Many of these ideas are encountered in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, a liturgical text the performance of which may be interpreted as the ritual construction by the worshiping community, in association with the angelic hosts, of a seven-tiered temple, which is identified with that of Ezekiel. This temple not merely reflects but actually embodies the structure of the cosmos, for its seven sanctuaries are the seven heavens. The construction of this imaginary temple is completed on the eleventh Sabbath, which falls on the day before the annual ceremony of the renewal of the sect's covenant at Shavuot, partially preserved in 4QBerakhot. On the Sabbaths following this ceremony of rededication, the Divine Glory descends on the merkabah to indwell the temple that has been constructed and to receive the pure sacrifices that are offered in it (songs 12–13). If this analysis is correct, a unified liturgical framework links the Sabbath Songs to 4QBerakhot. It is perhaps legitimate to suspect that the Songs of the Maskil may also belong within this framework.

Despite repeated references to the recovery of Adam's lost glory, the theme of correspondence between the temple and the body is not developed in the Qumran sources. Instead, we find an emphasis on the embodiment of the temple archetype in the structure of the community as a whole. The rabbinic writings, in contrast, posit a three-way correspondence between cosmos, temple, and body but make no reference to the correspondence between temple and community. All of these themes, however, are taken up and developed in combination by the Christian writers, who regarded their Savior-Messiah as “a great high priest who has gone through the heavens” (Heb 4:14) and for whom the image of the holy community as both body and temple was of central importance in the formulation of their faith.

God’s Face in the Enochic Tradition

Andrei A. Orlov

Moses said, “Show me your glory, I pray.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, YHWH, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.” And the Lord continued, “See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock. And while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.” (Exod 33:18–23)

Exodus 33:18–23 depicts Moses asking the Lord to show him his glory. Instead, the Lord agrees to proclaim his name before Moses, telling him that it is impossible for a human being to see God’s face.

In recent scholarship this prominent motif of Moses’ story has become a stumbling block for students of the Hebrew Bible. Currently most biblical scholars agree upon apparent difficulties in the literary-critical analysis of this section of Exodus. Martin Noth comments that a "literary-critical analysis of Exod 33 is probably impossible."¹ Berrard Childs confirms that there are several fundamental exegetical problems with Exod 33:18–23 and that “the most difficult one is to determine the role of this passage in its larger context.”²

The internal logic of the passage about the divine face is also problematic. The whole narrative about God’s מין ו śm in Exod 33 is quite perplexing. Exodus 33:11 informs a reader that God would speak to Moses face to face (.'/'.$ן מנה ל וCLASSICAL) as a person speaks with a friend. A few verses later, in 33:14–15, God promises Moses that his face will go (.’ל CLASSICAL מנה) with him. In the context of these promises and early

⁠* The first draft of this paper was presented in 2000 to the Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism Group at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and appeared in the Society of Biblical Literature 2000 Seminar Papers (SBLS39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2000), 130–47.


testimonies about "face-to-face" relationships, it comes as a surprise that in 33:20
the Lord suddenly rejects Moses' request to see his face (אֶלֶּ֛הָה יְהוָ֖ה אֲדָמָֽה).

It is clear that the anthropomorphic tradition about the divine face in Exod 33 has a fragmentary character. It may well contain polemics against the anthropomorphic position of the I source and the Deuteronomic theology of the divine name: instead of seeing of God's face, the Lord offers Moses to hear his name. Noth observes that Exod 33 can be seen as "a conglomeration of secondary accretions."2

The apparent difficulties one encounters in clarifying the concept of the divine face within the context of the known sources of the Pentateuch call for an investigation of the broader biblical and extrabiblical traditions where this motif could be possibly preserved in its extended form. Implicitly linked to the "original" Exodus motif, these later "interpretations" might provide some additional insights that may help us better understand the fragmentary tradition preserved in Exod 33. This essay will focus on one of the possible echoes of Exod 33: the theophanic tradition of the divine countenance preserved in the corpus of the Enochic writings.

3. Antony E. Campbell and Mark A. O'Brien (Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts, Introductions, Annotations [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 263) placed Exod 33 within the nonsource texts.

