"Seal of Resemblance, Full of Wisdom, and Perfect in Beauty": The Enoch/Meṭaṭron Narrative of *3 Enoch* and Ezekiel 28

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Introduction

One of the most intriguing narratives in the Hekhalot and Merkavah (HM) literature is the account of Enoch/Meṭaṭron, included in an elaborated form in *3 Enoch*.[1] This

[1]For the text of *3 Enoch*, see Peter Schäfer, ed., *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (in collaboration with M. Schlüter and H. G. von Mutius; TSAJ 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1981) §§1–80; the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative is in §§1–20. A German translation of *3 Enoch* with text-critical notes has been provided by Peter Schäfer and Klaus Herrmann, *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur* (4 vols.; TSAJ 46; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995) 1:1–82. The English translation of *3 Enoch* used here is that of Philip S. Alexander, "3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch," *OTP* 1:223–315; another English translation may be found in Hugo Odeberg, *The Hebrew Book of Enoch or Third Enoch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928; repr., New York: Ktav, 1973). On *3 Enoch* in the context of the HM literature, see Alexander, "3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch"; idem, "The Historical Setting of the Hebrew Book of Enoch," *JJS* 28 (1977) 156–80; Vita Daphna Arbel, *Beholders of Divine Secrets: Mysticism and Myth in the Hekhalot and Merkavah Literature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003) 97–102; Rachel Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (trans. David Louvish; Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004); Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (AGJU 14; Leiden: Brill, 1980) 191–208; Nathaniel Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate: Angelic Vice Regency in Late Antiquity* (Brill's Series in Jewish Studies 22; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 27–77; David J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision* (TSAJ 16; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988) esp. chap. 9; Moshe Idel, "Enoch Is Meṭaṭron," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6:1–2 (1987) 151–70 [Hebrew]; Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Meṭaṭron Tradition* (TSAJ 107; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005) 86–147; Peter Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism* (trans. A. Pomerance; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 123–38; Gershom G. Scholem, *Major Trends in*

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version, attributed to the fifth or sixth century C.E., draws together threads inherited from a variety of sources.[2] These include, for example, "angel of the Lord" traditions (e.g., Exod 23:20–21, *b. Sanh.* 38b, *Apocalypse of Abraham*), Enochic material found in *1 Enoch* and *2 Enoch*, and traditions of divinized angelomorphic humans and exalted figures found in Daniel 7 as well as in a host of pseudepigraphic sources (e.g., *T. Levi*, *Ascen. Isa.* 6–11, and *Apoc. Ab.* 15–19). They include, as well, traditions found in several Qumran texts (e.g., 4QShirShabb, 11QMelch), talmudic and midrashic polemics against beliefs in a second deity or an angelic vice-regent (e.g., *b. Ḥag.* 14a; *b. Sanh.* 38b), traditions of Meṭaṭron, and uncensored, nontalmudic speculation concerning the angel Meṭaṭron as an enthroned vice-regent in heaven.[3]

Yet, unlike these traditions, which either promote the exalted, divine-like status of Enoch and other humans or negate such an option (as in the case of the demoted Meṭaṭron), the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative of *3 Enoch* presents a dialectical view of both the exaltation and the demotion of Enoch/Meṭaṭron.[4] The narrative recounts in detail the translation of the human Enoch, son of Jared, from the earthly to the celestial sphere, his elevation, and his transformation into Meṭaṭron, the heavenly divine being who is second only to God. The presentation seems to support the notion of human exaltation and the option of a divine humanity. At the same time, however, the narrative renounces the crossing of boundaries between human and

Jewish Mysticism (3d ed.; New York: Schocken, 1954); idem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism and Talmudic Tradition* (2d ed.; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1965) 43–55.

[2]On *3 Enoch* and its date, language, context, and links to former traditions, see Odeberg, *Hebrew Book of Enoch*; Alexander, "3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch," 223–54; idem, "The Historical Setting"; idem, "3 Enoch and the Talmud," *JSJ* 18 (1987) 40–68; C. R. A. Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition," *JJS* 43 (1992) 1–31; idem, "Hekhalot Literature and Talmudic Tradition: Alexander's Three Test Cases," *JSJ* 22 (1991) 1–39.

[3]For discussions of specific traditions and references, see Alexander, "The Historical Setting"; Martin Samuel Cohen, *The Shiur Qomah: Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983) 135–36; John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1984) 152–54; Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate*, 28–77; Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 420–26; Rachel Elior, *Temple and Chariot, Priests and Angels: Sanctuary and Heavenly Sanctuaries in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2002) 248–61 [Hebrew]; Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Yehuda Liebes, *The Sin of Elisha: The Four Who Entered Paradise and the Nature of Talmudic Mysticism* (Jerusalem: Akademon, 1990) [Hebrew]; Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism"; idem, "Hekhalot Literature and Talmudic Tradition"; Odeberg, *Hebrew Book of Enoch*, 23–111; Orlov, *The Enoch-Meṭaṭron Tradition*, 1–208; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 67–70; idem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 50–51; Christopher Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study in Apocalypticism in Judaism and Early Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 94–113; Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (SJLA 25; Leiden: Brill, 1977) 60–73; idem, "The Risen Christ and the Angelic Mediator Figures in Light of Qumran," in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 302–28; Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Visions and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) 82–98.

[4]The early identification between Enoch and Meṭaṭron traditions is found in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to Gen 5:24.

divine by emphasizing the subordinate status of Enoch/Meṭaṭron as well as his subsequent demotion and overthrow from his former position of glory and power.

In its present form, the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative of *3 Enoch* cannot, in my view, be adequately explained by focusing on what it discloses about either Enoch's exaltation or Meṭaṭron's demotion. Instead, its integration of these two notions should be considered highly significant. This complex theology/anthropology in the late version of *3 Enoch*, one that both promotes and restricts the notion of a divine humanity, will be the focus of this study.

After a brief discussion of this dialectical presentation in the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative, this paper will address two major issues. It will suggest that the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative of *3 Enoch* corresponds to a biblical model in which the notions of both approving and prohibiting the concept of a divine humanity are juxtaposed. These notions are found in traditions of primal divine-human figures on which the compilers of the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative may have drawn in order to express their own theological and anthropological concerns. Ezekiel 28 will be examined as a key example of this model. The paper will then discuss possible motivations for evoking and reconceptualizing this ancient biblical model in the context of *3 Enoch*, written at a much later time, and its significance in the new visionary context of HM mysticism.

The Enoch/Meṭaṭron Narrative of *3 Enoch*: A Dialectic of Exaltation and Demotion

Third Enoch opens with an account of Rabbi Ishmael's visionary ascent to heaven and his encounter with Meṭaṭron, the supreme prince of the divine presence, who was sent to protect him from opposing angels. The depiction serves as an introduction to the equivocal Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative, which details the exaltation of the divine-human figure Enoch/Meṭaṭron and his eventual demotion. Meṭaṭron, as he himself attests, is in fact Enoch, the son of Jared, mentioned in Gen 5:24, whom God translated from earth to heaven and gradually transformed from a human into a divine being. As part of his metamorphosis Enoch underwent a gigantic enlargement, was endowed with wings, and became a glorious figure in the divine realm. He further experienced a fiery transformation which altered his entire being. Traditional emblems of stature, such as a throne, a crown, a robe, and the attribute of beauty, were also bestowed on him, confirming his elevated position as a lofty divine being.

