

CHAPTER 11
POETICS OF ERRORS
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1. ARE ERRORS ERRATIC?

Scribal errors and corrupt readings have their own logic and poetics. Encoded in them is fragmented yet firm evidence about the unique literary ancestry of the original text and its intellectual lineage. Their occurrences reflect coherent and systematic patterns; metaphorically speaking, they enfold the unique ‘intellectual DNA’ of their authors, and enclose the inherent cultural traits of their times and habitats. Containing information about ethno-confessional background and educational pedigree of the men of letters who composed the *Vorlage*, they further betray hereditary genes of those (often anonymous) scribes who diligently — or sometimes not so diligently — copied its consecutive redactions time after time, century after century. Furthermore the constellations of corrupt fragments attested in different manuscripts-allographs reveal the fossilised idiosyncratic imprints of each and every copyist upon the fabric of the (once pristine) protograph; it can be even argued that scribal errors contain the collective memory of its fluctuating transmission through space and time. Indeed, the language of scribal errors and corrupt readings can be regarded as a clandestine but faithful witness to the true nature of the *original*. When appropriately assessed, it may facilitate the reconstruction of the authentic features of the (no longer extant) *Ur-Edition*. The same can be said about errors occurring in the process of translation from language to language (e.g. Hebrew to Greek, Greek to Latin, Hebrew to Latin, Greek to Old Church Slavonic, etc.);¹ this is especially true when one examines the processes of text-transmission within Biblical and para-Biblical (apocryphal) Judaeo-Christian corpus. Of particular interest in this connection is the classical trilingual knot of *linguae sacrae* used in the intercultural spread of the Scriptures (i.e. Hebrew, Latin and Greek), the monopoly of which was successfully challenged in the 9th century by the last *lingua sacra* of Europe, Old Church Slavonic. The situation became even more intricate when the process of translation from one language into another (e.g. from Greek to Old Church Slavonic) was further complicated by the parallel existence of two

¹ For the typology of lexical and syntactic errors in Slavonic translations of the 9th to 15th centuries, see Thompson [1988: 351–380]. See also the discussion in Slavova [1999: 36–44], Totomanova [2008: 407–513, 545–573, 591–607, 611–630], and Fahl & Fahl [2008: 213–244].

Slavonic alphabets, Glagolitic and Cyrillic (at least during the first two decades of the 10th century).² While it has been generally accepted that the Glagolitic alphabet preceded the Cyrillic, it is still unclear when exactly the Cyrillic script claimed its ultimate victory over Glagolitic. There is, however, a possibility for detecting the original script used by authors, compilers and translators of the Old Church Slavonic/Bulgarian protographs of many of the texts from the period; due to the different numerical values of one and the same letter in these two scripts, the Glagolitic and the Cyrillic, the manuscripts copied in the period of transition from Glagolitic to Cyrillic contain transparent errors in conveying numbers.³ This is due to the fact that each of the letters of the Glagolitic alphabet designates consecutive numbers, while this is not the case with Cyrillic script, in which some of the letters do not have a numerical value (see the chart below). Thus, while the second letter of the Glagolitic alphabet (ѠУКЪ) designates number 2, its counterpart in the Cyrillic alphabet does not have a numerical value; this in turn means that the third letter in the Glagolitic alphabet will designate number 3, while its Cyrillic counterpart will be used to denote 2; the fourth letter of the Glagolitic alphabet will designate 4, but its Cyrillic counterpart will denote 3, etc. Hence, on the basis of the straightforward assessment of the predictable discrepancies between numerical values of one and the same letter within the two alphabets — an assessment combined with the evaluation of various readings of numbers in different manuscripts — one can decipher the language of errors and detect the correct scribal characteristics of the protograph. The epistemological simplicity of this approach, however, along with its success rate rests on the preliminary painstaking extraction of relevant empirical data from all available surviving witnesses, combined with exhaustive text-critical analysis of various editions. In order to demonstrate the potential scope of this methodology, I will apply its strategies to the analysis of mistakes related to numbers in one specific text — the apocryphal *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (aka *2 Enoch*),⁴ as attested in the medieval literary heritage of *Slavia Orthodoxa*.⁵ This

² Linguistic evidence suggests that at the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century in Preslav literary centre (north-eastern Bulgaria) Glagolitic script was used simultaneously with Cyrillic; see Slavova [1999: 35–46].

