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Article

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Bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume

CSCO Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1903ff.
EMML Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
OrChr Oriens Christianus, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
PO Patrologia Orientalis, 1903ff.
RRALm Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche, Roma, 1892ff.
SAe Scriptores Aethiopiacci.
The Term 'ālam in 1 Enoch

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Introduction

This paper deals briefly with the significance of the term 'ālam in 1 Enoch. Among the various words for time such as gizē, zaman or 'slat, 'ālam takes a prominent place in 1 Enoch both for its frequency and diversity of meaning. A statistical examination based on Flemming’s edition of 1 Enoch shows that the Go'az word 'ālam is mentioned some hundred and seventy-eight times. This, by far, supersedes the other significant words for time in 1 Enoch, except for the term 'slat. The term 'ālam alone, without any preposition, is attested seventy-two times, whereas itizer 3 months lam occurs seventy-four times and 3 months lam six times. As for ba'ālam, za'ālam, waba'ālam and zaba'ālam, they are each mentioned once in 1 Enoch. As part of construct state, la'ālama occurs twenty-two times. It is hoped to show that denotations of ‘remotest time’, ‘eternity’, ‘perpetuity’ and ‘duration of time’, as scholars suggest for the Hebrew cognate 'olam, or the Greek aion, are indeed perceptible throughout the text of 1 Enoch. The range of meanings can be determined through the word’s usage in its immediate context.

Temporal/Spatial meaning

Although 'ālam in 1 Enoch has mainly a temporal dimension one can observe a spatial one too, simply meaning ‘world’, as in Ps 24:1. However, the temporal connotation of 'ālam by far outnumbers the spatial one. The latter is in fact scarce, perhaps with a maximum of three references. In 1 En 20:4, the

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1 For the various meanings of the term 'ālam in Ethiopic literature, see Dillmann 1865, 951–952, Kidana Wald Kafle 1956, 696–697.
2 For examples of the Aramaic term 'lm attested in the Qumran fragments, see 4QEn° I ii: 11 (1 En 5:1); 4QEn° I i: 30 (1 En 5:1); 4QEn° I ii: 14 (1 En 9:4); 4QEn° I v: 1 (1 En 10:13); 4QEn° I vi: 14 (1 En 14:5); 4QEn° I vii: 23 (1 En 91:15); see Milik 1976, 146, 171, 185, 189, 193, 266. See also Stuckenbruck 1990, 32. Given that the Greek fragments of 1 Enoch contain many more verses than the Aramaic ones, it is possible to make a better comparison between the Ethiopic 'ālam and the Greek equivalent aion or any other related Greek word in 1 Enoch; for the Greek data, see Black 1970.
angel Raguel will take vengeance on the ‘world’ and the luminaries. Here, ‘alach does not have a temporal association, since vengeance on ‘eternity’ would be meaningless, at least from the perspective of an archangel.

*‘Alam qualifying heaven*

Heaven is described as ‘high’, ‘holy’ and ‘eternal’ in 1En 15:3. According to 1En 12:4, God sends Enoch to the watchers who, after descending to the earth, try in vain to return to heaven. Something worse awaits them according to the divine decree. They are guilty of forsaking heaven, that is, an eternal holy place in order to have sexual union with women. It is not easy to understand the meaning of ‘eternal secrets’ revealed to human beings by Azazel. Perhaps, the answer is in the details given in 1En 9:6 itself. The secrets are made in heaven. They are eternal in the sense that they are created in heaven and are not meant for the earth.

According to Isa 57:15, God ‘inhabits eternity’. Furthermore, this verse, with two interesting attributes, namely height and holiness, may draw our attention to the association between eternity and God’s transcendence; the divine and heavenly secrets are beyond human reach. The epithets of heaven, in 1En 15:3, and the epithets of God, in Isa 57:15, match in an interesting manner. The qualities of God and of heaven are interchangeable. In the book of Maccabees the term ‘heaven’ is used to mean God. The text gives unambiguous examples of such a substitution: ‘May Heaven preserve us from forsaking the Law and its observances’ (1Ma 2:21; cf. also 1Ma 3:18.19; 3:60; 4:10; 4:24; 4:55; 9:46; 12:15; 16:3; 2Ma 3:15; 7:11; 8:20; 9:4).