Visual symbolism of tangible attributes is not the only method applied in *3 Enoch* to depict Enoch/Meṭaṭron's acquired superhuman identity. Intangible qualities that are bestowed upon him, including divine wisdom, knowledge, and superior understanding, further denote his quasi-divine characteristics. His title, "the lesser YHWH," serves a similar purpose. Such qualities allow Enoch/Meṭaṭron to transcend his humanity and, in turn, to play a significant part in both the terrestrial and celestial worlds. Invested with divine attributes, the human Enoch becomes

the divine prince Meṭaṭron, who is unmistakably comparable to God, resembling him in appearance, essence, characteristics, and standing.[5]

This notion, namely, that a human being can transcend his humanity, attain a divine identity, and partake in the celestial realm, corresponds to well-known traditions within the broader setting of ancient Judaism, as scholars have observed. Several Jewish literary traditions, according to their own context, depict righteous human individuals as divine. These include figures such as Moses, Noah, patriarchs, kings, and high priests, as they are portrayed in pseudepigraphic, Samaritan, and Qumran texts.[6] *Third Enoch* seems to be in accord with such traditions. It uses an amplified language of exaltation, presenting the concept of a divine humanity as a legitimate and valid option, initiated by God. This tendency of *3 Enoch* is especially notable in comparison to Talmudic versions, as Morray-Jones has demonstrated. These versions minimize and guard against exalted human speculations, as several polemical traditions associated with Meṭaṭron indicate.[7]

Yet, while *3 Enoch* approves the notion of a divine humanity, it simultaneously restricts and limits this option. By introducing polemical traditions that are closely associated with the "two powers in heaven" debate,[8] the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative clearly incorporates into its theology/anthropology a concern with the supreme position of the one God. Moreover, it deals as well with a fundamental relation and distinction in the created order, namely, that between the human and the divine worlds, by presenting Enoch/Meṭaṭron's elevation as directly linked to his degradation. The two notions, exaltation and demotion, are interrelated and equally emphasized in this account, as narrative plot and imagery demonstrate. For example, when Elisha ben Avuya, known as ʾAḥer, comes on high to observe the vision of the Merkavah, he sees Enoch/Meṭaṭron enthroned in all his splendor.

[5]On Enoch's transformation, see Moshe Idel, "Enoch Is Meṭaṭron"; Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism," 7–27.

[6]See, for example, Jarl E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism* (WUNT 36; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985); idem, *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (NTOA 30; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995); J. H. Charlesworth, "The Portrayal of the Righteous as an Angel," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism* (ed. George W. E. Nickelsburg and John J. Collins; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980) 135–51; Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (AGJU 42; Leiden: Brill, 1998); Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 42; Leiden: Brill, 2002); Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism." See also references in studies mentioned in n. 3, above.

[7]Morray-Jones, "Hekhalot Literature and Talmudic Tradition," 32.

[8]Talmudic/midrashic literature deals very little with the figure of Enoch. Traditions of Meṭaṭron, however, are well known and are associated with polemic against a divine vice-regent. See Segal, *Two Powers*, 60–155; Ephraim E. Urbach, "The Traditions about Merkavah Mysticism in the Tannaitic Period," in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to Gershom G. Scholem* (ed. E. E. Urbach, R. J. Z. Werblowsky, and H. Wirshuvski; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967) 1–28 [Hebrew]; David J. Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (AOS 62; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1980) 94–95; Alexander, "3 Enoch and the Talmud," 40–68; Morray-Jones, "Hekhalot Literature and Talmudic Tradition," 6–32.

Assuming that he is equivalent to God, he thus concludes: "There are indeed two powers in heaven!" (*3 En.* 16:3).[9] Taking a position different from P. Alexander, C. Morray-Jones has asserted that the cause of ʾAḥer's fallacy in *3 Enoch* does not relate only to the fact that Meṭaṭron is seated on a heavenly throne. Instead, Meṭaṭron's godlike and glorious appearance as the enthroned "grand-vizier of heaven" is the basis of ʾAḥer's error.[10] ʾAḥer's mistake results in the demotion of Enoch/Meṭaṭron from his high position, in order to prevent the occurrence of similar fallacies in the future. According to God's command, Enoch/Meṭaṭron is punished with sixty lashes of fire and is forced to abandon the throne.

The narrative evidently presents an attempt to limit Enoch/Meṭaṭron's standing, to emphasize his subordinate position to God, and to accentuate God's unequaled sovereignty as the only power in heaven. Juxtaposed with an "open" theology/anthropology, which ratifies granting divine features to humans, the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative nonetheless rejects the breaching of the bounds between creator and creatures and undoubtedly expresses a concern about any overlap in identity between human beings and deity.

Endorsing speculations about the high rank of the divine-human Enoch/Meṭaṭron, while making an effort to limit them, this narrative seems to assert a composite, diversified conception: the notion of exalted and elevated humans is promoted, yet this possibility is restricted as well. In its present form, therefore, this narrative cannot be explained on the basis of what it communicates about either Enoch's exaltation or Meṭaṭron's demotion. The juxtaposition of both notions is indispensable to the Enoch/Meṭaṭron theology/anthropology, reflecting a significant binary focus. This concern is especially noticeable in light of other related traditions, which either absolutely support or unquestionably negate this idea of a divine humanity. The Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative presents an integrated theology/anthropology that affirms the notion of transcendent humanity but nonetheless limits and demarcates it within traditional boundaries of basic Jewish monotheistic views, emphasizing the existence of only "one power in heaven." This integration of contradictory notions raises questions related to both the manner in which specific conflicting traditions and themes were fused together and the inspiration for such cohesion. The following discussion treats these questions.

A Biblical Model of Exaltation and Demotion: Ezekiel 28

It has been suggested that the Enoch/Meṭaṭron account draws its material from apocalyptic, talmudic, and other sources, and combines them together in "a rather artificial way."[11] The structure and intricacy of the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative,

[9]A vast literature is available about ʾAḥer and his heresy, topics which are not included in this study. See Y. Liebes, *The Sin of Elisha*; Segal, *Two Powers*, 60–61.

[10]See Morray-Jones, "Hekhalot Literature and Talmudic Tradition," 25. Compare Alexander, "3 Enoch and the Talmud," 60–66.

[11]Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 191.

however, does not appear to be random. Instead, it reflects a careful attempt to juxtapose and link together two notably contradictory attitudes. Moreover, this presentation corresponds to an explicit, common biblical model in which two interrelated notions of allowing and precluding the concept of divine humanity play a meaningful role. These are expressed chiefly in biblical traditions of the primal divine-human, as Patrick D. Miller, for example, states:

> The line between that closeness to deity which is God's intention and a declaration of the high estate of humanity and that closeness to deity which is human arrogance and an attempt to claim all the prerogatives of deity is a very narrow one. One is an exaltation given by God in the creation, which in the context of the story is clearly set within certain limits; the other is a self-exaltation assumed or attempted by the creature in the face of the set limitations. . . . In a very real sense the whole narrative of the Primeval History flows out of this tension between being created like *ʾĕlōhîm* and seeking to become *ʾĕlōhîm*. One points to the human possibility; the other to its plight.[12]

Variants of the primal divine-human tradition are found in several sources of the Hebrew Bible in different manifestations and representations. Despite obvious differences among such diverse configurations of outlines and themes, several sources reveal a common conception of a primordial divine-human being who occupies a position between deity and humanity as a mediating or intermediary figure. This tradition expresses both positive and negative ideas about the primal divine-human figure.

As has been observed, primal human traditions, as part of a common system of symbols, are found in several biblical texts, such as Genesis 1–3, Ezek 28:1–10, Ezek 28:11–19, Job 15:7–9, Prov 8:22–31, and Psalms 8 and 82, both directly and indirectly.[13] As many examples in *3 Enoch* and other HM traditions indicate, deep knowledge of and proficiency in the Hebrew Bible were highly valued in

[12]Patrick D. Miller, Jr., *Genesis 1–11: Studies in Structure & Theme* (JSOTSup 8; Sheffield: JSOT, Dept. of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, 1978) 21–22.

