

Introduction

For many in contemporary societies, the imagining of unseen phenomena has been shaped by the claims of modern science. The air that surrounds us is emptied of sentient agency, animated only by the wanderings of microorganisms, the gyration of waves of sound and electricity, the movement of molecules, and the agitation of atoms and particles. That this emptiness stretches even to the skies is conveyed by our very notion of outer space – a vast and vacuous realm in which stars and planets cycle on paths guided by the laws of energy and matter, indifferent to human hopes, deeds, and suffering. Germs may be feared, and bacteria warded off, but even the harmful elements of the unseen world are conventionally conceived apart from voices that tempt and sing, eyes that watch and witness, and spirits that sizzle with ardor and anger.¹

The contrast could not be more striking with the ancient cultures that flourished near the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean Sea and in the lands around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Jews, Christians, and others

¹ Today, of course, belief in demons and angels is hardly absent. My point here is just that it is not cosmologically constitutive within the dominant discourses that shape public life (e.g., politics, education, science, economics) and that it has been particularly marginalized from those rationalizing discourses that inform modern Western scholarship. The contrast that I am highlighting, thus, pertains to the place of transmundane powers in fundamental assumptions about how reality worked across the diverse yet interlocking cultures of the ancient Mediterranean world – differing in their details but generally sharing a sense of spiritual forces as active in the cosmos in a manner not categorically compartmentalized from political, medicinal, or scientific phenomena, nor necessarily relegated to “popular” or “esoteric” domains. See further Reed, “Knowing Our Demons”; Berger, *Rumor of Angels*, 2; Lehoux, *What Did the Romans Know*, 21–46; Lincoln, *Gods and Demons*, 31–52.

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shared a view of the space around them as bustling with unseen powers.² When they peered into the skies, they saw sentience, and they heard the songs of stars and angels. “Demons,” as Peter Brown observes, “filled the air with their subtle bodies.”³

Ancient opinions varied as to the precise nature and purpose of these powers.⁴ Rarely contested, however, was their existence. Some such creatures – it was commonly believed – shared the inhabitable earth with humankind. Some peered down from above. Others lurked below or beyond. That they could sway human lives is a conviction expressed in ancient rituals for protection, prayers of petition, tales about transmundane encounters, and narratives about the cosmic unfurling of human history.

Across the ancient Mediterranean world, the population of the otherworld often provided a symbolic language for the articulation of this-worldly concerns.⁵ For those who believed in a single or dominant deity,

² For overviews on *shedim*, *daimones*, *daevas*, etc., see Lange and Lichtenberger, *Die Dämonen*; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 179–181; Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate*, 13–30; Timotin, *La démonologie platonicienne*; Brisson, et al., *Neoplatonic Demons and Angels*. On *mal'akim*, *angeloi*, etc., see Reiterer, Nicklas, and Schöpflin, *Angels*; Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien*; Schäfer, *Rivalität*; Fossum, *Name of God*; Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate*; Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy*; Cline, *Ancient Angels*. On the spirits of the dead, Johnston, *Religions of the Ancient World*, 470–495.

³ Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, 482. More recently, G. A. Smith has stressed that “it is very hard, and very important, to remember that ancient demons had bodies” (“How Thin Is a Demon,” 479) and that “being invisible is also not the same as being a metaphor” (482).