*‘Alam qualifying God*

According to 1En 1:4, the term ‘alach is attested and qualifies God who will ‘tread upon Mount Sinai, and will appear with his host’. The construct form ‘Amalak ‘alach here shows that the dependent word (eternity) signifies a property of the word ‘God’. It is a genitive of ‘quality’. One finds an analogous expression in 1En 58: 4, literally ‘Lord of Eternity’ and meaning ‘Eternal’ Lord. The same genitive relation is used in 1En 25:3, 5, 7 in order to qual-

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3 Another reference is found in 1En 41:4: ‘the beginning of the world’. See also 1En 58:4, where there is ambiguity between a spatial and a temporal meaning: ‘the Lord of the world’ or ‘the Lord of Eternity’.

4 In some texts such as Ps 73:9; Job 20:27; Dan 4:23, heaven stands for God; cf. Schoenborn 1990, 543.

5 Dillmann 1907, 462.

ify God as ‘Eternal King’. Nevertheless, instead of הָגוּש הָעָלָם, the text reads הַגוּש הָעָלָם. A similar expression, from the grammatical point of view, is found in Isa 40:28, where the Lord is ‘the everlasting God’ (הֵאלַּ֣ה הָעָלָם). The Go’sz term employed here is הָעָלָם, literally ‘of eternity’, just like the Greek τοῦ αἰώνος. Gen 21:33 has the same attribute הָעָלָם for God (אֶל הָעָלָם; אֶלְיִּ֣ב הָעָלָם). Similarly, according to 1En 75:3, God’s glory is eternal (אֵלְיִּ֣ב הָעָלָם).7

‘ָֽלָם qualifying the life of angels

The life of the angels is qualified by eternity and immortality in 1En 15:6:

But you formerly were spiritual, living an eternal, immortal life for all the generations of the world.

Here, one finds a very paradoxical situation, in which those who retain the characteristics of eternity and immortality behave as if they were non-eternal and mortal. And this is condemned by God. The verse is in fact bad news addressed to the fallen angels, who by coming down to earth, in order to commit sin, lost an ‘immortal and eternal’ life. Other angels, commissioned by God, come down to Earth without the danger of losing their spiritual and eternal heaven. Thus, Raphael, in 1En 10:4, is told to go down and bind Azazel.

Qualities of eternal life

Eternal life is expressed by eternal goodness and mercy in 1En 92:3.8 Eternal peace is depicted even more richly as the main feature of eternal life. The future age is characterized by peace (cf. 1En 1:8), implying the present age’s lack of harmony. 1Enoch exemplifies this well through the chaotic situations caused by the fallen angels. However, not everybody will enjoy peace in the future; the transgressor and the proud-hearted who spoke against God will be deprived of peace (1En 5:4). On the other hand, the chosen will relish light, joy and peace (1En 5:7).9 The peace they enjoy is eternal (1En 5:9). Peace and truth, united, will last forever according to 1En 11:2.10 1En

7 For ‘eternal king of glory’ see 1En 81:3. For the genitive relation with the use of a number of prepositions, see Dillmann 1907, 68–70.
8 This is accompanied by the elimination of sin and evil in 1En 92:5. According to Nickelsburg (2001, 433), ‘eternal’ mercy means ‘permanent’ mercy. For a commentary of these verses, see Stuckenbruck 2007, 227–231.
9 The text adds that the chosen will inherit the earth too, reflecting an eschatology probably different from the other sections of 1Enoch.
10 The expressions ‘days of eternity’ (eternal days) and ‘generations of eternity’ (eternal generations) are quite noteworthy.
71:15 refers to the future age, qualified by peace in particular and with a remarkable emphasis on its permanence, through a threefold mentioning of the term ‘ָלָם: la ָלָם wálá ָלָם ָלָם.’

‘ָל ת expressing the most distant time

Although ‘ָל ת qualifies mainly otherworldly realities, there are also earthly ones qualified by the term eternity or eternal. In 1 En 69:9, an evil angel has taught human beings the art of writing since remostest time (lit. from eternity to eternity). Similarly, with the same usage, old time is evoked in connection with the creation of the sea, the deep, the movement of the sun and the moon (1 En 69:19–20). In 1 En 70:4, Enoch, taken to heaven, sees the dwelling place of the first fathers and the righteous. Enoch affirms that the latter dwell in that place since time immemorial (וְָל ת).

