

Dictionary Early Judaism

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makes the prophetic deeds of the two prophets resemble each other. Both part the Jordan (2 Kings 2:8, 14), raise the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:8-37), multiply food miraculously (1 Kings 17:8-16; 2 Kings 4:42-44), and are, immediately before death, addressed with "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" (2 Kings 2:12; 13:14).

Later Tradition

In subsequent tradition Elisha is always in the shadow of Elijah and garners much less attention. The Hebrew Bible fails to speak of him outside of Kings (contrast Mal. 4:5, which envisages the return of Elijah). Likewise, Philo nowhere refers to Elisha. It is symptomatic that, although the New Testament names Elijah over thirty times, it names Elisha only once (Luke 4:27 — although the accounts of Jesus calling disciples in Mark 1:16-20 par.; 2:13-14 par.; and Matt. 8:18-22 = Luke 9:57-62 as well as the story of his feeding 5,000 in Mark 6:30-44 par. are modeled upon 1 Kings 19:19-21 and 2 Kings 4:42-44, respectively).

Elisha also goes unnamed in most of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, although CD A 8.20 mentions him in passing, and 4Q481A may contain fragments of a lost Elisha apocryphon (the extant scraps seem to paraphrase and supplement 2 Kings 2:14-16). Sirach 48:12-14, however, offers a brief retrospective of his life and work. The Hebrew reads: "When Elijah was concealed in the whirlwind, Elisha was filled with his spirit. He did twice as many signs [as Elijah] [cf. 2 Kings 2:9] and miracles with every utterance of his mouth. During his many days he feared no one, and no one could intimidate his spirit. No deed was beyond his ability, and in death his body prophesied." The last assertion, so oddly expressed, seems to be a reference to 2 Kings 13:20-21, where contact with Elisha's bones causes a dead man to return to life.

Lives of the Prophets

The *Lives of the Prophets* includes a longer summary of Elisha's career. After the conclusion of the *Life of the Prophet Elijah*, which mentions that Elisha crossed the Jordan with Elijah (chap. 14), the book's next section is entitled the *Life of the Prophet Elisha*, and it is wholly dedicated to Elijah's successor. It largely summarizes miracle stories from 2 Kings, mostly in their canonical order — Elisha divided the Jordan (2 Kings 2:13-14), purified foul water (2:19-22), summoned bears to maul children (2:23-24), multiplied oil for a widow (4:1-7), raised the dead (4:8-37), rendered poisoned food edible (4:38-41), made an axe head float (6:1-7), cured a leper (5:1-27), and blinded an army (6:8-23); and after death, his bones brought a dead man to life (13:20-21). The *Life of the Prophet Elisha* departs significantly from 2 Kings only in its narration of the prophet's birth and death. Concerning the latter, it informs us that Elisha died in Samaria, which 2 Kings does not say and indeed seemingly excludes. Concerning the former, the *Life of the Prophet Elisha* 1-2 passes on the tale, without scriptural foundation, that, when Elijah was born in Gilgal, the golden calf (cf. 2 Kings 10:29; 17:16) bellowed so loudly

that it was heard in Jerusalem, and the (high?) priest, in response, declared through the Urim that a prophet who would destroy idols had just arrived in Israel.

Josephus

A thorough treatment of Elisha appears in Josephus, *Ant.* 8.352-54; 9.27-183. This consistently sympathetic rewriting of portions of Kings, which characterizes Elisha's actions as "glorious" (9.46, 182), presents the prophet as having been just, humane, merciful, and hospitable (9.50, 58, 59, 182; cf. *J.W.* 4.462). In order to craft this exemplary portrait, Josephus omits several biblical stories in which Elisha acts rashly or harshly (e.g., 1 Kings 19:17, 21; 2 Kings 5:27). Josephus likewise, in accord with his general habit of downplaying or rationalizing biblical miracles, drops a number of astounding wonders reported in 2 Kings (4:38-41; 4:42-44; 5:1-19, 20-27; 6:1-7).

Josephus discreetly ignores 2 Kings 2:23-25, where Elisha, in response to the taunting of children, calls forth bears which maul forty-two boys. It seems likely enough that Josephus found the story morally distasteful, as did some of the rabbis later on (e.g., *b. Soṭah* 47a). Moreover, *T. Abr.* 10:6-7, 12-14 has God rebuke Abraham when he, acting like Elisha, commands beasts to come out of a thicket to devour certain sinners, and Ps.-Clem. *Hom.* 16:20 similarly rejects Elisha's act of vengeance. Origen felt moved to allegorize the folk tale (*Homily on Ezekiel* 4.7). Obviously discomfort with the Elisha of 2 Kings 2:23-25 was not uncommon.

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Enoch

Enoch is the seventh antediluvian patriarch, son of Jared and father of Methuselah. The terse account of Enoch's life in Gen. 5:21-24 attests to several important features of his story. It says that the patriarch lived only 365 years, a life span unusually short in comparison with that of other members of the Sethite genealogy. He also walked with *ha-ʿēlōhīm*, which can be interpreted either as a sign of his piety toward God or his association with angels. Finally, he was taken by God, which may implicitly refer to his ascension and installation in heaven.

While the Genesis account gives only scant and enigmatic details, in the earliest Enochic writings gathered in the collection known as 1 (*Ethiopic*) *Apocalypse of Enoch* or simply 1 *Enoch*, the seventh antediluvian patriarch has a set of highly developed roles: sage, diviner, scribe, expert in secrets, and priest. Such elaborations represent the result of a substantial and lengthy conceptual development, the impressive scope and antiquity of which has been reaffirmed by the discovery of the Qumran Enochic materials.