4. The Old Testament materials reveal complicated polemics for and against an anthropomorphic understanding of God. Scholars agree that the anthropomorphic imagery of the Hebrew Bible was "crystallized" in the tradition known to us as the Priestly source (Moshe Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School [Oxford: Clarendon, 1972], 191). Theological developments of the Priestly tradition demonstrate that the anthropomorphism of the Priestly source is intimately connected with the place of divine habitation. In this tradition, in which the Divinity is personalized and depicted in the tangible corporeal similitudes, God, who possesses a human form, has a need for a house or tabernacle (ibid.). Weinfeld rightly observes that this anthropomorphic position was not entirely an invention of the Priestly source but derived from early sacrificial conceptions found in the early sources. In these traditions the Deity was sitting in his house ensconced between the two cherubim, and at his feet rested the ark, his footstool. In spite of the active promulgation of anthropomorphic concepts in some Old Testament materials, such as J, E, and Ugaritic sources, the Hebrew Bible also contains polemics against God's corporeality. Scholars note the sharp opposition of the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic school to the anthropomorphic tradition of the Priestly source and early anthropomorphic traditions. In their opinion, the Deuteronomic school "first initiated the polemic against the anthropomorphic and corporeal conceptions of the Deity and ... it was afterwards taken up by the prophets Jeremia and Deutero-Isaiah" (ibid., 198). In contrast to the anthropomorphic imagery of J and P, the Deuteronomic school promulgated an anthropo-


the divine face. The first one occurs in 2 En. 22, which portrays Enoch's encounter with the Lord in the celestial realm. Enoch recounts:

I saw the view of the face of the Lord, like iron made burning hot in a fire and brought out, and it emits sparks and is incandescent. Thus even I saw the face of the Lord. But the face of the Lord is not to be talked about; it is so very marvelous and supremely awesome and supremely frightening. And who am I to give an account of the incomprehensible being of the Lord, and of his face, so extremely strange and indescribable? And how many are his commands, and his multiple voice, and the Lord's throne, supremely great and not made by hands, and the choir stools all around him, the cherubim and the seraphim armies, and their never silent singing. Who can give an account of his beautiful appearance, never changing and indescribable, and his great glory? And I fell down flat and did obeisance to the Lord. (2 En. 22:1–4, the longer recension)\(^8\)

In chapter 39 Enoch reports this theophanic experience to his sons during his short visit to the earth, adding some new details. Although both portrayals demonstrate a number of terminological affinities, the second account explicitly connects the divine face with the Lord's anthropomorphic "extent." The following account is drawn from the shorter recension of 2 Enoch:

And now, my children it is not from my lips that I am reporting to you today, but from the lips of the Lord who has sent me to you. As for you, you hear my words, out of my lips, a human being created equal to yourselves; but I have heard the words from the fiery lips of the Lord. For the lips of the Lord are a furnace of fire, and his words are the fiery flames which come out. You, my children, you see my face, a human being created just like yourselves; I am one who has seen the face of the Lord,\(^9\) like iron made burning hot by a fire, emitting sparks. For you gaze into my eyes, a human being created just like yourselves;

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\(^7\) In this paper I have used Andersen's ("2 [Slavonic Apocalypse of] Enoch," English translation of 2 Enoch and follow his division in chapters.

\(^8\) Ibid., 136. The shorter recension of the Slavonic text gives a less elaborate description of the Lord's appearance: "I saw the Lord. His face was strong and very glorious and terrible. Who is (in) to give an account of the dimensions of the being of the face of the Lord, strong and very terrible? Or his many-eyed ones and many-voiced ones, and the supremely great throne of the Lord, not made by hands, or those who are in attendance all around him, the cherubim and the seraphim armies, or how unvarying and indescribable and never silent and glorious is his service. And I fell down flat and did obeisance to the Lord" (see ibid., 137). Andersen observes that the absence of the comparison with hot iron in manuscripts of the shorter recension shows the embarrassment of scribes over this attempt to describe the Lord's appearance.


\(^10\) The important detail of this description is solar symbolism, which plays an important role in 2 Enoch. The text often uses solar metaphors in various descriptions of angelic beings, e.g., in 2 En. 1, where Enoch meets two angels with "faces like the shining sun." Later, during his heavenly journey, Enoch sees "a group of seven angels, brilliant and very glorious with faces more radiant than the radiance of the sun." The images of fire and light are often involved in these solar descriptions of angelic hosts. The text pictures "glorious and shining and many-eyed stations of the Lord's servants ... and of the ranks of powerful fireborn heavenly armies." Andersen rightly observes that "fire and light are fundamental elements in the physics of 2 Enoch" (Andersen, "2 [Slavonic Apocalypse of] Enoch," 104).


\(^12\) Manuscripts of the longer recension do not demonstrate substantial differences with this description.


