there were practitioners of magic who followed a tradition independent of the Hekhalot school … The Hekhalot literature constituted a new trend which may have exercised influence over some writers of amulets, while

[19] Michael D. Swartz, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), offers the only properly sociological analysis of these literatures to date. Swartz identifies the producers of both magical and Heikhalot literatures as belonging to the sub-elite of scribal functionaries who operated within the purview of rabbinic culture, but without enjoying access to full rabbinic authority or training. This view is largely confirmed in James R. Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot: The People behind the Hekhalot Literature*, JSJSup 70 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 214–56.

[20] Shaul Shaked, "'Peace Be upon You, Exalted Angels': On Hekhalot, Liturgy, and Incantation Bowls," *JSQ* 2 (1995): 197–219.

traditional formulae went on being used without showing any influence of the Hekhalot school.[21]

Moreover, in their view, an approach to the magical material that takes into account its geographic and temporal diversity is crucial for assessing its relationship to Heikhalot literature. We miss this crucial internal differentiation if we make the mistake of viewing the magical corpus as a unified whole or of harmonizing it fully with the Heikhalot material. It is precisely because the inter-dependence of these literatures is strong, but not static, that we can catch an oblique glimpse of their changing relationship.

In fact, despite its considerable degree of formal and substantive continuity, the Jewish magical corpus can be divided fairly easily in to three sub-groups that were generated under distinct historical circumstances. These three groups of texts can be summarized as follows:

1. incantations written on earthenware bowls from Sasanian Iraq in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (with some passage of biblical and rabbinic Hebrew) and dating between the late third and early eighth century CE (over 100 specimens published);[22]

[21] Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), 17–18.

[22] I have here provided the maximal chronological range for the magical bowls; the great majority of incantation bowls – both Jewish and non-Jewish – derive from the latter half of the Sasanian period, from the fifth to seventh centuries. See my comments on the dating of the bowls below. Only a fraction of the known bowls in Jewish Aramaic has been published, and more bowls are being brought to light all the time. For this reason, any survey of the bowls will necessarily be provisional. The majority of published bowls are collected in the following books: Dan Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls: Incantations in Jewish Aramaic from Late Antiquity* (London: Kegan Paul, 2003) (20 Jewish Aramaic bowls); Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, eds., *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998), 124–214 (11 Jewish Aramaic plus 2 Syriac bowls); idem, *Magic Spells and Formulae*, 113–43 (11 Jewish Aramaic plus 3 Syriac bowls); Charles D. Isbell, *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls*, SBL Dissertation Series 17 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975) (72 bowls, all previously published elsewhere); James A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1913) (30 Jewish Aramaic, 7 Syriac, and 3 Mandaean bowls). Note that, where Isbell republishes a bowl already found in Montgomery, I cite the text according to the latter. Since Isbell published his relatively complete collection in 1975, a number of bowls have been published in independent articles. Where I cite material not found in the major collections listed above, I indicate the source. For the most recent bibliographic surveys of published bowls, see J. B. Segal and Erica C. D. Hunter, *Catalogue of the Aramaic and Mandaic Incantation Bowls in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 2000), 13–21; Alexander, "Incantations and Books of Magic," 355–56; also the website maintained by Alex Jassen and Scott Noegel (http://faculty.washington.edu/snoegel/aramaicincantationbowls.htm).

2. metal (lead, gold, silver, or copper) or clay amulets from Palestine and western Syria written in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (with some passages of biblical and rabbinic Hebrew) and dating between the fourth and seventh century CE (approximately 40 specimens published);[23]

3. parchment or paper amulets and (fragments of) magical books written primarily in Hebrew and secondarily in Aramaic (with Arabic, Greek, and Persian elements) from the Cairo Genizah dating almost exclusively from after the ninth century CE (approximately 125 specimens published).[24]

The three categories can thus be divided not only by differences in media and linguistic forms, but also by time period. The first two groups of sources are pre-Islamic (or from the period immediately following the Islamic conquest at the latest), while the third set of sources was produced after the founding of the Abbasid dynasty in the middle of the eighth century. It should be noted that I use the rise of the Abbasid dynasty, with its new capital established in Baghdad in 762 CE, as the primary transitional point for my study because the highly gradual nature of the process of cultural transformation that occurred in the early Islamic period did not put an immediate end to the production of magical bowls in Jewish Aramaic, Syriac, or Mandaean.[25] In what follows, I show that these three temporally and geographically distinct magical corpora have significantly different relationships to the structure of "pseudepigraphic attribution" that characterizes Heikhalot literature.