⁴ Accessible entry-points into the topic for Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Persia include Schipper, “Angels or Demons”; Hutter, “Demons and Benevolent Spirits”; Lucarelli, “Demonology”; Lincoln, *Gods and Demons*, 31–42. For ancient Jewish examples, see Reynolds, “Understanding the Demonologies”; Stuckenbruck, “Angels and God,” 45–70; Alexander, “Contextualizing the Demonology,” 619–620. Among ancient Greeks, *daimôn/daimonion* could denote lesser spirits of various sorts, and these figures were attributed with tasks of intermediation between earthly and otherworldly realms that Jews associated with “angels” (*mal'akim*, etc.) as well as with “demons” (*shedim*, etc.); on the continuities and transformations in the semantic field of *daimôn* and *daimonion* in ancient Greek and late antique Christian literature, see Petersen, “Notion of Demon”; Albinus, “Greek δαίμων”; Cancik, “Römische Dämonologie”; Martin, *Inventing Superstition*; Martin, “When did Angels”; Timotin, *La démonologie platonicienne*; Brisson, et al., *Neoplatonic Demons and Angels*. For developments with respect to Greek *angeloi* and Latin *angeli*, Cline, *Ancient Angels*, 1–19. For Rabbinic, late antique, and medieval Jewish examples, Schäfer, *Rivalität*; Ahuvia, “Israel Among the Angels”; Ronis, “Do Not Go Out”; Ronis, “Intermediary Beings”; Berman, *Divine and Demonic*.

⁵ Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate*, 14–15. In what follows, I do my best to avoid the dichotomy of “natural” and “supernatural,” inasmuch as it is a modern contrast predicated on distinctively post-Enlightenment epistemological assumptions (partitioning, e.g., “secular”

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the appeal to malevolent powers could serve to make sense of daily life in locales dominated by devotion to multiple deities.⁶ At the same time, a wide spectrum of religious and philosophical groups – monotheistic and polytheistic alike – buttressed their authority-claims through promises of freedom from the whims of capricious spirits.⁷ Both between and within communities, speech and writing about demons were powerful tools in the arsenal of social exclusion and the legitimation of violence.⁸

Spirits, both wayward and benign, were also marshaled in the service of organizing and theorizing knowledge.⁹ Divine messengers, angelic interpreters, and spirits of the dead embodied the conviction that truth could travel from the highest heavens down into the quotidian domains of human life.¹⁰ Their explanatory power encompassed phenomena as diverse as disease, disaster, divination, the origins of technologies, and the efficacy of ritual action, as well as social unrest and political upheavals, past and predicted.¹¹ Appeals to capricious or wicked spirits proved

from “religious”). I retain, however, the term “otherworldly” as evoking something of the sense that human life and history are shaped not just by the world visible and accessible to humankind in the mundane cycles of everyday life but also by those invisible, above, below, beyond, etc. – or, in other words, that which ancient writings describe as requiring non-ordinary modes of travel, vision, or communication to see and know.

⁶ Wey, *Die Funktionen der bösen Geister*.

⁷ Denzey, *Cosmology and Fate*; Hodges, “Gnostic Liberation.”

⁸ Pagels, *Origins of Satan*.

⁹ Not least due to the shaping of the English vocabulary of the otherworldly by Christian and Enlightenment discourses, there is no term that is quite fitting for such beings. I thus alternate between using umbrella categories like “transmundane powers” and “intermediate spirits,” and the more accessible “angels” and “demons” as shorthand. Of course, strictly speaking, “demon” is anachronistic to the degree that it presumes the early Christian reinterpretation of Greek *daimon* or *daimonion* as categorically evil (e.g., Martin, “When Did Angels”; Frankfurter, “Master-Demons,” 127). I do not mean to downplay the significance of this later shift. For the purposes of the present study, however, I use the English term in the looser and more inclusive sense that it is commonly found in scholarly studies of a range of global cultures from Tibet to Egypt to Iran (e.g., Dalton, *Taming of the Demons*; Lucarelli, “Demonology”; Lincoln, *Gods and Demons*, 31–52) so as to draw out some of the shared concerns noted above – and especially the contrast between the richness of premodern demonologies and the habitual neglect thereof in modern scholarship.

¹⁰ For divine messengers, see Schipper, “Angels or Demons”; Speyer, “Divine Messenger.” On the *angelus interpres* of Jewish and Christian apocalypses, as well as Persian parallels, see Collins, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 33; Macumber, “Angelic Intermediaries.” On the possibility of communication from and about the dead, see Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy*; Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*.