\(^14\) Gershon Scholem's research on the presence of the רוחสะפיה traditions in 2 En. 39 helps to clarify the "anthropomorphic" character of the Lord's "extent" in 2 Enoch. See his lecture "The Age of Shitah Qumah Speculation and a Passage in Origen" in idem, Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism.
Lord's face and the Lord's "form" is reinforced by an additional parallel pair in which Enoch's face is identified with Enoch's "form":

You, my children, you see my face, a human being created just like yourselves; but I am one who has seen the face of the Lord, like iron made burning hot by a fire, emitting sparks... And you see the form of my body, the same as your own: but I have seen the form (extent) of the Lord, without measure and without analogy, who has no end. (2 En. 39:3–6)

The association between the divine face and divine form in 2 En. 39:3–6 alludes to the biblical tradition from Exod 33:18–23 where the divine presence is mentioned in connection with his glorious divine form: God's kavod:15

Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory (תבונתך)." And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence... but," he said, "you cannot see my face (-plugins), for no one may see me and live.

It is clear that in the biblical passage the impossibility of seeing the Lord's face is understood not simply as the impossibility of seeing the particular part of the Lord but rather as the impossibility of seeing the complete range of his glorious "body." The logic of the whole passage, which employs such terms as God's "face" and God's "back," suggests that the term panim refers to the "forefront" of the divine extent. The imagery of the divine face found in Psalms also favors this motif of the identity between the Lord's face and his anthropomorphic "form." For example, in Ps 17:15 the Lord's face is closely associated with his form or likeness (תבונתך): "As for me, I shall behold your face (пущיתך)" in righteousness;

15. The term בונה can be translated as "substance," "body," "mass," "power," "might," "honor," "glory," and "splendor." In its meaning as "glory" בונה usually refers to God, his sanctuary, his city, or sacred paraphernalia. The Priestly tradition uses the term in connection with God's appearances in the tabernacle. P and Ezekiel describe בונה as a blazing fire surrounded by radiance and a great cloud. See Moshe Weinfield, "תבונתך," TDOT 7:22–28.


17. Note also that the poetic rhyme further reinforces the correspondence between the face and the form of God in this passage.

when I awake, I shall be satisfied with beholding your form (תבונתך)." It is evident that all three accounts, Exod 33:18–23, Ps 17:15, and 2 En. 39:3–6, represent a single tradition in which the divine face serves as the terminus technicus for the designation of the Lord's anthropomorphic extent.

 Apparently all these accounts deal with the specific anthropomorphic manifestation known as God's kavod. The possibility of such identification is already hinted in Exod 33, where Moses, who asks the Lord to show Moses the Lord's kavod, receives the answer that it is impossible for him to see the Lord's "face." The correlation of the divine face with "likeness" (תבונתך) in Ps 17:15 can be also an allusion to kavod, which in Ezek 1:28 is described as "the likeness of the glory of the Lord." 18

There is another early Mosaic account that correlates the Sinai encounter with kavod. This important tradition, found in the fragments of the drama Exodus written by Ezekiel the Dramatist, depicts Moses' experience at Sinai as the vision of God's anthropomorphic kavod.20

I dreamt there was on the summit of mount Sinai
A certain great throne (המרד ילע) extending up to heaven's clef.
On which there sat a certain noble man
Wearing a crown and holding a great scepter in his left hand.21

Wayne Meeks observes that this passage may be safely taken as a witness to traditions of the second century B.C.E., since it was quoted by Alexander Polyhistor, who lived around 80–40 B.C.E. 22 It means that by the second century B.C.E. Moses' association with the divine kavod, hinted in Exod 33, was already surrounded by an elaborate imagery, in which the throne of glory played a crucial role.

This theophanic pattern in which the encounter with the divine face is understood as the vision of God's throne is further strengthened in 2 En. 22, which provides various pieces of evidences that prove that the anthropomorphic

18. Although the passage uses a different terminology, namely, the term בונה, the identification still has a strong anthropomorphic flavor. The term תבונתך can be translated as "form," "likeness," "semblance," or "representation."

19. Contra Walther Eichrodt, who insists that the panim had no connection with the kavod. He argues that the two concepts derive from different roots, and were never combined with one another (Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, 2:38).

20. Pieter W. van der Horst ("Moses' Throne Vision in Ezekiel the Dramatist," JJS 34 [1983]: 24) observes that Ezekiel the Dramatist's vision of God in human shape seated on the throne is based on the first chapter of the biblical Ezekiel.