³ See Panaiotov [2001: 258–259], Slavova [1999: 37–38, 42–44], Totomanova [2008: 410–420, 429, 434, 449, 456–457, 510–511, 607–610].

⁴ The apocryphal Enochic corpus was embedded in Jewish apocalyptic tradition from the Second Temple period; see Stone [1976: 414–452; 1980], Greenfield and Stone [1979, 89–103], Himmelfarb [1983; 2010], VanderKam [1984], Nickelsburg [2001], Schäfer [2004: 233–274], Reed [2005], Boccaccini [2005], Boccaccini and Ibba [2009]. Originally composed in either Hebrew or Aramaic, it survived in three versions: Ethiopic (*1 Enoch*), Slavonic (*2 Enoch*) and Hebrew (*3 Enoch*). The intellectual ancestry of the *2 Enoch* is that of a multilingual para-Biblical hypertext; its Greek *Vorlage* was based on either Hebrew or Aramaic original, and was fostered by Septuagint-related tradition, which was further influenced by Christian ideology of the Byzantine Commonwealth. Its Slavonic protograph appeared most probably in Bulgaria in the 10th century. Still, opinions

case study, I believe, is representative of the potential epistemological framework of the innovative methodology, which I outlined above.

2. EPISTEMOLOGY OF ERRORS: THE CASE OF THE APOCRYPHAL *BOOK OF THE SECRETS OF ENOCH*

The linguistic analysis of the text indicates that its Slavonic *Vorlage* must have been written originally in Glagolitic script, and only later converted to Cyrillic. Indicative in this respect is the shift between particular numbers in various recensions, and especially the alteration of six to five, due to the different numerical value of the letter ‘E’ (**ECTЪ**) within the two scripts; while the numeral equivalent of the letter ‘E’ (**ECTЪ**) in Cyrillic alphabet is 5 (Ѹ), in Glagolitic the same letter has the numeral value of 6. Thus, when taken to the western side of the fourth Heaven, Enoch sees, according to some of the versions of the apocryphon, five large gates through which the sun sets; according to other versions, however, the number of these gates is six. This kind of discrepancy between various redactions suggests that the

about its origins have differed widely; some scholars deny the existence of the intermediary Greek version, arguing that *2 Enoch* was a direct translation from a Hebrew or Aramaic protograph, while others conclude that its author was a Hellenised Jew from Alexandria who composed the text in Greek. The latter was suggested by Morfill and Charles [1896], who were the first to draw the attention of western scholarship to *Slavonic Enoch* and to publish the text in English translation with extensive commentaries; recensions of *2 Enoch* were further published by J. H. Charlesworth [1983: 91–221] and H. F. D. Sparks [1984: 169–362]. For more details, see A. Pennington’s Introduction to her translation of the shorter recension in H. F. D. Sparks’ edition [Pennington 1984: 321–326] and F. Andersen’s introductory notes to his translation of the longer recension in Charlesworth [1983: 91–100]. Further on the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* in Slavonic apocryphal tradition, see the discussion in Popov [1880: 66–139], Sokolov [1899, 1905, 1910], Bonwetsch [1896; 1922], Schmidt [1921: 307–312], Ivanov [1925: 165–191], Meshcherskii [1963: 130–147, 1964: 91–108], Navtanovich [2000: 204–241, 387–392], Vaillant [1952], Petkanova [1982: 49–63, 350–352], Santos Otero [1984: 147–202], Böttrich [1991: 35–42; 1996; 1997: 222–245], Alexander [1998: 101–104, 116–117], Panaiotov [2003: 279–283], Orlov [2004: 3–29; 2007], Reinhart [2007: 31–46], Badalanova Geller [2010].