Perpetual time could signify a period of time which lasts in duration within the large framework of the present age. For instance, references to situations taking place during life on earth or before the new earth fit into this category. Accordingly, in 1 En 10:5, Azazel (cf. 1 En 10:4) should be imprisoned in a dark place, ‘forever’ (la ָל ת). Now it is clear from 1 En 10:6, that the imprisonment will last until the last judgement. In other words, the time during which Azazel will be imprisoned has a beginning and an end. The imprisonment, it is true, engages most of the present age. Azazel was imprisoned immediately after the fall of angels. He would come out from prison at the last judgement, and would be thrown into an abyss of fire (cf. 1 En 10:13). In other words, there is a time limit for the sequestration. Thus the expression la ָל ת is not ‘without end’; the imprisonment stops at the moment of the last judgement. The same meaning of ָל ת is perhaps implied in 1 En 21:10, in connection with the prison of angels, assuming that a worse situation awaits them after the last judgement.

In 1 En 12:6, it is stated that the watchers will lament over the death of their offspring caused by the flood. Their lament and petition would be ‘forever’, la ָל ת. Now, one might wonder whether their lament would be without end since they themselves will be in darkness and then in eternal fire. Perhaps it means that they will mourn the death of their offspring for a long period of time, i.e. their suffering lasts a long time. Strictly speaking, imprisonment and lamenting the death of one’s offspring (1 En 12:6) are painful experiences.

However, 1 Enoch does not qualify human suffering as something everlasting. One might observe a contrast between the suffering of human beings in

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12 Here la ָל ת seems to have the meaning ‘eternal’ or ‘without end’.
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the present age and that of the fallen angels. To present the suffering of human beings as perpetual (laʾālam) would be too pessimistic. It would fill human life with despair. On the other hand, to announce the day of the last judgement as something which is at hand, is to give hope, and to affirm that the suffering of innocent humans will soon be brought to a close.

Even in the case of an otherworldly reality, one can distinguish between Eternity as an attribute of God and eternity in reference to the life of angels. According to 1 En 14:1, the watchers are ‘from Eternity’ (ʾmʾālam). Now, given that they are created, ‘Eternity’, with regard to the ‘life span’ of the watchers, means remotest time and not time without beginning.

One finds comparable usages in biblical texts. Jenni affirms that ‘eternity’ would mean a ‘most distant time, whether with regard to the past, to the future or to both’.13 Cypress and myrtle become eternal monuments for God in Isa 55:3. That probably does not mean that the plants will never die. Watts affirms that ‘eternal’ in Isa 55:3 does not mean ‘the ‘forever’ of a different worldview’.14 This remark presupposes an equivocal use of the term ‘eternal’. When it comes to earthly things, eternal connotes a very long period but does not necessarily imply an era without end, an infinite time. Thus, according to 1 En 99:2, there is a law or a covenant (ʾsrʾāt) that should not be altered or distorted, and qualified as eternal.15 God has an ‘eternal covenant’ with every living creature following the flood (Gen 9:16). Keeping the Sabbath is an ‘eternal covenant’ (Ex 31:16). Perhaps in connection with 1 En 99:2, 1 En 99:14 mentions an ‘eternal inheritance of fathers’.16 The plant of righteousness which is given an eternal attribution, in 1 En 93:10, is a metaphor for a group of people (Israel), i.e. for an entity on earth. The events connected with the expression concern the present age and not the future one, i.e. the one following the last judgement.

ʿĀlam meaning ‘forever without end’

There are examples in 1 Enoch where laʾālam may mean absence of an end as expected from God ‘who lives forever’ in 1 En 5:1. Several doxologies ending with the expression ‘forever’ or ‘for ever and ever’, frequently found

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14 Watts 2005, 819.
16 Both distant past or distant future, including the present time, are suggested as possible explanations of the attribute ‘eternal’ in 1 En 99:14 by Stuckenbruck 2007, 422–423.
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in the *Book of Parables* (1En 37–71) denote perpetuity. The elect and the chosen will dwell with the Son of Man, to eat, to lie down and to rise up perpetually (*laʾālām ʾālām*, cf. 1En 62:14).