"extent," identified with the divine face, indeed represents the divine kavod. The theophany of the divine countenance in the Slavonic apocalypse is surrounded by a peculiar kavod imagery, which plays a prominent role in the Ezekelian account. There are several noteworthy parallels.

First, the theophany of the divine face took place in the highest of the heaven. The highest of the heaven is a traditional place of God's throne, the abode of his Glory. A later account found in 3 Enoch states that "in Ararat there are 660 thousand of myriads of glorious angels, hewn out of flaming fire, standing opposite the throne of glory. The glorious King covers his face, otherwise the heaven of Ararat would burst open in the middle, because of the glorious brilliance." Second, the theophanic description in 2 En. 22 refers to "his many-eyed ones," alluding to מָיתָ רֹאִים, the wheels, the special class of the angels of the throne who in Ezek 1:18 are described as the angelic beings "full of eyes ( מלאָה יִתְנוֹם)." Third, a reference to the "many-voiced ones" probably alludes to choirs of angelic hosts surrounding the throne. Fourth, in 2 En. 22 there is a direct reference to the throne of the Lord, which occupies a central place in the theophanic description and is pictured as "supremely great and not made by hands." The throne of glory is surrounded by the armies of the angelic hosts, cherubim, and seraphim, with "their never-silent singing."

2. Moses’ Face

Previous research shows that the correlation between God's face and his luminous form (his glorious kavod) was already implicitly articulated in Exod 33. The Enochic theophany found in 2 Enoch further strengthens this connection, giving a theophanic description of the Lord's face as his terrifying "extent" that emits light and fire.

The important detail of these two accounts is the "danger motif": the warnings about the peril of seeing the Deity. Both of them contain specific references to the harmful effect this theophanic experience has on the mortals who dare to behold the divine face. In Exod 33:20 the Lord warns Moses about the danger of seeing his face: "You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." The motif of peril is further reinforced by the Lord's instructions in 33:22, where he commands Moses to hide himself in a cleft in the rock and promises to protect the prophet with his hands.

26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.

The danger motif also looms large in 2 Enoch. In 2 En. 39, immediately after his description of the theophany of the face, Enoch gives a warning to his children about the danger of this theophanic experience:

Frightening and dangerous it is to stand before the face of an earthly king, terrifying and very dangerous it is, because the will of the king is death and the will of the king is life. How much more terrifying [and dangerous] it is to stand before the face of the King of earthly kings and of the heavenly armies, [the regulator of the living and of the dead]. Who can endure that endless misery? (2 En. 39:8) 28

The "danger motif" in Exod 33 and in 2 Enoch implicitly suggests that both of these accounts support the idea that the human being actually can see the face of God. Moshe Weinfeld argues that the warning about the danger of seeing the Deity usually affirms the possibility of such an experience. In his observations about antithropomorphic tendencies of Deuteronomy, Deutero-Isaiah, and Jeremiah, Weinfeld points to the fact that these texts demonstrate a lack of usual warnings about the danger of seeing the Deity found in pre-Deuteronomic books. He concludes that it happened because the Deuteronomistic school could not conceive of the possibility of seeing the Deity. 29

The possibility of theophany hinted in 2 Enoch and Exod 33 might suggest that the Exodus account implicitly asserts that Moses could see the divine form. The distinctive details in the depiction of Moses’ face in Exod 34 may further support this conclusion. But before we explore this motif, let us again return to the narrative of 2 Enoch.

From this Enochic account we learn that the vision of the divine face has dramatic consequences for Enoch's appearance. His body endures radical changes as it becomes covered with the divine light. The important detail here is that the luminous transformation of Enoch takes place in front of the radiant "face" of the Lord. In 22:6 Enoch reports that he was lifted up and brought before the Lord's face by the archangel Michael. The Lord decides to appoint Enoch as שר פנימיה, the prince of the divine presence: "Let Enoch come up and stand in front of my face forever." 31 Further, the Lord commands the archangel Michael to remove Enoch from earthly clothing, anoint him with the delightful oil, and put him into the clothes of the Lord's glory (22:8–9). The text describes the actions of
Michael, who anoints Enoch with the delightful oil and clothes him. The symbolism of light permeates the whole scene; the oil emanates the rays of the glittering sun "greater than the greater light." At the end of this procedure, Enoch "had become like one of the glorious ones, and there was no observable difference." 34