⁵The historiographic formula *Slavia Orthodoxa*, together with its counterpart *Slavia Romana* (also referred to as *Slavia Catholica*), was introduced by Picchio [1984]; the terms reflect the ‘division of historical Slavdom into two main areas belonging to the jurisdiction of the Eastern Orthodox Churches (*Slavia Orthodoxa*) and to that of the Roman Church (*Slavia Romana*)’ [*ibid.*: 1]. Following Picchio’s methodology, I approach the institutionalised partition of Central and Eastern Europe between Rome and Constantinople as a *sui generis* linguistic phenomenon; Latin was to function as the *lingua sacra* in *Slavia Romana*, while in *Slavia Orthodoxa* this role was played by Old Church Slavonic. I further argued that, along with *Slavia Romana* and *Slavia Orthodoxa*, another set of terms, reflecting the confessional identity of ‘other’ (Jewish or Muslim) religious communities should be taken into consideration, with special emphasis on their respective *linguae sacrae*; hence my argument for *Slavia Judaica* and *Slavia Islamica* [Badalanova 1994; 2001; 2002]. The linguistic differentiation between *Slavia Romana* and *Slavia Orthodoxa* (i.e. Latin versus Old Church Slavonic) had a major impact upon future cleavage between the respective cultural traditions: ‘within each of these two main areas of civilisation, the self-identification of the Slavs with certain cultural and linguistic systems was directly affected by the ideological and linguistic models that the ecclesiastical organisations introduced into their spiritual patrimony’ [Picchio 1984: 3]; see also Picchio and Goldblatt [2008: 66–85]. The fact that the spiritual patrimony of *Slavia Orthodoxa* was anchored by Old Church Slavonic explains why *2 Enoch* was not attested in apocryphal heritage of *Slavia Catholica* and remained a specific product of *Slavia Orthodoxa* exclusively.

terminus ante quem for the translation/compilation of the Slavonic protograph of 2 *Enoch* was the period when the transition from Glagolitic to Cyrillic script took place.

On the other hand, there is a widespread misconception regarding the distribution of the two different schemes of the numbers of heavens employed in celestial cosmography of the apocryphal *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*; it is maintained that in the longer recension the number of heavens is *ten*, whereas in the shorter recension the heavens are *seven*. A survey of MSS containing both the longer and shorter recensions shows that in the longer recension the number of heavens is either *seven* or *ten*, whereas in the shorter recension the heavens are usually *seven* (although in some isolated cases they may be *five*); the latter observation was briefly underlined in Iatsimirski's *Bibliographical Review of South-Slavonic and Russian Apocryphal Literature*.⁶

The reason behind these conflicting readings is rather complicated; taken into consideration in this (certainly not only graphic) puzzle of fluctuating numbers of heavens should be various small but significant details reflecting the evolution of Slavonic writing systems. First, it should be noted that in the Glagolitic alphabet the number 7 was marked by the letter **ЖНВЪТЕ**; however, the connection between the letter **ЖНВЪТЕ** and the number 7 was disturbed in the process of transition from Glagolitic to Cyrillic, since in the Cyrillic alphabet the same letter (rendered as **Ж**) did not have any numeral value. In order to mark the number 7 (employing Cyrillic characters), the scribes used another letter, **ЗЕМАЖ** [3]. In the Glagolitic alphabet, however, the numeral value of this letter [i.e. **ЗЕМАЖ**] was 9. The number 9, on the other hand, was rendered in Cyrillic alphabet by the letter **Θ** (**ΘИТА**), which occurs at the end of the alphabet. As for the number 8, it was marked in Cyrillic by the letter **И** (**ИЖЕ**) which in Glagolitic had the numeral value 20; however, its phonetic twin **И** (**Iota**) the 10th letter in both the Glagolitic and the Cyrillic alphabet, had the numeral value of 10; this is also true for the numeral value of this same letter (ι) in Greek alphabet. In the light of all these variations, it is hardly surprising to have different numbers of heavens in various manuscript traditions from different periods and, perhaps, from different scripts. One possibility is that the actual 7th letter in the Greek alphabet, η, which corresponds phonetically to Glagolitic and Cyrillic **И** (**Iota**), was once used to mark the number of heavens in the now lost Greek *Vorlage*; during the process of its translation into Slavonic, the scribe converted