[23] Of the approximately 40 extant "Jewish" metal amulets that have been published, 32 are collected in Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*, 40–122; idem, *Magic Spells and Formulae*, 43–109. Additional amulets appear in C. Thomas McCollough, "An Aramaic Amulet from Sepphoris," *ʿAtiqot* 28 (1996): 161–65; Roy Kotansky, "Two Inscribed Jewish Aramaic Amulets from Syria," *Israel Exploration Journal* 41 (1991): 267–81; James A. Montgomery, "Some Early Amulets from Palestine," *JAOS* 31 (1911): 272–81 (3 amulets).

[24] Most of this material is collected in Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte* (84 specimens); Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*, 216–40 (8 specimens); idem, *Magic Spells and Formulae*, 147–242 (21 specimens); Lawrence H. Schiffman and Michael D. Swartz, eds., *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah: Selected Texts from Taylor–Schechter Box K1*, STS 1 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) (14 specimens).

[25] On the dating and socio-historical context for the production of the magical bowls in their various languages, see Michael G. Morony, "Magic and Society in Late Sasanian Iraq," in *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, ed. S. Noegel, J. T. Walker, and B. M. Wheeler (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 83–107.

III. Rabbinic and Heikhalot Figures in Jewish Magical Sources

Numerous Jewish magical texts recount – or, at least, briefly allude to – narrative traditions about righteous figures from the venerable past. These narratives, commonly referred to as *historiolae*, are imagined to harness the power of these heroic predecessors for the practitioner's present purposes, often for healing or for protection from human or demonic enemies.[26] In many cases, the practitioner need only invoke the name of one of these figures to call upon their merit and power. In Jewish magical texts, these figures are often biblical in origin, most prominently Moses or Solomon.[27] Nevertheless, we also find instructions for the practitioner to recount well established narrative traditions concerning the efficacious ritual actions performed by famous rabbinic figures from the past. Over time, we can trace subtle, but important, shifts in the profile of the rabbinic figures mentioned in Jewish magical artifacts.

The table below presents all published Jewish magical texts from Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages that refer to named rabbinic figures from either classical rabbinic sources or Heikhalot literature.[28] I have

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[26] On the use of narrative *historiolae* as sources of ritual power in late antique magic, see David Frankfurter, "Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical *Historiola* in Ritual Spells," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, ed. M. Meyer and P. Mirecki, RGRW 129 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 457–76.

[27] For invocations of narrative traditions involving Moses, see, among the many examples, M123:3–6 (Levene, *Magic Bowls*, 83–84) and M138:3–9 (Levene, *Magic Bowls*, 89–90); also, of course, the various versions of *Ḥarba de-Moshe* ("The Sword of Moses"), one of which appears at Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§598–622. And for Solomon, see, e. g., M142:10 (Levene, *Magic Bowls*, 93–94); Pergamon Museum (Berlin) VA 3854:15–19 (= VA 3853:14–20) (Dan Levene, "Heal O' Israel: A Pair of Duplicate Magic Bowls from the Pergamon Museum in Berlin," *JJS* 54 [2003]: 104–21, esp. 105 and 107). On the biblical figures of Solomon and Moses in the Jewish magical tradition more generally, see respectively Pablo A. Torijano, *Solomon the Esoteric King: From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition*, JSJSup 73 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), esp. 192–224, and John G. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 134–61.

[28] Neither concordances nor computerized databases exist yet for the various magical corpora. I have, therefore, been forced to review each text individually, with the help of the indices in each collection. The following abbreviations are used in the table: Isbell = Isbell, *Aramaic Incantation Bowls*; Levene = Levene, *Magic Bowls* (cited by name of collection: M = Moussaieff); Montgomery = Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts*; *AMB* = Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*; *MSF* = Naveh and Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae* (Naveh and Shaked cited by object: A = amulet, B = bowl, G = Genizah fragment); *MT* = Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte* (cited by Taylor-Schechter Catalogue number). For Hekhalot-style "magical" material from the Cairo Genizah, I refer to Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente* (= *GFHL*).