In Enoch's radiant metamorphosis before the divine face an important detail can be found that links Enoch's transformation with the account in Exodus. In 2 En. 37 we learn about the unusual procedure performed on Enoch's face during the final stage of his encounter with the Lord: the Lord called one of his senior angels to chill the face of Enoch. The text says that the angel appeared frigid; he was as white as snow, and his hands were as cold as ice. The text further depicts the angel chilling Enoch's face, who could not endure the terror of the Lord, "just as it is not possible to endure the fire of a stove and the heat of the sun." Right after this "chilling procedure," the Lord informs Enoch that, if his face had not been chilled, no human being would be able to look at his face. 35 This reference to the radiance of Enoch's face after his encounter with the Lord is an apparent parallel to the incandescent face of Moses after the Sinai experience in Exod 34. 36

References to the shining countenance of a visionary found in 2 Enoch return us again to the Exodus story, where 34:29–35 portrays Moses after his encounter with the Lord. 37 The passage tells that "when Moses came down from Mount Sinai ... he was not aware that his face was radiant, because he had spoken with the Lord." The strange logic of the last sentence, which points to an ambiguous connection between the speech of the Lord as a cause of Moses' glowing face, can be explained by the Enochic theophanic account, where "the lips of the Lord are a furnace of fire, and his words are the fiery flames which come out."


34. Andersen, "2 [Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch]," 139 observes that "this motif [Enoch's transformation into the glorious angel] seems to have been influenced by the legend of Moses, whose shining face was a reflection of God's magnificent glory."

35. Ibid., 160.

36. About the possible Mesopotamian provenance of this motif, see Menahem Haran, "The Shining of Moses' Face: A Case Study in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography" [Ex 34:29–35; Ps 68:32; Hab 3:4]."


38. Andersen, "2 [Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch]," 163.

These parallels between the later Enochic text and the biblical Mosaic account are not inappropriate. As will be demonstrated later, the connection between the Enochic and Mosaic accounts has quite ancient roots. Evidences of the early link between Enoch and Moses includes the already mentioned drama of Ezekiel the Dramatist, which was apparently written during the second century B.C.E. 39

Wayne Meeks and Pieter van der Horst observe that the depiction of Moses in the drama of Ezekiel the Dramatist bears some similarities to Enoch's figure in the Enochic traditions. 40 They note a number of remarkable allusions in the drama to the Enochic motifs and themes. First, Moses' account is depicted as his dream vision in a fashion similar to Enoch's dreams in 1 and 2 Enoch. Second, in the text Moses is "elevated" by God, who gives him the throne, the royal diadem, and the scepter. Third, God appoints Moses as an eschatological judge of human kind to see "things present, past and future." 41 The traditional role of Enoch found already in early Enochic booklets. Fourth, Moses is an "expert" in "a variety of things," including cosmological and astronomical information:

I beheld the entire circled earth
Both beneath the earth and above the heaven,
And a host of stars fell on its knees before me;
I numbered them all,
They passed before me like a squadron of soldiers.

This preoccupation with various meteorological, astronomical, and eschatological "secrets" are typical duties of the elevated Enoch that are here transferred to Moses, apparently for the first time. 43

Finally, the motif of assigning the seat/throne is a peculiar feature of Enochic literature where Enoch-Metatron is depicted as a scribe 45 who has a seat (later

39. Holladay, Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors, 2:312.


41. The crowning of Enoch-Metatron became a prominent leitmotif in later Enochic tradition, especially, in 3 Enoch. Meeks observes that the enshrinement of Enoch-Metatron in 3 Enoch "betrays interesting similarities to Moses' traditions" (Meeks, Prophet-King, 207). See also van der Horst, who observes that "like Moses, Enoch is assigned a cosmic and divine function that involves the wearing of regalia" ("Moses' Throne Vision," 25).

42. Holladay, Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors, 2:367.

43. Ibid., 2:365.

44. R. H. Charles argued that this transition of Enoch's function to Moses first was made in 2 Apocalypse of Baruch, where God shows Moses "the measures of the fire, also the depths of the abyss, and the weight of the winds, and the number of the drops of rain" (APOT 2:514).

The tacit links between Enoch and Moses found in the early Enochic theopoanic tradition later becomes openly articulated in rabbinic literature. In this later enunciation, as in the initial encounters, the familiar theopoanic motif from the Exodus story again plays a crucial role. From 3 Enoch we learn that it is Enoch-Metatron, whose face once was transformed into fire, who is now the one who tells Moses about his shining visage: "At once Metatron, Prince of the Divine Presence, said to Moses, Son of Amram, fear not! for already God favors you. Ask what you will with confidence and boldness, for light shines from the skin of your face from one end of the world to the other."