¹¹ For their association with various types of misfortune, see Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate*, 13–30; Sorensen, *Possession*. For their association with *technê*, see Graf, “Mythical

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useful for explaining human suffering on personal and global levels.¹² Likewise, appeals to heaven's lesser inhabitants served as one potent means for claiming access to secret truths about cosmic order or hidden patterns in history. Figures like angels, archons, demons, and *daimones* could thus play a part in theology, theodicy, and the theorization of the structure and the workings of the cosmos.¹³ At times, as Bruce Lincoln observes, demons could function "quite literally like the black holes of a premodern cosmology, where physics, metaphysics, and ethics remain inextricably intertwined."¹⁴

The present study is an attempt to illumine one corner of this richly imagined otherworld. It focuses upon the representation and functions of intermediate spirits in an important but understudied corpus: the Aramaic Jewish literature of the early Hellenistic age (ca. 333–167 BCE), as preserved in so-called pseudepigrapha such as the *Astronomical Book*, *Book of the Watchers*, and related Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls such as the *Aramaic Levi Document* and *Visions of Amram*.¹⁵ This corpus includes the most ancient Jewish texts known outside the Hebrew Bible.¹⁶ Among the many innovations therein is a newly expansive vision of Israel's

Production"; Reed, *Fallen Angels*. For the notion of spirits as agents in the efficacy of divination, see Johnston, *Religions of the Ancient World*, 371–391.

¹² The association of lower powers with personal suffering (e.g., illness, madness, unrequited love) is perhaps most poignantly expressed in "magical" materials; e.g., Luck, *Arcana Mundi*, 161–226; Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 42–44, 88–114.

¹³ One striking example of the cosmological consequences is the discourse about *daimones* in Iamblichus' *de Mysteriis*, on which see Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, 130–141. With respect to Late Antiquity, Athanassiadi and Frede stress that "the angels of the one and only God belong . . . to the theological *koine* of the period"; *Pagan Monotheism*, 17. For inscriptional and other evidence for non-Jewish, non-Christian reflection on *angeloi/angeli* in the Roman Empire, see Cline, *Ancient Angels*.

¹⁴ Lincoln, "Cesmag, the Lie," 55.

¹⁵ Throughout this book, I avoid retrojecting the late antique compendium "*I Enoch*" into Second Temple times. I refer instead to the earlier independent works collected therein by the titles conventional in current scholarship – e.g., *Astronomical Book* for 1 En 72–82 and 4Q209–211, *Book of the Watchers* for 1 En 1–36, etc. – and I consider the early Aramaic materials therein in relation to the corpus of what we now know as the Aramaic Jewish literature of the early Hellenistic age. For linguistic and other evidence for treating the earliest Enochic writings and Aramaic DSS as a "corpus," see Cook, "Qumran Aramaic"; Machiela and Perrin, "Tobit and the Genesis Apocryphon"; Perrin, *Dynamics of Dream-Vision*, 30–37, 230.

¹⁶ "Biblical" materials that have been sometimes dated to this century include the Aramaic materials in Daniel 2–6, as well as Qohelet, 1 and 2 Chronicles, and Esther, together with various smaller additions expanding older works of biblical prophecy; see e.g. Carr, *Formation*, 184–201; Japhet, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 23–28; Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1.109–175.

heritage of books and knowledge, predicated on claims to special access to information *from* and *about* archangels, fallen Watchers, and wicked spirits. Heavenly and wayward angels here gain names, classes, motives, and inner lives. The origins, functions, and fates of demons are mapped and explained. These and other spirits, moreover, take on integral roles in newly intricate cosmologies, mediating the cycles of the celestial luminaries and populating the divine abode in heaven, the realms of the dead, and the ends of the earth.¹⁷ Inasmuch as this corpus attests an unprecedented concern among learned Jews for collecting, textualizing, and systemizing a claimed totality of knowledge about transmundane powers, it marks what we might call the beginnings of Jewish angelology and demonology.¹⁸