limited my sample to texts written in the languages used in rabbinic literature, namely, Hebrew and the various forms of Jewish Aramaic.[29] I have, therefore, excluded the following types of material from consideration: a) incantation bowls written in the Mandaean and Syriac dialects of Aramaic, even those artifacts that may incorporate "Jewish" elements;[30] and b) Greek literary or ritual texts that incorporate "Jewish" elements or may have been produced by or for Jews.[31] Rabbinic figures whose names appear in **bold** are regularly used as pseudonymous authorities in Heikhalot literature. An asterisk (*) appearing alongside the name of a given rabbi indicates that, in at least some texts, the ritual power of the sage is explicitly linked within the text to his association with or activity involving the divine chariot-throne (*merkavah*), one of the central motifs in Heikhalot literature; I have indicated those texts that specifically mention the *merkavah* in such contexts by appending "+ *merkavah*" to the citation in the right-hand column.

The table reveals a fundamental shift in the relationship between Jewish magical sources and Heikhalot literature. Not a single Jewish magical text produced in the pre-Islamic period, before the mid-seventh century, explicitly employs or refers to any of the pseudonymous heroes of the Heikhalot corpus, let alone associates them with heavenly-ascent or the vision of the *merkavah*. By contrast, a significant number of magical sources from the Islamic period not only invoke the authority of the pseudonymous heroes of Heikhalot literature, but also specifically ascribe ritual power to their vision of the *merkavah*.

In addition, a number of more detailed observations can also be drawn from this data. The rabbinic figure most frequently found in the Jewish incantation bowls from the pre-Islamic period is R. Joshua ben Peraḥya, who appears in six extant spells.[32] In addition to his more

[29] On the various Aramaic dialects used in Jewish magical bowls, see Christa Müller-Kessler and Theodore Kwasman, "A Unique Talmudic Aramaic Incantation Bowl," *JAOS* 210 (2000): 159–65. According to Müller-Kessler and Kwasman, most Jewish bowls are not written in standard "Talmudic Aramaic," as some have argued, but in other more widespread dialects, primarily what they call "Standard Literary Babylonian Aramaic." These linguistic issues, while important, do not have direct bearing on my present argument.

[30] On possible "Jewish" elements in a Mandaean bowl, see Bowl D (931.4.2) in W. S. McCullough, *Jewish and Mandaean Incantation Bowls in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 28–47.

[31] On Jewish magical texts preserved in Greek, consult Alexander, "Incantations and Books of Magic," 3.1:357–61.

[32] Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts*, nos. nos. 8:6–11; 9:2–3; 17:9–12; 32:3–4; and 33:3–4; Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*, B5:5–7. It should be noted that R. Joshua ben Peraḥya also appears along with R. Judah ben Bava in the Genizah

Corpus/Provenance		Rabbinic figure	Source
pre-Abbasid Period (c. 250–750 C. E.)	Jewish Aramaic incantation bowls (Sasanian and early Islamic Iraq)	R. Joshua b. Peraḥya	– Montgomery, nos. 8:6–11; 9:2–3; 17:9–12; 32:3–4; and 33:3–4 – B5:5-7 (*AMB* 158)
		(R.?) Ḥanina b. Dosa	– M156:6–8 (Levene 115)
		merkavah as evil chariot or as chariot of demons or evil spirits	– Isbell, no. 44:4 – B13:6 (*AMB* 198) – M121:4 (Levene 81) – M145:4 (Levene 81)
		merkavah as chariot of YHWH, but not as object of vision	– Montgomery, no. 14:6–11 – M123:4 (Levene 83) – M138:6 (Levene 90)
		merkavah as chariot of YHWH and as object of vision	– Pergamon Museum (Berlin) VA 2434 + VA 2486 (Levene 15-16)
	Aramaic amulets (Syria-Palestine)	Yishmaʾel	– A1:8 (*AMB* 41): used as angelic name and not as that of a rabbinic figure
Abbasid Period and Beyond (c. 750 C. E.)	Parchment and paper amulets and books in Hebrew and Aramaic (Cairo Genizah, after 800 ce)	R. Joshua b. Peraḥya	– T.-S. NS 107.3/1a:12 (*MT* 2:299) – T.-S. K 1.148/1a:21 (*MT* 2:307) – possibly alluded to in *nomina barbara* in T.-S. K 1.96/1a:12 (*MT* 3:368)
		R. Judah b. Bava	– T.-S. NS 107.3/1a:12 (*MT* 2:299)
		Yonatan b. Uziel	– T.-S. K 1.148/1a:21 (*MT* 2:307)
		Judah b. Yeḥezqel	– T.-S. K 1.148/1a:21 (*MT* 2:307) – JTLS ENA 3657.2-3/2b:13 (*MT* 2:287)
		Joshua b. Levi	– T.-S. K 1.148/1a:21 (*MT* 2:307)
		R. Eliezer (ha-Gadol?)	– G21/1b:10-11 (*GFHL*175) + *merkavah*
		R. Ḥananya b. Ḥakhinai	– JTLS ENA 3657.2-3/2b:13 (*MT* 2:287) – G21/1b:11 (Schäfer 175) + *merkavah*
		***R. Ishmael**	– T.-S. K 1.148/1a:21 (*MT* 2:307) + *merkavah*
		***R. Akiva**	– T.-S. K 1.148/1a:21 (*MT* 2:307) + *merkavah* – G21/1b:11 (Schäfer 175) + *merkavah*
		***R. Neḥunya b. ha-Qanah**	– T.-S. K 1.148/1a:21 (*MT* 2:307) + *merkavah* – G21/1b:11 (Schäfer 175) + *merkavah* – T.-S. AS 143.171/2b:8 (*MT* 3:137)
		Rabban Gamaliel	– T.-S. AS 143.171/2b:7 (*MT* 3:137)
		Hagadas b. Levi	– T.-S. AS 143.340/2b:4-5 (*MT* 3:130)