[13]Critical studies of these texts as well as significant questions such as the roots, meanings, similarities and differences, and conceptual links among these primal human traditions have been investigated by biblical scholars from a variety of perspectives. See references to earlier studies and discussions in James Barr, "Thou Art the Cherub: Ezekiel 28.14 and the Post-Ezekiel Understanding of Gen 2–3," in *Priests, Prophets and Scribes* (ed. Eugene Ulrich et al.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) 213–23; Dexter E. Callender, Jr., *Adam in Myth and History: Ancient Israelite Perspectives on the Primal Human* (HSS 48; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2000); Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (trans. Cosslett Quin; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 392–95; Donald E. Gowan, *When Man Becomes God: Humanism and Hybris in the Old Testament* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1975); Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37* (AB 22A; New York: Doubleday, 1997) 579–93; Herbert G. May, "The King in the Garden of Eden," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage* (ed. Bernard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson; New York: Harper, 1962); Hugh R. Page, *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion: A Study of Its Reflexes in Ugaritic and Biblical Literature* (VTSup 65; Leiden: Brill, 1996); Kalman Yaron, "The Dirge Over the King of Tyre," *ASTI* 3 (1964) 45–49; Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48* (trans. J. D. Martin; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 81–95.

the circle of Merkavah seekers. It is quite possible, therefore, that the compilers of the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative interacted with the ancient biblical sources in an ongoing process of absorption and interchange. In such a process, biblical themes and traditions were absorbed and internalized, and, in turn, also inspired the construction of a new version of Enoch/Meṭaṭron, which both promotes and restricts the notion of a human transcendent position. This paper will proceed to focus on the paradigm of the primal divine-human in Ezekiel 28, on which the authors and redactors of *3 Enoch* may have drawn in order to structure and express their own traditions and categories of thoughts.

Applying royal and priestly imagery, Ezekiel 28 employs, in a historicized manner, themes rooted in several ancient mythological traditions.[14] On form-critical grounds the chapter is divided into two major units. The first unit, Ezek 28:1–10, is an announcement of judgment against the prince of Tyre. The reasons for the judgment are stated, followed by the actual announcement of judgment and the conclusion. The second unit, Ezek 28:11–19, is a lament (קִינָה) over the king of Tyre, which presents the reasons for the king's downfall; it too ends with an announcement of judgment. The relationship between the two units of Ezekiel 28 has been the focus of many studies, several of which suggest that both units relate to the same myth and feature the same primal human figure.[15] The first unit includes a general "thematic" presentation, while the second unit includes a more developed and detailed presentation and thus will be examined first.

Ezek 28:11–19

Several observations related to mythological aspects of Ezek 28:11–19 shed significant light on issues of principal concern for this investigation.[16] These issues are associated with a basic perspective which both affirms and restricts the notion of divine humanity, as well as with specific imagery and themes through which this notion is conveyed. These include the following elements:

[14]On links to Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, and parallel biblical mythological traditions, see Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 392–95; Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (VTSup 2; Leiden: Brill, 1955) 97–103; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 94.

[15]For discussion of form-critical treatments, see Robert R. Wilson, "The Death of the King of Tyre: The Editorial History of Ezekiel 28," in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (ed. John H. Marks and Robert M. Good; Guilford, Conn.: Four Quarters, 1987) 211–18. For a recent summary of scholarship on Ezekiel 28, see Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and Symbolism of the Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000) 332–35; Page, *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion*; May, "The King in the Garden of Eden"; John Van Seters, "The Creation of Man and the Creation of the King," *ZAW* 101 (1989) 335–39.

[16]For examples of mythological treatments, see Geo Widengren, "Early Jewish Myths and Their Interpretations," in *Myth, Ritual and Kingship: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Kingship in the Ancient Near East and Israel* (ed. S. H. Hooke; Oxford: Clarendon, 1958) 149–203; Julian Morgenstern, "The Mythological Background of Psalm 82," *HUCA* 14 (1939) 111–14. For discussion of Ezek 28:11–19 and further bibliography, see Callender, *Adam in Myth and History*, 87–135; Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 332–35; Page, *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion*, 148–58.

1) A mythological setting of the beginning.
2) A primal human figure who is exalted into a divine status. This figure is depicted also as a superior winged cherub with outstretched wings, whose exaltation involves the endowment of divine attributes and placement in the divine sphere.
3) A crisis related to the figure's elevated position.
4) Consequences involving expulsion from the divine location and demotion from former divine status.

Throughout Ezek 28:11–19 these motifs are expressed both explicitly and implicitly. I will examine each of them in turn.

1. Setting. The lament is placed in a primeval mythological setting, rather than in an actual historical time. In this context an elevated, primordial figure is portrayed, with whom the king of Tyre is ironically equated. The setting of primeval time is evoked by references to "Eden, the garden of God" (Ezek 28:13), an expression reminiscent of Genesis 2–3, as well as by indirect references to the creation of this figure by God at the beginning of time (Ezek 28:13, 15).[17]

2. An exalted divine-human figure. The presentation does not explicitly identify the primal figure to whom the king of Tyre is compared. This being is addressed as a cherub in Ezek 28:14 and 28:16. Additional details, however, characterize him by both divine and human attributes as an exalted human being who partakes in the divine.

The human nature of this figure is implied by twofold emphatic references to the day of his creation (Ezek 28:13, 15), in language recalling the creation of humanity in Gen 2:4 and 5:2. The double use of the root ברא, "to create," in these verses evidently distinguishes this being from divine beings and posits that this being is essentially human. The humanity of this being is also suggested by classifying him as "blameless," תָּמִים, in Ezek 28:15. "Blameless" is one of the distinctive attributes by which special human beings such as Noah (Gen 6:9), Abraham (Gen 17:1), and Job (Job 1:1) are characterized in the Hebrew Bible. The identification of the primal being by this particular attribute seems to associate him with these mortal figures and thus alludes to his human character.

Moreover, the ambiguous statement of Ezek 28:13b, "and of gold was the work of your *tuppîm* and *nĕqābîm*,"[18] further suggests, according to *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*'s understanding, that the initial identity of the primal being is human.[19] According to this reading, *tuppîm* and *nĕqābîm* (translated as חללין ונקבין) are physical

[17]On Eden symbolism in Ezek 28:11–19, see Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 332–63.

[18]The terms *tuppîm* and *nĕqābîm* have been rendered, for example, as "your tambours and settings" (Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 579); "[technical terms] from the industrial arts" (Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 84); "your ear-rings and your settings" (Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 389); "your setting and your anchoring" (Page, *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion*, 151), and "your timbrels and your pipes" (Callender, *Adam in Myth and History*, 88).

[19]*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to Ezek 28:13, in *The Bible in Aramaic*, vol. 3, *The Latter Prophets According to Targum Jonathan* (ed. Alexander Sperber; Leiden: Brill, 1962) 332–33.

features, orifices and holes, which were fixed in the primal figure's body on the day on which he was created:

> All these were made for your adornment; as a result, you have become arrogant; however, you did not reflect wisely on your body, which consists of *orifices and organs [lit. holes]* of which you have need, for it is impossible for you to survive without them.[20]

Support for this link between *tuppîm* and *nĕqābîm* and the human body is found later in the Jewish *Asher Yatzar* benediction, which is included in the preliminary morning service as a blessing over the worshiper's corporeal features. It refers to the complexity of the human body, emphasizing that all its organs, especially the alimentary canal (*nĕqābîm*), fulfill a vital function in the constitution of the human being.[21] If this understanding of *tuppîm* and *nĕqābîm* in Ezek 28:13 as associated with the human body is legitimate, then the full verse and its juxtaposition of *tuppîm* and *nĕqābîm* and creation are not incoherent. Rather, this verse calls attention to human marks of the primal figure, whose specific human bodily features were set in him on the day of his corporeal creation.