THE BEGINNINGS OF JEWISH ANGELOLOGY AND DEMONOLOGY

The flourishing of traditions about angels and demons is among the most dramatic developments in Jewish literature in the centuries between the Babylonian Exile (586–538 BCE) and the compilation of the Mishnah (ca. 200 CE). In the Hebrew Bible, speculation of this sort is conspicuously absent. God is depicted as surrounded by unnamed “hosts” and “holy ones,” and mysterious “messengers” (*mal'akim*) act on his behalf. Yet, as Saul Olyan notes, “no text from pre-exilic Israel presents a detailed or even basic ordering of angels into a hierarchy of divisions with specific functions and responsibilities.”¹⁹ Demons are even less of a concern. “Whether suppressed by the Hebrew Bible . . . or theologically subjected to the dominion of God,” as Dan Ben-Amos observes, “the biblical references to demons and demonic forces are scant.”²⁰ What is treated mostly in passing and allusive fashion within biblical literature, however, becomes the subject of exuberantly explicit discussion in the writings from Second Temple times (538 BCE to 70 CE).²¹ The explosion

¹⁷ Alexander, “Enoch and the Beginnings,” 231–232, 240; VanderKam, “Book of Luminaries,” 367; Reed, “Enoch, Eden.”

¹⁸ I.e., demonology and angelology as thus distinct from demon-belief and angel-belief; see Chapter 1. See also below on my choice of the term “beginnings,” which signals my concern to avoid the assumptions and valuations associated with the quest for a singular point of “origin”; Said, *Beginnings*, xvii; Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 323–326.

¹⁹ Olyan, *Thousand Thousands*, 18. ²⁰ Ben-Amos, “On Demons,” 30.

²¹ On this allusiveness and its effects see further Chapter 1.

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of Jewish literary interest in angels and demons is one of the most striking intellectual shifts during these politically turbulent and culturally creative centuries, and its products proved foundational for later reflection about divinity, the cosmos, and the human condition within Judaism and Christianity alike.

In past research on Second Temple Judaism, this development was studied in retrospective terms, largely through the lens of Christian categories. Loren Stuckenbruck and Wendy North, for instance, have noted the long-standing effects of the model associated with Wilhelm Bousset (1865–1920) whereby post-exilic Judaism has been characterized as “a religious environment in which the strict monotheism of the Old Testament prophets (and Jesus himself) had been significantly weakened,” due to “(a) a growing interest in angels. . . , (b) the rise of dualism, marked by increasingly concern with demonology, and (c) a belief in divine ‘hypostates.’”²² This model jars with much of our evidence for Second Temple Judaism but has been influential nonetheless, in part due to its resonance with Christian representations of the Judaism of Jesus’ time as if a corrupted form of the piety and prophecy of ancient Israel. Among the enduring results was the scholarly tendency to treat the rise of angelology and demonology as emblematic of a purported decline in the vitality of Judaism in the period between the Exile and the life of Jesus.²³

Already in the early twentieth century, Bousset’s model was critiqued for its supersessionism. Even his critics, however, followed his assessment of angelology and demonology as essentially incompatible with monotheism and, hence, only possible within denigrated forms of Judaism, ailing from divine alienation or infected by foreign influence. When George Foot Moore (1851–1931) sought to recuperate Second Temple Judaism, for instance, he did so by rejecting “pseudepigrapha” as unrepresentative – and precisely on the grounds of their interests in angels and demons.²⁴ Bousset’s notions of

²² Stuckenbruck and North, *Early Christian and Jewish Monotheism*, 5–9, quote at 6. For critiques of Bousset’s notion of a pre-Christian Jewish “angel cult,” see also Hurtado, *One God*, 22–35; Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 51–149.