conventional career as a tannaitic authority (e. g., *mḤag* 2:2; *mAvot* 1:6), Joshua ben Peraḥya also famously appears as Jesus' teacher in later Talmudic literature (e. g., *bSan* 107b; *bSot* 47a, but only in uncensored editions) and in the Jewish anti-Gospel tradition *Toledot Yeshu*.[33] He is, however, notably absent from the Heikhalot corpus. The enigmatic name "Yeshuʿa the healer" also appears in a number of bowls, though this designation may refer to Jesus Christ rather than to his rabbinic master.[34] The power of the spells, which are intended to protect against demons, derives from a particular episode in R. Joshua's life, in which he successfully banned a female spirit by learning her name and writing it in a divorce decree.[35]

A small number of the bowls also introduce rabbinic traditions concerning R. Ḥanina ben Dosa's powers as a healer and miracle-worker. Like R. Joshua ben Peraḥya, Ḥanina ben Dosa is known for his prowess in vanquishing demons.[36] In his case, Ḥanina ben Dosa's reputation is evidently based on a narrative tradition in which he restricts the movement of the demoness Igrat daughter of Maḥalat to Wednesday and Saturday nights, thereby enabling the cautious wayfarer to avoid her

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text T.–S. NS 107.3/1a:12 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:299); an allusion to his name may also be contained in the *nomina barbara* found in T.–S. K 1.96/1a:12 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 3:368).

[33] On the figure of R. Joshua ben Peraḥya in both magical and narrative sources, see John Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 229–31; Johann Maier, *Jesus von Nazareth in der Talmudischen Überlieferung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1978), 117–26; Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (New York: Harper Row, 1978), 46–50; Markham J. Geller, *Joshua b. Perahia and Jesus of Nazareth: Two Rabbinic Magicians* (Ph. D. Dissertation, Brandeis University, 1974).

[34] Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts*, no. 34:2: יישוע אסיא (and not יהושע). The name Jesus is also invoked as a "name of power" in a number of bowls (e. g., Isbell, *Aramaic Incantation Bowls*, no. 52:3). On the use of the name or figure of Jesus in Jewish magical bowls, see Dan Levene, "'… and by the Name of Jesus …' An Unpublished Magic Bowl in Jewish Aramaic," *JSQ* 6 (1999): 283–308, Shaul Shaked, "Jesus in the Magic Bowls: Apropos Dan Levene's '… and by the Name of Jesus,'" *JSQ* 6 (1999), 309–19; Markham J. Geller, "Jesus' Theurgic Powers: Parallels in the Talmud and Incantation Bowls," *JJS* 28 (1977), 141–55.

[35] On the use of divorce formulae in ancient magical texts, see Shaul Shaked, "The Poetics of Spells: Language and Structure in Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity 1: The Divorce Formula and its Ramifications," in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives*, ed. T. Abusch and K. van der Toorn (Groningen: Styx, 1999), 173–95.