⁶ In the account presented by the version entitled 'О Еносе что был на пятом небеси и исписал 300 книгъ' ['About Enoch who was in the 5th heaven and wrote 300 books'] — briefly mentioned by Попов [1880: 106], Sokolov [1910: 1; part 1 in his Commentaries] with a reference to Pypin [1862: 15]), and Iatsimirskii [1921: 81–82] — the number of heavens is five (which parallels the number of heavens in *The Apocalypse of Baruch*).

the actual 7th letter of the Greek alphabet, η, into either Glagolitic or Cyrillic using its phonetic twin **I (Iota)**; and since the latter has a numeral value of 10 in both Glagolitic and Cyrillic scripts, the number of heavens was also emended from 7 to 10.⁷ This will also explain why the compiler ended up with three extra heavens to describe — an odd detail, which was obviously interpolated in Enoch’s monologue against the traditional logic of the narrative of his celestial journey, in which the numbers of heavens is usually seven.⁸ As a result, the scribe had to insert pieces of additional information into the account of visionary’s encounter with God; here follows the fragment concerned:

And those men <i.e. the angels> lifted me up from there, and they carried me up to the 7th heaven [ВОЗДВНГОСТА МА ѿТДД МДЖІЕ ѿНЫ НА 7 НБО]. And I saw there an exceptionally great light [н вндѣх тѣ свѣтъ велнкѣ сѣло], and all the fiery armies of the great archangels [н вон ѿГНЕННИ ВЕЛНКХ ѿрхагѣлъ], and the incorporeal forces [БЕЗПЛОТНЫХ СНАЪ] and the dominions and the origins and the authorities, the cherubim and the seraphim and the many-eyed thrones [н гсдтва, начала, н властн, херѣвннн, н серафннн, прстан н многоѿчнтн]; and nine <var. five > regiments and the shining *otanim* stations [ѿ польковѣ, свѣтлостоаніа Іѿаннѣтское]. And I was terrified, and I trembled with great fear [н оубоахса, н вострепетах страхомѣ велнкнмѣ]. And those men picked me up and let me into their <midst> [н поаша ма мѣжѣ ѿны, н ведоша ма въ слѣдѣ нх]. And they said to me: ‘Be brave, Enoch! Do not be frightened!’ [н гѣлаша ко мнѣ. дерзай ѣноше не бойса!] And they showed me the Lord, from a distance, sitting on His exceedingly high throne [н показаша Гсда нздалеуе, сѣдациаго на Прстолаѣ своемѣ превнсоцѣ]. For what is on the 10th heaven, since the Lord is present there [ѿто оубо ѣсть зане Гсдѣ тѣ пребываетѣ на 10 мѣ НБСН]? And on the 10th heaven is God [на НБѣ 10 мѣ ѣсть БГѣ], and it is called in Hebrew language *Aravoth* [ѣврейскнм ѣззыкѣм ѿраватѣ нареветса]. And all the heavenly armies came and stood on the ten steps, corresponding to their rank [н всн вон нспын востѣпнша стоахѣ на 10 степенн по чннѣ нхѣ], and they did obeisance to the Lord [н покланяхса Гсдвн]. And then they went to their places in joy and merriment and in immeasurable light, singing with soft and gentle voices, while presenting the liturgy to him gloriously [н пакн востѣпахѣ на мѣста своа, в радостн н веселнн, н въ свѣтѣ безмѣрнемѣ поюще пѣснн малннн н кроткнн гласѣ, ѿ славнн слѣжаще ѣмѣ]. <...> And when I had seen all this things, those men said to me: ‘Enoch, up to this point we have been commanded to travel with you’ [ѣгда вндѣх вса сѣа, рекоша ко мнѣ мѣжѣ ѿны, ѣноше, доуде намѣ с тобою ѣсть повеленно сопѣтшествоватн]. And the men went away from me, and from then on I did not see them anymore [н ѿнодоша ѿ мене мѣжѣ ѿны, н ктомѣ не вндѣх нх]. But, I remained alone at the edge of the seventh heaven [н ѿзѣ ѿстах ѣдннѣ на концн 7-го НБСН]. And I became terrified [н оубоахса]; and I fell on my face and I said in myself [н падох на лнцн своемѣ н рѣхѣ в себѣ]: ‘Woe to me! What has happened to me?’ [оубы мнѣ. ѿто ма ѿбрѣте?] And the Lord sent one of his glorious ones, the archangel Gabriel [послаа Гсдѣ ѣдннаго ѿ славных свонх ѿрхагѣла Гаврїлаа]. And he said to me [н рече ко мнѣ]: ‘Be brave, Enoch! Do not be frightened [дерзай ѣноше не бойса!] Stand up, and come with me and stand in front of the face of the Lord forever!’ [востанн пред лнцем Гсдннмѣ въ вѣкн, востанн пойдн со мною] <...> And Gabriel carried me, like the leaf carried up by the wind [н восхнтн ма Гаврїлаѣ, ѣко же лѣсть восхнцаемѣ вѣтромѣ]. He moved me along and put me down in front of the face of the Lord [н поставн ма пред лнцем Гсдннмѣ]. And I saw the eighth heaven, which is called in the Hebrew language