²³ Bousset was not wholly original in this regard, but his account in *Die Religion des Judentums* (esp. 302–357) proved influential in spreading such views, especially in scholarship on the NT. On the history of research – and its echoes into the present day – see Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 5–7; Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 8–12.

²⁴ e.g., Moore, “Intermediaries.” In effect, Moore counters Bousset’s ideas by refracting Second Temple Judaism through yet another, later, lens and claiming Rabbinic sources as the crux of a timelessly normative Judaism from which “pseudepigrapha” (and earliest Christianity) are categorically excluded.

post-exilic decline helped to naturalize the marginalization of Second Temple Judaism as merely “intertestamental” in import, and Moore’s critique further reinscribed the denigration of demonology, angelology, and “pseudepigrapha.”²⁵ For much of the twentieth century, the literature of Second Temple Judaism was read as epilogue to the story of ancient Israel or as preface to the drama of Christian Origins, but rarely valued or studied for its own sake. The influential innovations in demonology and angelology during this period were either denigrated or downplayed.

Since the late twentieth century, explicitly supersessionist approaches to Second Temple Judaism have been increasingly eschewed even in New Testament Studies, and the study of “pseudepigrapha” has been further integrated into Jewish Studies, especially in relation to the history of biblical exegesis.²⁶ Nevertheless, lingering traces of older biases continue to reverberate – perhaps particularly in the treatment of angels and demons.²⁷ Elements of Bousset’s model still echo, for instance, in the common tendency to explain the Second Temple interest in angels as compensatory for Jewish feelings of “distance” from God after the Exile.²⁸ Furthermore, the angelology and demonology of Second Temple Judaism are still primarily construed in terms of Christian categories – and, hence, typically with a focus on abstract concepts retrojected from later theological debates about topics like monotheism, theodicy, or Christology.²⁹ For the most part, research on demons and angels in Second Temple Judaism remains framed and justified primarily with

²⁵ Even Louis Ginzberg (1873–1953) – whose *Legends of the Jews* did so much to lay the groundwork for integrating “pseudepigrapha” into Jewish intellectual history – similarly insisted that “in the appreciation of Jewish legends, it is the Rabbinic writers who should form the point of departure, and not the pseudepigrapha” (I.xxvii). In doing so, moreover, he relegated “pseudepigrapha” to Christianity: “The pseudepigrapha originated in circles that harbored the germs from which Christianity developed later on. The Church could thus appropriate them as her own with just reason” (I.xxvii).

²⁶ The latter is especially due to the influence of James Kugel; see esp. his magisterial synthesis in *Traditions of the Bible*.

²⁷ For surveys of the relevant history of research, see Olyan, *Thousand Thousands*, 2–9; Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 5–14; Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 8–25; Reynolds, “Understanding the Demonologies.”

²⁸ Recent examples include Burkes, *God, Self, and Death*, 15–17; Moss, *Other Christs*, 113–114, 255–256.

²⁹ Research on intermediate spirits in late antique literature, by contrast, tends to focus on the social functions of discourse about angels and demons, exploring the ramifications for religious self-fashioning and communal identities in specific historical and local settings; e.g., Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk*; Kalleres, *City of Demons*; Muehlberger, *Angels*; Rosen-Zvi, *Demonic Desires*; Ahuvia, “Israel Among the Angels”; Ronis, “Do Not Go Out”; Ronis, “Intermediary Beings.”

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reference to so-called intertestamental trajectories, connecting the dots between Hebrew Bible and New Testament.³⁰ And even when these traditions are studied apart from the analytical framework of Christian biblical canons, it remains common to bring diachronic perspectives to bear on “pseudepigrapha,” culling them for themes or motifs to compare with what came after.³¹ Partly as a result, the proliferation of detailed literary interest in intermediate spirits has been treated as epiphenomenal to developments that prove important for later periods – whether the origins of Christianity, the development of apocalyptic literature, the spread of Jewish sectarianism, or the prehistory of Jewish mysticism.³²

This book makes the case for a synchronic approach to understanding the beginnings of Jewish angelology and demonology, attending to the other shifts that we see within Jewish literature from the early Hellenistic age (333–167 BCE) and situating them in relation to broader cultural and intellectual changes both among Jews and across the Mediterranean world in the wake of the conquests of Alexander.³³ Accordingly, I here

³⁰ On “the persistence of the Bible as an anachronistic structuring principle for the study of the period,” see Mroczek, *Literary Imagination*, 6.