[36] E. g., M156:6–8 (Levene, *Magic Bowls*, 115–19). On Ḥanina ben Dosa's miraculous powers in rabbinic sources, see especially Baruch M. Bokser, "Wonder-Working and the Rabbinic Tradition: The Case of Ḥanina ben Dosa." *JSJ* 16 (1985): 42–92; Geza Vermes, "Ḥanina ben Dosa: A Controversial Galilean Saint from the First Century of the Christian Era," *JJS* 23 (1972): 28–50; 24 (1973): 51–64.

(*bPes* 112b). Classical rabbinic literature appears to supply the narrative background for the *historiolae* involving both R. Joshua ben Peraḥya and Ḥanina ben Dosa. Certainly, neither is linked in any way by the incantation bowls to the types of ritual practices prescribed in Heikhalot literature.

In contrast, the magical documents from the Islamic period that have been retrieved from the Cairo Genizah considerably expand their range of references to rabbinic figures to include the pseudonymous heroes of the Heikhalot corpus. Moreover, we can see from the table that a number of these Genizah texts associate the ritual efficacy of these Heikhalot figures with general *merkavah* traditions, in some cases explicitly referring to their experience of ascending to the divine chariot-throne. In some respects, the integration of elements of Heikhalot literature into these magical texts represents the counterpart to the incorporation of pre-existing "magical" units within various Heikhalot texts in the course of their transmission during the Middle Ages.[37]

One thirteenth-century ritual text provides a clear illustration of the complex literary interaction that was increasingly taking place at the seams between the domains of Jewish ascent mysticism and other forms of magical-ritual discourse. The spell stakes its efficacy on the authority of a series of rabbinic figures, including the above-mentioned "R. Yehoshuaʿ ben Peraḥya," as well as "Yehudah bar Yeḥezqel,"[38] "Yehoshuaʿ ben Levi," and "Yonatan ben Uzi'el." The text, however, also invokes the ascent-experiences of R. Neḥunya ben ha-Qanah, R. Ishmael, and R. Akiva, whom it specifically labels as "those who ascend and descend to the chariot-throne (העולים ויורדים למרכבה)."[39] These figures also

[37] Perhaps most prominent in this regard is the highly unstable Heikhalot composition *Heikhalot Zutarti*, which includes significant portions of such magical treatises as the *Havdalah of Rabbi Akiva* (*Synopse*, §§362–365). Similarly, the theoretical "magical" treatise *The Alphabet of R. Akiva*, which also draws on the same general set of traditions associated with R. Akiva, developed in contact with and perhaps also in opposition to the emerging Heikhalot corpus. See Saskia Dönitz, "Das Alphabet des Rabbi Aqiva und sein literarisches Umfeld," in *Jewish Studies between the Disciplines: Papers in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday*, ed. K. Herrmann, M. Schlüter, and G. Veltri (Brill: Leiden, 2003), 149–79.

[38] R. Yehudah bar Yeḥezqel also appears in JTLS ENA 3657.2–3/2b:13 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:287).

[39] T.–S. K 1.148/1a:21–23 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:307). Note the order of the verbs in this phrase, which does not correspond to the technical vocabulary of the *yeridah* (first descent to heaven, then ascent). It must be stressed, however, that, although modern scholars often privilege the paradoxical *yeridah*-vocabulary, the more "conventional" ascent vocabulary actually predominates in Heikhalot literature. On the distribution of the different types of ascent-vocabulary in Heikhalot literature, see especially Kuyt, *"Descent" to the Chariot*.

serve as sources of ritual power independently of each other elsewhere in the Genizah texts.[40]

Still another ritual text found in the Genizah associates the power that its practitioner, Pinḥas, can hope to derive from the *merkavah* with a different, but overlapping triad of rabbinic figures.[41] In this case, the text appeals to "R. Eliezer (who) interprets the *merkavah* (דורש במרכבה), R. Akiva (who) enters the *merkavah* (מפלש במרכבה), and [R. Ḥananya ben] Ḥakhinai (who) recounts the *merkavah* (מספר במרכבה)."[42] The larger composition from which this unit is taken is itself highly unusual. The text is built around a version of Moses' heavenly ascent to receive the Torah that draws heavily on Heikhalot ascent-traditions, while diverging significantly from its earlier midrashic models.[43] The interpenetration within this text of explicit ritual elements, *merkavah*-vocabulary and Heikhalot figures, and atypical narrative elements reflects a relatively late stage in the development of Jewish magical literature.