Simultaneously, the divine status of this being is suggested by several characteristics: he is a *ḥôtēm tŏknît*, he possesses beauty and wisdom, and he is addressed as an anointed covering cherub, who is incorporated into the divine realm of Eden, the garden and mountain of God. Although these depictions are fraught with difficulties, they seem to allude to the primal figure's divine nature.

The obscure phrase "you are *ḥôtēm tŏknît*," אַתָּה חוֹתֵם תָּכְנִית (Ezek 28:12), is often emended to read "you are *ḥôtam tabnît*," because of a possible graphic confusion of *k* and *b*. Among the various interpretations and translations of this expression, two related suggestions, "a seal of resemblance" (Callender) or "a seal of likeness" (Greenberg) propose significant implications.[22] According to these

[20]Translation from *The Targum of Ezekiel: Translated with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes* (trans. and ed. Samson H. Levey; ArBib 13; Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1987) 83–84. Italics are mine.

[21]*The Complete ArtScroll Siddur: Chol, Shabbat, Shalosh Regalim, Nusach Ashkenaz* (ed. and trans. Nosson Scherman and Meir Zlotowitz; New York: Mesorah, 1984) 15: "Praised are You, Eternal One, our God, king of the universe, who has formed a human with wisdom, and created in him many openings and many cavities [*nĕqābîm nĕqābîm, ḥălûlîm ḥălûlîm*]. It is well known before Your throne of glory, that if but one of them were to be ruptured or but one of them were to be blocked it would be impossible to survive and to stand before You. Blessed are You, our God, who heals all flesh and acts wondrously." For discussion of the history of Jewish liturgy, see Stefan C. Reif, "Jewish Liturgical Research: Past, Present and Future," *JJS* 34 (1983) 161–70; Richard S. Sarason, "On the Use of Method in the Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism* (ed. William Scott Green; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978) 97–172. Compare Ismar Elbogen's classic study, *Prayer in Israel in Its Historical Development* (trans. Y. Amir; 3d ed.; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1972) 68–71 [Hebrew].

[22]Callender, *Adam in Myth and History*, 88. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 579, note a. Compare other readings mentioned by Callender at 91, n. 187; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (Lund: Gleerup, 1976) 271; Hemmes J. van Dijk, *Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre (Ez. 26, 1–28, 19): A New Approach* (BibOr 20; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1968) 113–16.

readings, the phrase "seal of likeness/resemblance," translated as such in accordance with the LXX and the Vulgate, introduces a concept that is likewise conveyed by the terms "image" (צֶלֶם) and "likeness" (דְּמוּת) used in Gen 1:26 in reference to the creation of human beings by God. This concept is best explained on the basis of the imagery and ideology of royal seals, according to which a person who is invested with a seal represents, in fact, the essence or embodiment of the one to whom the seal belongs. Accordingly, the description of the figure as "the seal of resemblance/likeness" in Ezek 28:12 suggests that the "model" expressed by *tŏknît* (or *tabnît*) is God, whose image the figure represents as his *ḥôtam*, that is, his seal. Thus, although the text does not depict the figure with certainty, the language applied emphasizes his position as YHWH's vice-regent, or signet, who is expected to embody God's essence and to implement his will.

The exaltation of the primal figure to a divine-like status is further suggested by the attributes of wisdom and beauty with which he is endowed. According to Ezek 28:12 he is distinguished by his beauty. Beauty is considered to be a divine attribute, commonly associated with God, gods, and kings in the Hebrew Bible as well as in a variety of Near Eastern traditions.[23] The primal figure is also endowed with wisdom, depicted not as human wisdom but rather as a divine quality, in a manner which may recall the notion of wisdom in Gen 2:9 and 3:22.

According to several scholars, the reference to the primal figure as an "anointed covering cherub" (Ezek 28:11) identifies him as one of the guardian cherubs of the tree of life in the Eden narrative (Gen 3:24), or alternatively as one of the cherubic throne supporters (Exod 25:18–22; 37:6–9; Num 7:89, 1 Sam 4:4).[24] James Miller has suggested that this being is associated with the covering *kĕrûbîm* who surround the throne of God and/or make up the divine chariot, and who are often depicted with outstretched wings which touch each other and cover the ark (e.g., Ezek 1:11; 1 Chr 28:18).[25] But whereas these cherubs are usually mentioned in the plural, Ezek 28:14 refers to a single cherub, addressed as כְּרוּב מְמֻשָּׁח. The precise meaning of מְמֻשָּׁח is unclear. Many interpreters, nonetheless, suggest "an anointed cherub," deriving this term from the root מׁשׁח, meaning "to smear" or "to anoint."[26] In accordance with the notion of anointing, which commonly confers the power and status of the anointed subject, the reference to an "anointed cherub" seems to be an alternative way of ranking the primal figure as a superior cherub among other cherubic beings. It appears to suggest that he is not comparable to

[23]See, for example, the attribute of beauty as a royal quality associated with God in Isa 33:17, and with kings in 1 Sam 9:2; 10:23; 16:12, 18; Ezek 16:13–15; Ps 45:3.

[24]See, for example, Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 85; Barr, "Thou art the Cherub"; James E. Miller, "The Mælæk of Tyre (Ezekiel 28,11–19)," *ZAW* 105 (1993) 497–501; Yaron, "The Dirge over the King of Tyre," 31–32.

[25]See Miller, "The Mælæk of Tyre," 500.

[26]See, for example, Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 583; Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 271; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 85.

other divine beings. Instead, he is a uniquely superior celestial figure, chosen by God, and envisioned as a particularly exalted divine being.[27]

References to the incorporation of the primal being into the sacred divine realm also emphasize his quasi-divine status. According to Ezek 28:14 and 28:16 he is placed in Eden, which is portrayed as both the garden and the holy mountain of God.[28] The bejeweled garb covered with precious stones that adorns the primal figure further highlights his state of exaltation: "every precious stone was your covering, carnelian, topaz, and jasper; chrysolite, beryl, and onyx, sapphire, carbuncle, and emerald" (Ezek 28:13, RSV). As has long been observed, the verse lists nine of the twelve stones found in the first description of the priestly ephod in Exod 28:17–20, yet not in the same order. The LXX, on the other hand, includes the names of twelve stones, and the list matches the Greek text of the Exodus passage. Thus, it has been argued, in the LXX the figure closely resembles the high priest. The MT, however, diminishes this similarity, emphasizing instead the divine status attributed to the primal figure.[29]

3. Crisis. The exalted position of the primordial figure is evidently associated in Ezek 28:11–19 with his demotion. The text describes a figure, trusted by YHWH, who is blameless at the beginning, before he falls from favor when iniquity is found in him (Ezek 28:15).[30] The exact nature of the offense is not mentioned, although

[27]Compare Widengren's suggestion that the spirit of God, which was wisdom, was endowed to the cherub through the act of anointing: Geo Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und im Judentum* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1955) 31. On the act of anointing, which symbolically marks transformation of status and authority, see references to "anointed" high priests, kings, and prophets. For example: Exod 29:29; Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:20; Ps 105:15; 132:10; 1 Sam 16:13; 2 Sam 2:4; 1 Kgs 19:16; 1 Chr 16:22. For a later tradition regarding the transformative power of anointing, see *2 En.* 22:9 and 56, in which the "ointment of glory" transforms a human being into a celestial creature.