For example, in 2 En. 23:4 the angel Vevvel commands Enoch to sit down:146 "You sit down; write everything...." Enoch reports, "And I sat down for a second period of 30 days and 30 nights, and I wrote accurately" (2:6).147 The theme of Enoch-Metatron's seat became a prominent motif in rabbinic tradition, where according to b. Hag. 15a the privilege of "sitting" beside God was accorded solely to Metatron by virtue of his character as a "scribe," for he was granted permission as a scribe to sit and write down the merits of Israel.


Theforegoing research has examined some extrabiblical materials related to the motif of the divine face found in Exod 33. The investigation has shown that the evolution of this motif in later traditions is dependent on Enoch-Moses gestalt, which plays a prominent role in Enochic theopoanies of the divine face. This research, however, would not be complete without mentioning another important source also related to the traditions about the patriarch Enoch and the prophet Moses. This source is the Priestly editor of the Pentateuch.

Much attention has been devoted to the peculiar interest of the Priestly editor in anthropomorphic descriptions of the Deity.150 Weinfeld and Mettinger show that the Priestly source played a crucial role in promoting biblical theopoanic traditions. In these traditions Moses' figure has occupied an important place.151

The Priestly source also was the locus where the enigmatic figure of Enoch for the first time appeared in its esoteric complexity,152 indicating that the priestly author was cognizant of the broader Enochic developments. Some scholars believe that perhaps it is "to some such developed Enoch tradition that the author of Genesis is making reference when he emits his cryptic statements about Enoch in Genesis 5:22–24."153 Students of the Enochic tradition are now aware that the Priestly editor was familiar with the peculiar Mesopotamian traditions that constituted a conceptual framework for Enoch's figure.154

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151. The traditions about Enoch are different in J and P. For the discussion of the differences, see James C. VanderKam, Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition (CBQMS 16; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), 23–51; Helge S. Kvanvig, Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man (WMANT 61; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner, 1988), 40–53.


In these Mesopotamian traditions a prototype of Enoch, Enmeduranki, is portrayed as a "translated" figure, the one "who sat in the presence (naḫar) of Shamash and Adad, the divine adjudicators." This reference to Enmeduranki's access to the glorious presence/facade of the solar deity indicates that the later role of Enoch as sar ḫapanim, the prince of the divine presence or the prince of the face, was already present in its rudimentary form in the Mesopotamian traditions known to the Priestly editor.

include the various versions of the so-called Sumerian antediluvian king list, the materials that dated from 1500 to 165 B.C.E. The list demonstrates a number of similarities with the genealogy of Gen 5. One of its interesting details is that Mesopotamian kings, as well as patriarchs from the Genesis account, had extraordinary long reigns, ranging from 3,600 to 72,000 years. A second important parallel is that two versions of the list give ten kings, the last of whom is designated as the hero of the flood. It demonstrates a close resemblance to the role of Noah, who occupies the tenth place in the list of Gen 5. VanderKam notes that "in the literature on Genesis there is a well established tradition which holds that P modeled his pre-flood genealogy on a Mesopotamian list of antediluvian kings, the so-called Sumerian King List" (VanderKam, Enoch and the Growth, 26). An important character in the Sumerian King list is Enmeduranki (Enmeduranna), the king of Sippar, the city of the sun god Shamash. In three copies of the list he occupies the seventh place, which in the Genesis genealogy belongs to Noah. Moreover, in other Mesopotamian sources Enmeduranki appears in many roles and situations that demonstrate remarkable similarities with Enoch's story. VanderKam's research shows that the priestly author was aware of these broader Mesopotamian traditions that served as a prototype for Enoch's figure, whose symbolical age of 365 years reflects the link between the patriarch and the solar cult of Shamash. VanderKam concludes that "the biblical image of Enoch is based on the Mesopotamian picture of Enmeduranki" (ibid., 50).

56. Wilfred G. Lambert, "Enmeduranki and Related Matters," JCS 21 (1967): 128 and 130. In another text about Enmeduranki the same motif of the divine presence can be found: "he may approach the presence (naḫar) of Shamash and Adad" (ibid., 132).


58. VanderKam, Enoch and the Growth, 50.

In the light of these observations, the idea that Exod 33 could actually contain the original Enochic motif is not inappropriate. The implicit link between the Enochic account of the divine presence and the Mosaic account of the divine panim may well reflect the conceptual world of the Priestly editor, who often "has expressed his acquaintance with a fairly broad range of Mesopotamian traditions in remarkably few words."