This is not to say, of course, that elements found in Heikhalot literature are entirely absent from the earlier incantation bowls. As I have discussed earlier, not only do the two corpora contain formally similar material, but, in a very small number of cases, they share closely related literary units.[44] Similarly, we find that the angelic figure Metatron, who appears throughout Heikhalot literature as the "Prince of the (divine) Countenance" (*Sar ha-Panim*),[45] also enjoys a significant presence in the

[40] R. Neḥunya ben ha-Qanah is paired with Rabban Gamaliel at T.–S. AS143.171/2b:7–8 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 3:137); R. Neḥunya appears alone in T.–S. NS 91.41/1a:2 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:265). R. Ishmael is appealed to as the recipient of revelations from Metatron in JTSL ENA 3635.17/17a:9–11 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 1:19); T.–S. K 1.56/1b:8–10 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 1:32). It should be noted here that the name Yishma"el is used as an angelic name in a Palestinian amulet (A1:8 in Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*, 41), although the significance of this usage is unclear and likely unrelated to the rabbinic figure.

[41] The name of the practitioner, Pinḥas, appears at G21/1a:12.

[42] G21/1b:9–11 (Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente*, 175). R. Eliezer the Great (*ha-Gadol*) serves as R. Akiva's teacher in a number of Heikhalot texts, much like the master-disciple relationship of R. Ishmael and R. Neḥunya ben ha-Qanah. For passages that are introduced as teachings transmitted to R. Akiva by R. Eliezer, see, e. g., Schäfer, *Synopse*, §281, §§297–299, §§304–305, §623; G1/F:22–23 (Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente*, 17).

[43] The Moses material is found at G21/1b:12–2b:28 (Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente*, 103–5). On the unusual form of the version of Moses' ascent that is found in this text, see Schäfer, *Geniza-Fragmente*, 171–72.

[44] Shaked, "'Peace Be upon You,'" 197–219.

[45] The literature on Metatron is vast. For a brief but excellent discussion of the role of Metatron in Heikhalot literature, see Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Gnostic Imagination: Gnosticism, Mandaeism, and Merkabah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 99–105.

Babylonian incantation bowls, where he is invoked as a protecting angel.[46] And, not surprisingly, Metatron remained in active use in Jewish magical sources well into the Middle Ages.[47] But this continuity in usage should not be read as an indication that the incantation bowls are drawing from texts that we might recognize as "Heikhalot literature." Metatron is simply too widely attested in Jewish sources from Late Antiquity – rabbinic and apocalyptic literatures as well as the Heikhalot corpus – to offer testimony for the literary development of one particular class of texts.[48]

The appearance of the term *merkavah* (chariot) in the incantation bowls presents a similar problem, although in this case the data suggest a palpable shift in usage. Thus, we can see from the table that where the term does appear in a small number of incantation bowls from the pre-Islamic period, it almost always refers to "evil chariot(s)" or the chariots of demons or evil spirits – and not to God's divine-chariot from Ezekiel's vision at all.[49] There are, of course, exceptions. In one unpublished text that has been brought to light by Dan Levene, the practitioner claims to have discovered the evil spirit he wishes to exorcise while he was gazing at "mysteries of the earth" (רזי ארעה) and "paths of the *merkavah*" (דירכי מרכבתא).[50] Levene is surely correct that the idiom

[46] E. g., Montgomery, no. 25:4, where just his name, Metatron Ya, is invoked; Isbell, no. 49:11, where his is called "the Great Prince of His (God's) Throne" (איסרא רבא דכורסיה); Isbell, no. 56:12, where his is called "the Great Prince of the entire universe" (איסרא רבא דכליה עלמא). In addition, M155:4 (Levene 111) invokes the angelic name ʾIQWN MYṬMWN WPSQWN (איקון מיטמון ופסקון), which is one of Metatron's many names (see, e. g., *bSan* 44b).

[47] E. g., T.–S. K 1.144 + T.–S. K 21.95.T + T.–S. K 21.95.P/3a:19 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:33); Oxford, Bodl. heb. A.3.25a/1a:2 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:88); T.–S. AS 142.214/1b:6 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:192); T.–S. K 12.29/2a:3–11 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:219–20); T.–S. K 1.60/1a:17 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:259); T.–S. AS 142.15 + T.–S. NS 246.14/1b:27–29 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 3:121).