⁷ See also the discussion in Forbes and Charles [1913: 442, footnote XXI. 6].

⁸ The model of ‘seven heavens’ is likewise represented in other apocryphal writings (such as *The Ascension of Isaiah*, *The Sea of Tiberias*), and in erotapocritic tradition. In some texts (e.g. *The Discussion Between the Three Saints*) each heaven is allocated to a different Biblical patriarch; thus **СНТЬ** (Seth) is in the First Heaven, in the Second is **Азарь** (Azariah), in the Third – **ЕНОВЬ** (Enoch), in the Fourth – **НОЕ** (Noah), in the Fifth – **Аврамъ** (Abraham), in the Sixth – **Исаакъ** (Isaac), and in the Seventh – **Иаковъ** (Jacob). A similar model of the sevenfold heavens (which are paralleled by the seven earths and/or the seven compartments of hell) is attested in oral tradition.

Muzaloth [внѣхъ ѿ-е нѣо, ѣже нареуется ѣврейскнмъ ѡзъкомъ М8залоѡѡ], the changer of the seasons [премѣнителъ временемъ], of dry and wet [с8хотн, ѿ мокротн], and the 12 zodiacs [дванадесатнмъ содѡамъ], which are above the seventh heaven [ѣже сѡтъ верх8 7-го нѣсн]. And I saw the ninth heaven [ѿ внѣхъ ѡ-е нѣо], which in the Hebrew language is called *Kukhvim* [ѣже по ѣврейск8 зовемъ К8хавым], where the heavenly houses of the 12 zodiacs are [ѿдеже сѡтъ домове нѣснн зодѡамъ дванадесатнмъ]. <...> And on the tenth heaven, *Aravoth* [на десатомъ нѣсн Аравоѡѡ], I saw the view of the face of the Lord, like iron made burning hot in a fire [внѣхъ внѣннѣ лица Г8днн, ѡко желѣзо разжжено въ сѡгнн, ѿ ѿзнесенно, ѿ ѿскры пѡцѡюцн, ѿ жжетъ]. Thus even I saw the face of the Lord [Тако ѡзъ внѣхъ лице Г8дне].⁹

There are some significant details in the above quoted text that deserve special attention. Only here are the ‘surplus heavens’ given special names; this is rather symptomatic, since the scribe does not mention any of the first seven heavens by name. He is anxious to designate only ‘the superfluous ones’ (i.e. the eighth, the ninth and the tenth). In other words, only those heavens which appear to be incompatible with the (otherwise) dominant scheme of the seven heavens are defined by special appellations. As pointed out by Andersen, these particular passages (which are also missing from all other text-witnesses of *2 Enoch*), are clearly interpolations. On the other hand, it is quite intriguing that the designations of the three additional heavens (i.e. *Muzaloth*,¹⁰ *Kukhvim*¹¹ and *Aravoth*¹²) are in fact ‘domesticated’ Slavonic renditions of otherwise ‘genuine Hebrew words’.¹³ This specific detail betrays the scribe’s attempt not only to iron out the problematic details concerning the troubling deviations from the conventional patterns of heavenly topography, but also to revive the dormant memory of the ‘Jewish lineage’ of the *Slavonic Enoch*. Indeed, according to the description found in Babylonian Talmud *Hagigah* 12b,