[28]For affiliated garden (i.e., Eden) and (sacred) mountain imagery, see Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985) 128–33; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) 367–72. On the identification of Eden and the mountain of God in Ezekiel 28, see Howard N. Wallace, *The Eden Narrative* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985) 82–85. This figure is placed in the divine sphere, on the holy mountain of God, among the stones of fire, according to Ezek 28:14. These fiery stones are often interpreted as referring to other divine beings, with whom the primal human dwells in the celestial realm. Of these he is the highest.

[29]According to this view, the bejeweled garb suggests kingship and is related to divine characteristics of this figure. See, for example, May, "The King in the Garden of Eden," 170; Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 272 n 17. Page (*The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion*, 149), as well, does not see a priestly allusion here but rather an allusion to astral deities that surround the figure as his coterie. According to Greenberg (*Ezekiel 21–37*, 582), it is conceivable that the MT would wish to reduce that association and deviate from the LXX in order to weaken the connection between the figure and the high priest. Stordalen (*Echoes of Eden*, 339, 346–47) has observed that this description is consistent with the MT's depiction of the figure as a colossal heavenly cherub. For other views that associate the list of stones with priestly traditions, see Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 338–40.

[30]The term "blameless" is a specific attribute which seems to associate the figure with the blameless Noah (Gen 6:9), who himself is associated with creation and the primal human traditions. On Noah as a second Adam associated with primal human traditions, see Devora Steinmetz, "Vineyard, Farm, and Garden: The Drunkenness of Noah in the Context of Primeval History," *JBL* 113 (1994) 193–207.

28:17 states that the cherub's wisdom becomes corrupted because of his splendor and that his beauty has contributed to his pride. It appears that this offense is related to an actual or potential harm to God and his absolute status, because of the primal human's abuse of divine privileges, notably divine wisdom. Accordingly, this figure, who has been considered a quasi-divine being, abuses his office, misappropriates divine prerogatives, and seeks to partake in divine rights and to replace the one God as the supreme deity.[31]

4. Consequences. For this grievous error, the primal divine-human being is deprived of what has made him what he is. He is dismissed from the divine locus, expelled from his high divine position, denied the status and functions of a deity, exposed before other kings, and consumed internally by fire before the eyes of all who looked at him.[32]

Ezek 28:1–10

As indicated above, the oracle addressed to the king of Tyre in Ezek 28:1–10 contains a concise presentation of themes which occur also in Ezek 28:11–19.[33] It presents, nonetheless, parallel allusions to the primal human tradition, comprising both positive and negative conceptions of divine humanity. In it we find the following themes and imagery:

1) A mythological setting of the beginning.
2) A depiction of an exalted primal human, whose exaltation involves attainment of divine attributes and placement in the divine locus.
3) A crisis related to the figure's elevated position.
4) Consequences involving expulsion from the divine location and demotion from former divine status.

The text depicts a primal figure who occupies a position between deity and humanity. He is portrayed initially as human but is simultaneously considered to be divine. The emphasis on his humanity (versus his divinity) in Ezek 28:2 reveals him to be originally human: "Yet you are human and not God," וְאַתָּה אָדָם וְלֹא אֵל. The text does not disclose the circumstances by which this figure became divine. However, it unquestionably portrays him as an "*ʾĕlōhîm*-being" who is incorporated into God's sacred sphere: אֵל אָנִי מוֹשַׁב אֱלֹהִים יָשַׁבְתִּי בְּלֵב יַמִּים ("I am a god; I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas"). The location of the primal figure is associated with the geographical setting of the ancient port city of Tyre, "in the heart of the seas." More significant for this analysis, the phrase also suggests the seat of a divinity, since such locations are often associated with water in biblical and ancient Near Eastern sources.[34] This statement seems analogous to the

[31]Page, *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion*, 154–58; Gowan, *When Man Becomes God*, 85–92; Callender, *Adam in Myth and History*, 87–135.

[32]Callender, *Adam in Myth and History*, 119–31, 214–15.

[33]For analysis of Ezek 28:1–10, see the studies mentioned in nn. 13–15, above.

[34]Page, *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion*, 142; Callender, *Adam in Myth and History*, 185–86, 215.

opening statement of Ezek 28:11–19. Both acknowledge the divine character of the originally human figure and locate him in the divine sphere.

In addition to his location, the divine privileges and attributes of this figure are further emphasized by the mention of his wisdom and his ability to access divine secrets and hidden mysteries: "no secret is hidden from you" (Ezek 28:3). The ambiguous phrase, "you have made your mind like the mind of gods," וַתִּתֵּן לִבְּךָ כְּלֵב אֱלֹהִים (Ezek 28:2, compare 28:6), further associates the figure with divine knowledge or wisdom. The RSV translates, "though you consider yourself as wise as a god," suggesting that the figure thought himself to possess supernal wisdom.[35] This being laid claim to a divine status. Identifying himself with God, gods, or El, he considered himself to be divine, and manifested this position by sitting in the dwelling of the divine: "Because your heart became exalted and you declared: 'I am God, I sit in the dwelling of the gods'"(Ezek 28:2).

The overstepping of bounds as well as the primal human's claim to divine status are the dominant themes here. They find full expression in the statement, "I am God," as well as in the primal figure's appropriation of the divine seat and habitation. The consequences suffered for these false claims and the usurpation of status are the expulsion of the primal figure from the divine sphere, the defilement of his splendor, and his death (Ezek 28:7–10).

Both Ezek 28:11–19 and 28:1–10 include mythological allusions to a primal divine-human tradition and convey both positive and negative conceptions about the notion of a divine humanity or intermediary figures. On the one hand, the texts reflect a legitimization of this notion. The language of exaltation is used in a positive, unapologetic manner to portray a human figure who is elevated to a divine status, incorporated into the divine realm, given a position of power, and endowed with divine characteristics. On the other hand, this option is restricted and limited by presenting predicaments and problems related to humans' quest for independent divine prerogatives and their misuse of divine privileges, along with the harmful effects of blurring fundamental distinctions between humanity and deity and of challenging the absolute supremacy of the one God. Both demotion from high divine status and dismissal from the divine locus are consequences of these errors. This basic pattern is conveyed through the application of several parallel themes and images, as discussed above.

Exaltation and Demotion: The Enoch/Meṭaṭron Narrative and Ezekiel 28

Certain major and minor features found in both sections of Ezekiel 28 correspond to specific interests expressed in the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative of *3 Enoch*. These include a basic desire both to affirm and to restrict the notion of a divine humanity, a concern with boundaries between human and divine, and the application of

[35]Compare Gen 3:22. See Callender, *Adam in Myth and History*, 188.

specific motifs and imagery. Can a case be made for associating the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative with Ezekiel 28?

Obviously, I am not assuming a simple correlation between them. Nonetheless, there is a conceptual and thematic affinity between both sources, which does not seem to be coincidental. This correspondence allows the possibility that the authors and redactors of the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative, who were certainly conversant with the Hebrew Bible as part of their training, drew on Ezekiel 28, a tradition they knew and most likely internalized over time.[36] It is plausible that they then invoked both the text's basic model and several of its mythical themes in a new context, in order to assert and accentuate their own views and claims about divine humanity. It is also possible that the authors of *3 Enoch* integrated former contradictory traditions of Enoch and Meṭaṭron from various apocalyptic and rabbinic sources and thereby constructed a new Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative inspired by Ezekiel 28. Several themes as well as a dominant equivocal perspective suggest an implicit and explicit correlation between the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative and Ezekiel 28. I will discuss each of these themes in turn.