³¹ This approach has much value for highlighting the rich afterlives of Second Temple traditions (e.g., Bernstein, “Angels at the Aqedah”; Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*; Orlov, *Dark Mirrors*; Poirier, *Tongues of Angels*; Reed, *Fallen Angels*) – not least because elements from the earliest “pseudepigrapha” survived in later traditions most persistently and pervasively in the forms of motifs. My suggestion here is that something may be lost when we study them only or primarily in this atomized fashion. For a sense of how and why such ideas crystallized in such forms in the first place, rather, it is pressing to understand how they function in their earliest known contexts as well. Throughout the present study, thus, I draw upon – and take inspiration from – more focused literary studies such as Dimant, “Sons of Heaven”; Hanneken, “Angels and Demons”; Najman, “Interpretation”; Najman, “Angels at Sinai”; Stuckenbruck, “Angels and Giants”; VanderKam, “Angel of the Presence”; VanderKam, “Putative Author”; VanderKam, “Angel Story”; VanderKam, “Demons in the Book of Jubilees.”

³² Influential examples include Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*; Elior, *Three Temples*; Alexander, “What Happened to the Jewish Priesthood.” For critiques and alternates, see Himmelfarb, “Heavenly Ascent”; Himmelfarb, “Merkavah Mysticism since Scholem”; Swartz, “Dead Sea Scrolls”; Stern, “Rachel Elior on Ancient Jewish Calendars”; Boustan, “Rabbanization”; Schäfer, *Origins of Jewish Mysticism*.

³³ Among Classicists, it is conventional to refer to the “Hellenistic period” as 333–30 or 323–30 BCE – that is, spanning the time from the conquests or death of Alexander to the fall of the last surviving dynasty of his successors (i.e., the Ptolemies) to Rome. Here, I use “early Hellenistic age” to denote the first part of this period (i.e., 333–167 BCE), especially as seen from the perspective of our Jewish sources, for which the Maccabean uprising against the Seleucids (ca. 167–164 BCE) and subsequent reestablishment of native rule are major landmarks. I use this terminology in part to signal my interest in recovering neglected pre-Maccabean perspectives (see further below), and in part to resist the conventional usage of “Greco-Roman” in Biblical Studies and Jewish Studies to

experiment instead with more integrative interpretations that interweave literary analysis and cultural history through attention to the social practices and settings of writing, reading, and teaching, on the one hand, and to the cultural correlates, contexts, and consequences of the classification of knowledge, on the other. In the process, I attempt to bring new questions and intertexts to much-studied “pseudepigrapha” like the *Book of the Watchers* and *Jubilees*, in the hopes of uncovering overlooked factors in the seemingly sudden explosion of intensive interest in angels and demons in Second Temple times.

Rather than attempting to add to the splendid wealth of philological, exegetical, and theological studies of Jewish traditions about angels and demons,³⁴ this book tackles the challenge of situating the beginnings of Jewish angelology and demonology within its specific synchronic cultural contexts, seeking to uncover its connections to concurrent shifts in the textualization of knowledge. In this respect, I attempt a “cultural history of literature” in the sense practiced by Classicists like Tim Whitmarsh, “focus[ing] upon the role of texts . . . not just as ‘reflections’ of history, but as active participants in the struggle to define and popularize certain perceptions of the current state of that society.”³⁵ Accordingly, throughout this book, I am less concerned with what lies *behind* our texts

conflate Ptolemaic, Seleucid, and Roman periods and cultures (see further Reed and Dohrmann, “Rethinking Romanness”).