‘Araboth is that in which there are Right and Judgment and Righteousness, the treasures of life and the treasures of peace and the treasures of blessing, the souls of the righteous and the spirits and the souls which are yet to be born, and dew wherewith the Holy One, blessed be He, will hereafter revive the dead. Right and Judgment, for it is written: Right and Judgment are the foundations of Thy throne. Righteousness, for it is written: And He put on Righteousness as a coat of mail. The treasures of life, for it is written: For with Thee is the fountain of life. And the treasures of peace, for

⁹ The description of the three additional heavens is attested in only two texts:

1). MS № 13.3.25 (fols. 93a–125a) from the Academy of Sciences Collection (St Petersburg), which is a Bulgarian redaction, copied in the 15th–16th century in Romania. It forms the basis of the English translation of the longer recension of *2 Enoch* (MS *J*) produced by F. Andersen [1983: 135–136].

2). Poltava MS (fols. 1–25) from the Khudov Collection of the State Historical Museum (ГИМ, Собрание Хлудова); copied in 1679 in Poltava. According to Meshcherskii [1964: 93], it is a ‘poorly copied, full of scribal errors version of an earlier Moldavian-Bulgarian MS’ which is ‘rather close in its content to MS № 13.3.25 from the Academy of Sciences Collection (St Petersburg)’. The MS was first published by A. Popov in 1880 in Vol. 3 of the *Transactions of the Historical and Archaeological Society of the University of Moscow* [1880: 67, 75–83, 89–139]. The edition of Popov was used as a primary witness to the text of the longer recension in the translation of *2 Enoch* into English (by Morfill and Charles, and later by Forbes and Charles) and into German (by Bonwetsch).

¹⁰ That is, *М8залоѡѡ* (= Mazzalôt).

¹¹ That is, *К8хавым* (= Kokabîm).

¹² Rendered in Slavonic sources as either *Аравать* or *Аравоѡѡ* (= Aravôt/Arabôt).

¹³ See the discussion in Andersen [1983: 134–137, and especially footnotes 20a, 20d].

it is written: And called it, 'The Lord is peace'. And the treasures of blessing, for it is written: he shall receive a blessing from the Lord. The souls of the righteous, for it is written: Yet the soul of my Lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God. The spirits and the souls which are yet to be born, for it is written: For the spirit that enwrappeth itself is from Me, and the souls which I have made. And the dew wherewith the Holy One, blessed be He, will hereafter revive the dead, for it is written: A bounteous rain didst Thou pour down, O God; when Thine inheritance was weary, Thou didst confirm it. There [too] are the Ofanim and the Seraphim, and the Holy Living Creatures, and the Ministering Angels, and the Throne of God; and the King, the Living God, high and exalted, dwells over them in 'Araboth, for it is said: Extol Him that rideth upon Araboth whose name is the Lord (Ps. 68: 5).

As pointed out by Jastrow, in rabbinic texts the lexeme 'Arabôt functions as 'a poetic name for heaven'. In actual fact, in Hagigah 12b it denotes 'the seventh heaven', in which dwell righteousness and justice.¹⁴ As for the Hebrew lexeme *Kokabîm*, it is used as a common term designating stars, planets and zodiac signs.¹⁵ The lexeme *Mazzalôt* has a similar semantic coverage: it means 'planet', 'constellation', and even 'luck'.¹⁶ Instead of solving the puzzle of perplexing cultural processes behind the 'domestication' of 2 *Enoch* in *Slavia Orthodoxa*, this captivating lexicographic evidence raises even more challenging questions. What does 'the language of errors' say about the scribe who copied this manuscript? What was his intellectual background? Did he know Hebrew? And if so, what was the source of this knowledge? Shall we consider the discrepancies in his manuscript as witnesses to a bilingual scribal tradition, or to the lack of such a tradition? One thing is clear: the questions raised by 'scribal errors' and 'corrupt readings' make us aware of our own epistemological deficiency in grasping these phenomena.

¹⁴ See Jastrow's *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Vol. 2) [1950: 1113].

¹⁵ See Jastrow, *op. cit.* (Vol. 1) [1950: 619].

¹⁶ See Jastrow, *op. cit.* (Vol. 2) [1950: 755].

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