[48] On the broader development of the Metatron tradition in rabbinic, apocalyptic, and Heikhalot literatures (especially *2 Enoch* and *3 Enoch*), see Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition*, TSAJ 107 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

[49] E. g., M121:4 (Levene, *Magic Bowls*, 81): "evil chariots" (מרכבתא בישתא); M145:4 (Levene, *Magic Bowls*, 81): "the great chariots of the no-good spirits" (מרכבתא רבתא דלטבי); B13:6 in Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*, 198: "his chariot is the chariot of the evils ones" (מרכבתיה מרכבא לטבי). For close parallels to this last example in the Syriac incantation bowls, see Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls*, 207.

[50] Berlin Museum VA 2434 + VA 2486 (unpublished, but transcribed and translated in Levene 15–16): "I was astonished by the mysteries of the earth and I looked at the paths of the *merkavah*. Again I saw the evil, powerful, and violent *Yaror* … that has been sent against him. *Yaror* … go out and fly away from the house …"

used here comes close to the language of secrecy and revelation characteristic of Heikhalot literature.[51] I would caution, however, that this usage of the term *merkavah* is relatively unusual in the bowls; on its own, it does not constitute evidence for the existence of "Heikhalot literature" in this period.

IV. The History and Function of Pseudonymity in Heikhalot Literature

We have seen that, when the incantation bowls from the pre-Islamic period are compared with the medieval Genizah materials, we find the *merkavah* serving explicitly as an allusion to the divine chariot-throne of Ezekiel's vision, often in conjunction with the names of specific figures from Heikhalot literature, only in Genizah texts.[52] The belated appearance of R. Ishmael and his colleagues in Jewish magical literature indicates that Heikhalot literature *as it appears in the medieval manuscript tradition* had not registered a perceptible impact on Jewish magical discourse before the Islamic conquest.

These conclusions accord well with my findings concerning the literary relationship between *Heikhalot Rabbati*, one of the central compositions in the Heikhalot corpus, and the post-talmudic rabbinic martyrology *The Story of the Ten Martyrs.* In a recently published monograph,[53] I argue that the narrative framework that anchors *Heikhalot Rabbati* as a literary composition (esp. *Synopse*, §§107–121; §§198–203; §§237–240) is largely constructed out of material taken from *The Story of the Ten Martyrs.* I show, however, that *Heikhalot Rabbati* radically inverts the narrative conventions of the martyrological genre: the ten rabbinic martyrs from the conventional martyrology are spared their expected fate, while their persecutor, the Roman Emperor Lupinus, is executed and resurrected ten times over so that he might die in the place

[51] Levene, *Magic Bowls*, 15–16.

[52] See especially T.–S. K 1.148/1a:21 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:307); T.–S. K1.144 + T.–S. K 2195.T, T.–S. K 21.95.P: 3b/2 and 4a/16 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:33–34). It should be noted, however, that in some texts the term *merkavah* is employed as nothing more than a "magical" name: e. g., Oxford, Bodl. heb. a.3.25a/1a:65 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:90); T.–S. NS 322.21 + T.–S. NS 322.72/1b:19 (Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte*, 2:82).

[53] Boustan, *From Martyr to Mystic*, esp. chs. 5 and 6. A comprehensive critical edition of the martyrology appears in Gottfried Reeg, ed., *Die Geschichte von den Zehn Märtyrern*, TSAJ 10 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985), in which ten distinct recensions of the work are printed synoptically.

of each of the ten martyrs. This "inverted" form of the martyrology presents the dissemination of the ritual practices and esoteric knowledge described in Heikhalot literature as a response to the circumstances of the Roman persecutions of the second century C. E., which rabbinic literature remembers as a foundational episode in the development of rabbinic Judaism. The text thus reworks the narrative framework supplied by post-talmudic rabbinic martyrology into an account of the "historical" emergence of Jewish mystical practice. In producing a foundation-narrative for "Merkavah mysticism," the creators of *Heikhalot Rabbati* sought to provide the figure of the Heikhalot visionary with a distinct social and historical profile that would situate him firmly within the rabbinic tradition.[54]