In contrast with the favourable future just mentioned, 1En 14:5 affirms the hopeless situation of the fallen angels:

> And from now on you will not ascend into heaven for all eternity, and it has been decreed that you are to be bound in the earth for all the days of eternity.

Here, ‘For all eternity’ (*ʾaskǝ kʷallu ʾālām*) means that the angels will never be able to ascend into heaven.

Perpetuity is expressed also in terms of ‘eternal judgement’ related in the *Apocalypse of Weeks*; 1En 91:15 finishes the narration of the great scheme of history with an ‘eternal judgement’, supposed to take place after a number of previous judgements on earth. It is clear here that ‘eternal’ does not signify duration in time; it is not about a judgement that does not last, rather it means a final judgement, after which there is no further need for judgements.\(^\text{19}\)

**Conclusion**

While the spatial connotation of the term ʾālām in 1En is poorly attested, the large majority of ʾālām’s usage is temporal. Accordingly, any thorough analysis of the vocabulary of time \(^\text{20}\) in 1Enoch cannot neglect the term ʾālām.

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17 These are abundantly attested in the *Book of Parables*; cf. 1En 49:1 where glory will not fail before God for ever and ever; 1En 49:2: ‘his glory is for ever and ever’; 1En 61:11: ‘Blessed is he, and blessed be the name of the Lord of Spirits for ever and ever’; 1En 61:12: ‘and all flesh which beyond its power will praise and bless your name for ever and ever’.  
18 Stuckenbruck says: ‘The judgment is “eternal” because it marks the complete, unrepeatably defeat of evil’; Stuckenbruck 2007, 148; cf. 1En 104:5.  
19 According to Angeles, time may have the following definitions: ‘that in which events are distinguishable in terms of the relations of before and after, beginning and end’; Angeles explains ‘time’ as ‘the irreversible succession of instants (events, segments, points, intervals and durations) conceived of as a linear progression or only as a directional line’. This definition can be useful for the examination of 1Enoch’s eschatology. The *Eschaton* or the End, of which we have several references in 1Enoch, comes after the present time. It is also interesting to see the terms that express duration in 1Enoch. ‘Periodisation’ is one feature in several parts of the book. Angeles adds: ‘a measure of change, or change itself observed, as in the positional change of the sun or the hands of a clock, or the qualitative change of the colour, of an object or sharpness of a sound or sight. Such changes are often used as a reference for comparison to other changes; for example, the cycle of the moon is called a month, and is used as a
Without being exhaustive, this paper has shown that ‘ālam has been used to qualify the spiritual heaven, to portray God and the angels, to illustrate the otherworldly reality. Heavenly secrets too are given the attribute ‘eternal’. The doxologies, abundant in the Book of Parables, end with the expression la’ālam, often reflecting an otherworldly context. But, the term ‘ālam is also used to describe these worldly realities, especially to express the remotest time, or a long duration in the future. The term has thus served to describe the fallen angels’ period of punishment and painful imprisonment before the last judgement. Similarly, in the expressions ‘eternal law’, ‘eternal plant of righteousness’ and ‘eternal inheritance’, all entities belong to this world. The expression ‘Eternal judgement’ has been used to mean final, complete and irrevocable judgement. One therefore needs to see the attribute ‘eternal’ case by case in order to discern the nuances and decide on the meaning that best fits the immediate context. The rich range of meanings of ‘ālam, recurring in an impressive manner, in 1Enoch, would be even better appreciated in a more complete philological study.

References

— and J.C. Vanderkam 2012. 1 Enoch 1, a Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82, Hermeneia Series (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2012).

measure of Time to compare to the cycle of light and darkness we call a day’; this time, which can be called cosmological time, is well described in the Astronomical section of 1 Enoch (72–82); see Angeles 1992, 313.
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Summary

In 1 Enoch, the term ‘ālam offers various meanings, most of which are temporal. It qualifies God as well as heaven. It also expresses the type of angelic life in heaven. With regard to life on earth, ‘ālam signifies the most distant past and the most distant future. It also refers to things that will have a long duration, yet not without limit, like the suffering of fallen angels. In contrast human suffering on earth is never associated with an eternal one.