1. Setting. Similarly to Ezekiel 28, *3 Enoch* appeals to the mythic construction of reality in which it sets its narration, making several references to the primordial time. Although not all themes mentioned in the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative duplicate Ezekiel 28 precisely, its conceptual focus as well as the imagery used are analogous. Two themes in particular convey this focus on primordial time and mythological setting. First is the mention of the flood, after which God elevated Enoch to heaven, regarding him as the only blameless, righteous one among the sinful people of that generation.[37] Strong allusions to Gen 6:5–12; to the flood hero, Noah; and to the remote time of the beginning are present, situating the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative in that mythological setting of a new creation (*3 En.* 4:1–10). Second, a specific reference to the hazy time of the beginning is introduced, similarly to Ezekiel 28, by the image of Eden conceived as both the garden of God and the place where he resides on high (*3 En.* 5:1–6).[38] This designation recalls, as well, the divine location Eden in Ezekiel 28, envisioned as both a garden and a cosmic mountain.

2. Divine-human figure. In this context the figure of Enoch/Meṭaṭron is introduced as both a human and a divine being. The narrative emphasizes his human attributes and origin, especially in Enoch/Meṭaṭron's answer to Rabbi Ishmael on

[36]See, for example, Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§ 93, 199–201, 224, 234, passages which demonstrate a basic requirement to master the Hebrew Bible and thus indicate its central place in HM mysticism. See discussion in Scholem, *Major Trends*, 41–42, 52–70; Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 99.

[37]See Odeberg, *Hebrew Book of Enoch*, 51.

[38]The upper Eden is explicit only in manuscript D; see Alexander, "3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch," 260, note f. For discussion of Eden as the place in which God resides, see Martha Himmelfarb, "The Temple and the Garden of Eden in Ezekiel, the Book of the Watchers, and the Wisdom of ben Sira," in *Sacred Places and Profane Spaces: Essays in the Geographics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (ed. Jamie Scott and Paul Simpson-Housley; New York: Greenwood, 1991) 63–78; idem, "Apocalyptic Ascent and the Heavenly Temple," *SBLSP* 26 (1987) 210–17.

high: "I am Enoch, the son of Jared" (*3 En.* 4:2). A well-known theme regarding the angels' opposition to the creation of humans is also applied in this context, thus further highlighting the humanity of Enoch/Meṭaṭron:[39] "Then three of the ministering angels, ʿUzzah, ʿAzzah, and ʿAzaʾel, came and laid charges against me in the heavenly height. They said before the Holy One, blessed be he, 'Lord of the Universe, did not the primeval ones give you good advice when they said, Do not create man!'" (*3 En.* 4:6).[40]

While stressing the human nature of Enoch/Meṭaṭron, the narrative accentuates his attainment of significant divine characteristics, thus illustrating his exalted position. Several images, reminiscent of Ezekiel 28, are particularly effective. Enoch attains divine wisdom: "Then the Holy One, blessed be he, bestowed upon me wisdom heaped upon wisdom, understanding upon understanding" (*3 En.* 8:2). This quality of wisdom is especially emphasized as a divine quality, enabling him to transcend his human abilities and to become a quasi-divine being. Recalling Ezekiel 28, Enoch/Meṭaṭron's mind is like the mind of God:

> I have committed to him the Prince of Wisdom and the Prince of Understanding, to teach him the wisdom of those above and of those below, the wisdom of this world and of the world to come. (*3 En.* 10:5)

The divine attribute of beauty is also bestowed on him (*3 En*. 8:2). Furthermore, he is placed in the divine sphere, the heavenly height where God dwells, and is incorporated into this sacred world. Enoch thus becomes Meṭaṭron, a divine power who not only sits in the divine dwelling, but also on a throne like the throne of God:

> The Holy One, blessed be he, made for me a throne like the throne of glory, and he spread over it a coverlet of splendor, brilliance, brightness, beauty, loveliness, and grace, like the coverlet of the throne of glory. (*3 En.* 10:1)[41]

[39]On traditions of angelic opposition to humans, see discussion and references in Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 198–200; Peter Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen. Untersuchungen zur rabbinischen Engelvorstellung* (SJ 8; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975) 98. As both scholars observe, in *3 Enoch* this tradition has been conflated with traditions of angelic opposition to the admission of humans to heaven.

[40]Compare the angels' question in *3 En.* 6:2, "What is this smell of one born of a woman?" Joseph Dan has suggested that the characterizations of both Meṭaṭron and the angel ʿAnafiʾel conceal traces of a figure who was understood to have been a partner of God at the beginning. In Dan's opinion, the authors of *3 Enoch*, who realized the danger of such a heretical view, connected Meṭaṭron with the human Enoch. See Joseph Dan, "ʿAnafiʾel, Meṭaṭron, and the Creator," *Tarbiz* 52 (1982–1983) 447–57 [Hebrew]. This reconstruction also emphasizes the humanity of Enoch/Meṭaṭron in *3 Enoch.* On the human aspects of Enoch/Meṭaṭron, see also Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 126–27.

[41]On the image of the throne as associated with God as king in the HM mysticism, see Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 11–15. On God's throne in heaven according to *3 Enoch*, see Timo Eskola, *Messiah and the Throne*: *Jewish Merkabah Mysticism and Early Christian Exaltation Discourse* (WUNT 2/142; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001) 120–21.

The depiction undoubtedly emphasizes the image of Enoch/Meṭaṭron as sitting on "the seat of the gods." So does the title "Meṭaṭron," which, according to several suggestions, describes the one who stands after, behind, or next to the throne.[42]

The exaltation of Enoch to Meṭaṭron also involves a physical transformation:

> In addition to all these qualities, . . . I was enlarged and increased in size till I matched the world in length and breadth. He made to grow on me 72 wings, 36 on one side and 36 on the other, and each single wing covered the entire world. (*3 En.* 9:1–3)

This description recalls the imagery of Ezekiel 28 and its portrayal of a colossal cherub with outstretched wings, suggesting that several strands of the cherubic iconographical traditions have been woven into this description. Additional divine attributes are bestowed on Enoch/Meṭaṭron: a jeweled robe on which precious stones are placed, and a majestic crown.[43] These too parallel those mentioned in Ezekiel 28:

> Out of the love which he had for me, more than for all the denizens of the heights, the Holy One, blessed be he, fashioned for me a majestic robe, in which all kinds of luminaries were set, and he clothed me in it. He fashioned for me a glorious cloak in which brightness, brilliance, splendor and luster of every kind were fixed, and he wrapped me in it. He fashioned for me a kingly crown in which 49 refulgent stones were placed, each like the sun's orb, and its brilliance shone into the four quarters of the heaven of ʿArabot, into the seven heavens, and into the four quarters of the world. (*3 En.* 12:1–4)

Elevated and transformed, Enoch/Meṭaṭron is an "*ʾĕlōhîm*-being" who is placed among the ranks of divine beings, of whom he is the most perfect: "I have appointed Meṭaṭron my servant as a prince and a ruler over all the denizens of the heights" (*3 En.* 10:3).[44] Other divine beings in heaven clearly enhance his status by being related in nature but inferior in rank:

[42]Saul Lieberman, "Metatron, The Meaning of His Name and His Function," in appendix 1 to Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 235–44. According to this suggestion, Meṭaṭron is not a proper name but a title, adapted from the Greek term *synthronos* (i.e., the one who is with the throne), which was altered to *metathronos* (the one after, behind, or next to the throne) in order to avoid heretical implications. For views and interpretations of the name "Meṭaṭron," see Odeberg, *Hebrew Book of Enoch*, 125–42; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 68.