³⁴ The study of Second Temple traditions about angels and demons in relation to the exegesis of Genesis and other books of the Hebrew Bible has been a particularly vital area of research. For an important precedent, see Olyan, *Thousand Thousands*, and for insightful recent examples see Wright, *Origin of Evil Spirits*; von Heijne, *Messenger of the Lord*. The investigation of angels in relation to “monotheism” and mediation, and the investigation of demons in relation to “dualism” and theodicy, both continue to bear fruit as well – e.g., Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate*; Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy*; Stuckenbruck, “Angels and God”; Stuckenbruck, “Interiorization of Dualism.” For ancient Jewish approaches to the problem of evil, see Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, surveying the relevant Second Temple traditions, and Rosen-Zvi, *Demonic Desires*, tracing trajectories forward into Late Antiquity.

³⁵ Whitmarsh, *Ancient Greek Literature*, 6, further stressing that texts “are not second-order ‘evidence’ for society; they are primary building-blocks of that society, as it is experienced and understood by its members.” In Whitmarsh’s articulation, a “cultural history of Greek texts” ideally includes the “various ways that Greeks themselves narrated their own literary history, and the role of the archive in maintaining and disseminating those narratives” – not least because the archive is shaped during centuries when “Greek identity was increasingly bound up with the study of literature” (22). Here too, I attempt a cultural history of literature precisely because of my focus on a period in which the Jewish archive was reshaped and in which textuality became more explicitly tied to Jewishness; see esp. Chapter 2.

(whether in the sense of constituent sources, exegetical logics, or hidden authorial motives) and more concerned with what is achieved *by* and *with* practices of textualizing, organizing, packaging, and transmitting knowledge.³⁶ I approach the literary data, not as windows onto beliefs, but rather as evidence for practices of writing and reading as well as sites of scribal expertise.³⁷ Consequently, I focus on the meanings made by the form, selectivity, rhetoric, and authorizing claims of the early “pseudepigrapha” and related Dead Sea Scrolls in which we see the emergence of explicit and systematic Jewish reflection on angels and demons. To do so – I suggest – is to shed light on the making of Jewish angelology and demonology through anthological and other scribal practices with parallels across the Mediterranean world in the third and early second centuries BCE.

Accordingly, throughout this book, I resist framing my analysis of the rise of Jewish literary interest in angels and demons in terms of a quest for one moment of “origins” or “invention.” Instead, I follow what Edward Said posits as a productive shift toward a concern with “beginning” as “an activity which ultimately implies return and repetition rather than simple linear accomplishment”:

... whereas origins are divine ... a beginning not only creates but is its own method because it has intention. In short, beginning is making or producing difference; but—and here is the great fascination in the subject—difference which is the result of combining the already-familiar with the fertile novelty of human work in language.³⁸

For analyzing Jewish angelology and demonology, this sense of “beginning” proves apt inasmuch as it allows for the dynamics of cultural change produced *from within* continuity, such as by collecting, recontextualizing, and reconfiguring earlier received traditions. Such coupling of change with continuity is familiar to scholars of Second Temple Judaism in relation to biblical exegesis. As Mark Smith reminds us, however, it is found already in “the Bible’s presentation of history,” which is best understood “not only as the record of Israel’s past or as literary

³⁶ For a similar approach with respect to biblical poetry, see Vayntrub, *Beyond Orality*, there stressing the degree to which past research “focused on reconstructing the history of the text’s development, and seeking it in its earliest original form, risks obscuring claims encoded in the text’s very arrangement” (4).

³⁷ My sense of “scribe” here is akin to that recently articulated by Daniel Pioske, that is, as “artisans trained in the technologies of textuality” and who “generated, copied, and maintained texts held in common over time”; *Memory in a Time of Prose*, 4.

³⁸ Said, *Beginnings*, xvii.