The intertwined literary histories of *Heikhalot Rabbati* and *The Story of the Ten Martyrs* have important implications for the history of early Jewish mystical literature. Indeed, the systematic and extensive alterations to the martyrology through which *Heikhalot Rabbati* was fashioned as a literary composition are only explicable as a considered response to what must already have been a well-established and influential literary tradition. I conclude from the direct literary dependence of *Heikhalot Rabbati* on *The Story of the Ten Martyrs* that this process of literary adaptation occurred some time after the creation of the martyrology in fifth- or sixth- century Byzantine Palestine, but prior to the eleventh-century fragments of *Heikhalot Rabbati* found in the Cairo Genizah.[55]

Thus, while Heikhalot literature includes liturgical and ritual traditions that have their roots in pre-Islamic Late Antiquity, the incorporation within *Heikhalot Rabbati* of martyrological traditions reflects a decisive stage in the formation of Heikhalot literature. Indeed, it seems that the appropriation of martyrological material in *Heikhalot Rabbati* served as a primary avenue for the introduction of narrative elements and especially literary figures into Heikhalot literature and thus played a central role in the crystallization of Heikhalot literature around a set of heroes drawn from rabbinic tradition. In a very real sense, therefore,

[54] This conclusion is consistent with the sociological portrait of the Heikhalot mystics in Swartz, *Scholastic Magic*. Swartz argues that the mystics were scribes drawn from the middle strata of Jewish society but shared the scholastic values of the rabbinic elite.

[55] The Genizah texts T.–S. K 21.95.K and T.–S. K 21.95.M (=Peter Schäfer, ed., *Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, TSAJ 6 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984], 33–52 and 53–67 respectively), which both date the approximately 1000 C. E., already attest the existence of the "inverted" martyrology in the text of *Heikhalot Rabbati*.

this act of literary appropriation represents the narrative counterpart to the pervasive use of pseudepigraphy in Heikhalot literature.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that late antique Jewish magical sources offer no positive evidence for the existence of Heikhalot literature *as a fully realized class of texts* organized around a specific group of "pseudonymous" rabbinic heroes. Beginning in the early Islamic period, however, Jewish magical sources begin to attest the association between this set of "Heikhalot rabbis" and their experience of the *merkavah*. It is only at this point that Jewish magical discourse began drawing on Rabbi Ishmael, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Neḥunya ben ha-Qanah's mastery of ascent-praxis as a source of ritual power.

It might, of course, be argued that those who produced the Jewish incantation bowls and amulets during Late Antiquity were either ignorant of Heikhalot traditions concerning R. Ishmael and his colleagues – or, for some reason, simply chose not to use them as a source of ritual power. Conceivably, Heikhalot literature formed an isolated or autonomous domain within the Jewish literature culture of Late Antiquity. Yet, in light of the appearance of Heikhalot-style material in the late antique magical sources, it is somewhat difficult to understand why their creators would "lift" material from Heikhalot compositions – assuming they did indeed exist in something like their final and fully developed forms – but not capitalize on the obvious and available authority of their central protagonists, as do some magical texts retrieved from the Cairo Genizah.

Still, it must be acknowledged that the type of argument I have advanced here is necessarily circumstantial, rather than probative. As Karl Popper has famously argued, the nonexistence of a phenomenon is logically impossible to prove – that elusive black swan may always glide by tomorrow. But I hope that I have convincingly shown why the burden of proof must now rest with those scholars who wish to maintain that (some) Heikhalot texts already relied upon the architecture of "pseudonymous attribution" so characteristic of the genre during the classical rabbinic period (c. 200–650 C. E.). While it is apparent that certain liturgical compositions and magical formulae that eventually found their way into the Heikhalot corpus were in circulation in late Roman Palestine and Sasanian Persia, the data reviewed here strongly suggest that the early Islamic/geonic period should serve as the primary historical

and cultural context for interpreting the literary crystallization of Heikhalot literature and its subsequent impact on the wider Jewish literary culture.[56]

[56] On the recently renewed interest in this period for the study of Jewish mysticism, see now Klaus Herrmann, “Jewish Mysticism in the Geonic Period: The Prayer of Rav Hamnuna Sava,” in *Jewish Studies between the Disciplines: Papers in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday*, ed. K. Herrmann, M. Schlüter, and G. Veltri (Brill: Leiden, 2003), 180–217.