[43]Meṭaṭron's robe may be connected to the priestly dress and tradition, as has been suggested, for example, by Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 45. Unlike in rabbinic tradition, however, where Meṭaṭron is often called the heavenly high priest (e.g., *Num. Rab.* 12:12), this position is not mentioned in *3 Enoch*. The robe thus can be associated with God's royal garments, as Schäfer, for example, has suggested (*The Hidden and Manifest God*, 19, 65, 133). The robe, therefore, seems to reflect Meṭaṭron's function as a divine being or as God's vice-regent in heaven. The crown, as well, conveys a similar conception. On the crown as a metaphor of kingship in the HM literature and in *3 Enoch*, see Arthur Green, *Keter: The Crown of God in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) 58–68.

[44]This passage continues by stating that Meṭaṭron does not rule the eight princes who are called YHWH. At the same time, however, it emphasizes his total control in heaven in the sentence that

> Even the princes of the ʾelim, the princes of the ʾerʾellim and the princes of the ṭapsarim, who are greater than all the ministering angels that serve before the throne of glory, trembled and shrank from me when they saw me. (*3 En.* 14:1)

Another significant aspect is introduced by the following description:

> He set it [a crown] upon my head and he called me, "The lesser YHWH" in the presence of his whole household in the height, as it is written [Exod 23:21], "My name is in him." (*3 En.* 12:4–5)[45]

In addition to his physical and mental/spiritual divine attributes, Enoch/Meṭaṭron also shares the name of God; as this passage demonstrates, he is called "the lesser YHWH." This designation suggests a distinct connection with God that goes beyond specific attributes. Rather, it identifies the essence of Meṭaṭron as embracing the essence of God.[46] Enoch/Meṭaṭron, however, is also called *naʿar*, that is, either a youth or a servant who can represent his master and act on his behalf.[47] This designation may echo the imagery and ideology of Ezek 28:11–19, according to which the primal divine/human/cherub in Eden was God's "seal of resemblance" or "seal of likeness." On the one hand, Enoch/Meṭaṭron clearly shares in God's characteristics, representing him and embodying his essence. On the other hand, he is not identical to God but merely functions as his embodiment, and is expected to implement his will. Ezekiel's imagery of the "seal of resemblance" best conveys these two functions. The following Enoch/Meṭaṭron passage expresses an analogous notion. It presents the position of Enoch/Meṭaṭron as an intermediary figure between God and humanity and emphasizes his role as God's vice-regent, or his signet who is expected to perform his decisions:

> Any angel and any prince who has anything to say in my presence should go before him and speak to him. Whatever he says to you in my name you must observe and do. (*3 En.* 10:4–5)

3. Crisis. The Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative, as previously mentioned, relates the demotion of Enoch/Meṭaṭron from his high stature. The conflict stems mainly from his position as an exalted divine figure enthroned in heaven and his glorious divine qualities and responsibilities. Unlike in Ezekiel 28, the errors deriving from the

follows: "Any angel and any prince who has anything to say in my presence should go before him and speak to him" (*3 En.* 10:4).

[45]Compare *3 En.* 11:1–3.

[46]On the concept of God's names as manifestations of his divine essence in HM mysticism, see Rachel Elior, "The Concept of God in Hekhalot Literature," in *Binah*, vol. 2, *Studies in Jewish Thought* (ed. Joseph Dan; New York: Praeger, 1989) 97–120.

[47]The term *naʿar* is inspired perhaps by Exod 33:11. See "My King calls me 'Youth [*naʿar*]'" (*3 En.* 3:2). Compare "Why are you called by the name of your Creator . . .? You are greater than all the princes . . . why, then, do they call you 'Youth' [*naʿar*] in the heavenly heights?" (*3 En.* 4:1). On these two designations, see Segal, *Two Powers*, 65–67; Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 198.

supposition of high divine status, the mistreatment of divine privileges, and the crossing of legitimate boundaries between humanity and deity are not associated with Enoch/Meṭaṭron himself. However, these themes are clearly present in *3 Enoch* as problematic issues, though in a different form. It is Elisha ben Avuya, ʾAḥer, who asserts Enoch/Meṭaṭron's divine status, concluding: "There are indeed two powers in heaven!" (*3 En.* 16:3). Attributing an ultimate divine status to God's intermediary, his "seal of resemblance," ʾAḥer misconstrues and misapplies Enoch/Meṭaṭron's divine distinction and prerogative. Misguided, he considers Enoch/Meṭaṭron to be equal to God, and thus utters his false conclusion which, in turn, challenges both the absolute and exclusive rule of God and the fundamental boundaries between humanity and deity:

> At first I sat upon a great throne at the door of the seventh palace, and I judged all the denizens of the heights. . . . I assigned greatness, royalty, rank, sovereignty, glory, praise, diadem, crown, and honor to all the princes of kingdoms, when I sat in the heavenly court. The princes of kingdoms stood beside me, to my right and to my left, by authority of the Holy One, blessed be he. But when ʾAḥer came to behold the vision of the chariot and set eyes upon me, he was afraid and trembled before me. His soul was alarmed to the point of leaving him because of his fear, dread, and terror of me, when he saw me seated upon a throne like a king, with ministering angels standing beside me as servants and all the princes of kingdoms crowned with crowns surrounding me. Then he opened his mouth and said, "There are indeed two powers in heaven!" (*3 En.* 16:1–3)

4. Consequences. Following this faulty claim, the initial exalted position of Enoch/Meṭaṭron is followed by his demotion from his high status and his removal from the divine seat and locus. He is also struck by fire (*3 En.* 16:5).[48] Both units of Ezekiel 28 describe severe consequences, involving not only dismissal from divine status, seat, and locus but also death. This latter theme, death, does not occur in the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative. It is hard to ignore, however, that a similar pattern of demotion, related to human appropriation of the divine position and the crossing of fundamental boundaries between humans and the divine, prevails in each source. Enoch/Meṭaṭron is forced to abandon his elevated position and throne and, from that point on, functions as God's attendant rather than as "the lesser YHWH." Following his demotion he functions chiefly as a "tour guide" of the heavenly realm, who protects and escorts Rabbi Ishmael in his celestial journey (*3 Enoch* 17–48A).

To summarize my points thus far: I have suggested that the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative integrates earlier traditions, constructing a new version and emphasizing two contradictory yet interrelated notions, which stand out as central to the shape and direction of the narrative. It presents, in positive terms, the concept of a divine humanity, delineating the exaltation of a primal figure by God, and his attainments

[48]On Enoch/Meṭaṭron's demotion, see Morray-Jones, "Hekhalot Literature and Talmudic Tradition," 23–35. On the punishment involving "fiery lashes," see Segal, *Two Powers*, 61 with n. 5.

of divine qualities and status. At the same time, the narrative restricts and limits this alternative, expressing its adverse ramifications such as the danger of humans gaining divine prerogatives, the threat of blurring fundamental distinctions between humanity and deity, and of defying the absolute, supreme position of God. This synthesis of inverse notions in the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative is unique, especially in light of earlier sources that accentuate either only exaltation or demotion. Yet, rather than assuming that the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative contains a random, coincidental assortment of traditions, it is possible to suggest that it fuses and reintegrates several sources and themes into a lucid, yet composite tradition, according to a specific model.

Based on corresponding themes, imagery, and perceptions, I have suggested that a binary biblical model, related to the primal human tradition in which the contradictory notions of allowing and precluding the concept of divine humanity are found, may have inspired the construction of the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative of the HM literature. The two accounts included in Ezekiel 28 served as examples of such a biblical model, which could have inspired the manner in which the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative juxtaposes and combines former Enochic and Meṭaṭron traditions as well as its application of specific imagery and themes. The profound knowledge of the Hebrew Bible reflected in *3 Enoch* and other HM traditions allows for this possibility. The explicit links between the HM literature and the book of Ezekiel further support this suggestion.[49]

Conclusion: Exaltation and Demotion—A Demarcation of Mystical Notions?

This study has suggested, in the light of a biblical model of the primal human tradition, that the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative reintegrates several sources and constructs a new, unique version, cast in a language echoing Ezekiel 28, among other sources. If this proposal is accepted, the reasons for and importance of evoking this model in the context of the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative should be considered. In my view, if we consider the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative as a loosely exegetical response to the primal human tradition in Ezekiel 28, then we can understand how that tradition was used to express mystical notions found in *3 Enoch*.

3 Enoch is part of the HM literature. Associated with other spiritual trends of late antiquity, this literature introduces a religious outlook, recognized as mystical, according to which humans can attain an elevated spiritual perception and consciousness capable of matching divine reality and perspectives.[50] Several passages introduce the manner in which members of the Merkavah circle, the "descenders" to the Merkavah, practice various techniques and spiritual exercises, elevate

[49]Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 38–62, 503–510.

[50]On the nature of the HM mystical tradition, see the discussion in Arbel, *Beholders of Divine Secrets*, 21–50.

their human perception beyond its ordinary limits, and in so doing gain a new awareness.[51] They are then initiated into the divine reality, understand revelations from a God-like perspective, and interpret their concealed meanings and hidden truths. In this way, for a short period of time, human and divine perceptions correspond and become one. The Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative of *3 Enoch* depicts this stage. In addition to its presentation of Enoch/Meṭaṭron's cosmic, mythological transformation, the narrative seems to treat the shift from a conventional to a more expansive mental awareness, emphasizing the correspondence in perception between Enoch/Meṭaṭron and God:

> The Holy One, blessed be he, revealed to me from that time onward all the mysteries of wisdom, all the depths of the perfect Torah and all the thoughts of humans' hearts. All the mysteries of the world and all the orders of nature stand revealed before me as they stand revealed before the Creator. . . . There is nothing in heaven above or deep within the earth concealed from me. (*3 En.* 11:1–3; translation based on Alexander)

This statement is not pronounced in isolation but as a paradigm presented in a mystical context, which members of the Merkavah circle, for whom Enoch/Meṭaṭron is a prototype, can embrace.[52] Various passages of this literature, such as the well-known *gedulla* passage from *Hekhalot Rabbati*, express this enhanced, elevated perception gained by the Merkavah seekers:

> The greatest thing of all is the fact that he sees and recognizes all the deeds of human beings, even [those] that they do in the chamber of chambers, whether they are good or corrupt deeds. . . . The greatest thing of all is the fact that all creatures will be before him like silver before the silversmith, who perceives which silver has been refined, which silver is impure, and which silver is pure.[53]

These descriptions denote a specific spiritual alternative for human beings, affirming the possibility of crossing conceptual and spiritual boundaries and of gaining an exalted, quasi-divine position and awareness. This option goes far beyond traditional views, which often emphasized that fundamental categories,

[51]See, for example, Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§11–14, 59–68, 247–51, 580–81. On the term "descent," frequently used in the HM literature to describe an "ascent," see Scholem, *Major Trends*, 46–47; Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 2–3; 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).

[52]On Enoch/Meṭaṭron as a model for the members of the Merkavah circle, see Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 134. On mystical transformation and deification, see Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, 82–85; and A. Green's clear position (*Keter*, 40, n. 20): "The ultimate goal of Merkavah experience is transformative and 'deifying' at least in some sources. Merkavah practice thus is, in the most precise sense, truly mystical."

[53]Schäfer, *Synopse*, §83. My translation. See full description in *Synopse*, §§ 81–93 and discussion in Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God*, 41–45.

boundaries, and divisions between humanity and God are not to be crossed.[54] Yet, a distinct warning not to err, never to confuse similarity to the divine with an absolute identification with the one God, and not to consider God's *naʿar* as divinity, is distinctly proclaimed. A passage in the Cairo Genizah fragments of Hekhalot literature demonstrates this concern about any overlap in identity between humans and God:

> And see the Youth [*naʿar*] who comes forth towards you from behind the throne of glory—do not worship him. For his crown is like the crown of his King, his sandals on his feet are like the sandals of his King, his gown is like the gown of his King.[55]

In the context of the Judaism of late antiquity, constructing a version of the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative with an appeal to this particular biblical model, which both allows and restricts the option of divine humanity, seems to be a beneficial way to validate and advocate the mystical option.

The structural, conceptual, and thematic allusions to the biblical model, however, seem to be exegetical in nature. We do not find a direct *midrashic* exegesis, yet it seems that the biblical model included in Ezekiel 28 was both invested with and absorbed into the spiritual conception and imagination of the HM authors and, in turn, served as a viable explicit and implicit exegetical source to inspire their new construction of the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative of *3 Enoch*.[56] The biblical model and the specific thematic references present in the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative are not applied in their original form, nor are they interpreted in light of a specific symbolic system. Instead, they are reshaped and contextualized anew in *3 Enoch* in order to convey a specific spiritual notion.

In his analysis of the HM mystical tradition, Joseph Dan has examined both its conservative and innovative aspects. As he states, the HM mystics "never separated themselves from the world of general Jewish culture, while preserving the differences and ensuring that these remained within limits, which would not bring about division and separation."[57] The manner in which *3 Enoch* appropriates the biblical model seems to reflect this notion. It appears to be an effective way to demarcate

[54]For biblical views see, for example, Ps 115:16, "The heavens are the Lord's heaven but the earth he has given to the human beings"; Exod 33:20, "You will not see my face, for no human can see me and live." On biblical and later rabbinical views, see Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages, Their Concepts and Beliefs* (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975) 66–79.

[55]Frg. 8, 2b, lines 13–14, in Peter Schäfer, ed., *Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (TSAJ 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1984) 105. My translation.

[56]On mystical exegesis in the HM literature, see Arbel, *Beholders of Divine Secrets*, 135–38. Compare a different form of "exegetical spirituality" discussed by Michael Fishbane, "The Book of Zohar and Exegetical Spirituality," in *The Exegetical Imagination: On Jewish Thought and Theology* (ed. Michael Fishbane; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998) 105–22.

[57]See Joseph Dan, *The Ancient Jewish Mysticism* (Tel Aviv: MOD, 1993) 224.

the framework of an unorthodox mystical option by linking it to an ancient model that, on a conceptual level, offers a similar message.[58]

From the theological/anthropological perspective of HM mysticism, the potential of humanity's divine nature and possibilities is thus recognized in the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative. Nonetheless, it is confined within the framework of Jewish monotheism, or "monarchism," according to Peter Hayman, by negating humanity's quest for an absolute divine status and emphasizing the exclusive position of the only God.[59] This dual theme is captured, in the mythical language of exaltation and demotion, by an indirect exegetical appeal to a biblical model. This model, analogous to the Enoch/Meṭaṭron narrative, promotes an elevated "*ʾĕlōhîm*-like" status for humans, and at the same time restricts it, making sure that "the *ʾĕlōhîm*-like creature does not indeed become *ʾĕlōhîm*."[60]

[58]On both innovative and conservative aspects of mystical traditions, see Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mysticism," in *Mysticism and Religious Traditions* (ed. Steven T. Katz; New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) 3–60.

[59]Peter Hayman, "Monotheism—A Misused Word in Jewish Studies?" *JJS* 42 (1991) 1–15.

[60]Miller, *Genesis 1–11*, 21.