Mesopotamian Background

In view of the complexity of the patriarch's profile already present in the earliest Enochic writings, scholars believe that some Mesopotamian influences, especially traditions about the seventh antediluvian king Enmeduranki, contributed to the evolution of Enoch. Enmeduranki (Enmeduranna) was the king of Sippar, the city of the sun-god Šamaš. In the Sumerian King List, he occupies the seventh place, which in the Genesis genealogy belongs to Enoch. A cuneiform tablet from Nineveh describes Enmeduranki as a translated figure who entered the divine assembly and received the heavenly tablets. In one of the earliest Enochic booklets, the *Book of the Watchers* (1 Enoch 36), Enoch is depicted in several roles that show striking similarities to those of Enmeduranki. Just like his Mesopotamian counterpart, Enoch is skilled in the art of divination; he is able to receive and interpret mantic dreams. Like Enmeduranki, he travels to the divine throne and becomes initiated into the heavenly secrets by celestial beings. He then brings this celestial knowledge back to earth and, similar to Enmeduranki, shares it with the people and with his son. Enoch's life span of 365 years reflects the number of days in the solar year and may also constitute a link with Enmeduranki, who was the priest of the solar deity Šamaš. Enoch's access to the divine throne in the celestial temple, the prototype of the Jerusalem Temple, establishes him as a heavenly priest like Enmeduranki and secures the sacerdotal significance of his revelation.

Mediatorial Functions

Enoch is often depicted in Second Temple and later literature as a mediator of revelations that often were in polemical opposition to the official ideology. This mediatorial function profoundly shaped the cluster of the traditional roles that Enochic lore ascribed to its hero. Enoch's role as a mediator of divine revelation may be implicitly reflected even in his name. While several etymologies for it have been proposed, many scholars suggest that it may be related to the Hebrew root *hnk*, in the sense "to train up," "to dedicate," or "to initiate."

The patriarch's mediatorial functions loom large in Enochic lore. He is depicted not only dispatching knowledge from the celestial to the terrestrial realm but also conveying messages received in the lower realms to God and other celestial beings. This two-way communication involves specific media of knowledge represented by the heavenly tablets and by Enoch's petitions and testimonies written on behalf of fallen creatures. His functions as mediator are not confined to a particular realm or a particular petitioner, since his clients include a range of divine, angelic, human, and composite creatures.

In the *Book of the Watchers*, Enoch mediates on behalf of rebellious beings that include the fallen Watchers and the Giants. In 2 Enoch the elders of the earth ask him for intercession. In the *Genesis Apocryphon* Enoch's son Methuselah consults him to obtain special knowledge about the extraordinary birth of Lamech's son

Noah. Enoch's mediating activities also are not limited by specific chronological boundaries. He mediates in the generation of the flood, but he is also expected to be a mediator and a witness of divine judgment at the end of days. 2 Enoch 36:3 stresses the enduring scope of the patriarch's mediating activities when it mentions the Lord's invitation to Enoch to become his celestial scribe and witness of the divine judgment forever.

Revealer of Esoteric Lore

Enochic materials emphasize that the knowledge transmitted by their hero is not an ordinary revelation but an ultimate wisdom of perennial value. This eternal quality of the revelation is stressed in the Cairo Geniza manuscript of Sir. 44:16, which identifies Enoch as "the sign of knowledge for all generations." The patriarch's prowess in the uttermost heavenly secrets is deeply woven into the fabric of Enochic myth and is set against the expertise in celestial knowledge that the fallen Watchers once possessed. Already in the Enoch *Astronomical Book* (1 Enoch 72–82), the possession and revelation of cosmological and astronomical secrets becomes a major function of the elevated Enoch. The origin of this role in Enochic tradition can be traced to 1 Enoch 72:1, 74:2, and 80:1, which depict the patriarch as a recipient of angelic revelations, including the celestial knowledge of astronomical, meteorological, and calendrical lore. He remains in this capacity in the majority of the materials associated with the early Enochic circle. In the *Book of the Similitudes* (1 Enoch 37–71) Enoch is portrayed as the one who "saw all secrets of heaven" (41:1). *Jubilees* 4:17 also attests to this peculiar role. Later merkabah mysticism also underscores the role of Enoch as the "knower of secrets"; thus according to 3 Enoch 11:2, Enoch-Metatron is able to behold "deep secrets and wonderful mysteries."

Scribal Functions

Enoch's role as an expert in the secrets of heaven and earth cannot be separated from his scribal functions, which are documented already in the *Book of the Watchers* and the *Astronomical Book*. In 1 Enoch 12:4 and 15:11 Enoch is defined by the honorific "scribe of righteousness." In 1 Enoch 74:2, Enoch writes down the instructions of his *angelus interpres* Uriel regarding the secrets of the heavenly bodies and their movements. In 1 Enoch 81:6, Uriel advises the patriarch to record the knowledge he has received in the celestial realm so that he can share it with his children during his upcoming visitation of the earth. Qumran fragments of the *Book of Giants* (4Q203 frg. 8 line 4 and 4Q530 frg. 2 line 14) label Enoch as a distinguished scribe or "the scribe set apart." In *Jub.* 4:17 he is credited with learning the art of writing, instruction, and wisdom and with writing down in a book the signs of the sky. In Merkabah tradition, Enoch-Metatron is depicted as a scribe who has a throne in the heavenly realm; according to *b. Hagigah* 15a, the privilege of sitting beside God was accorded solely to Metatron because he had been commissioned by God to sit and write down the merits of Israel.

Other Roles

Late Second Temple Enochic materials, including the *Book of the Similitudes* and *2 Enoch*, try to enhance Enoch's profile by transferring to him many additional elevated characteristics and titles. In the *Similitudes* Enoch is identified with several biblical figures including Deutero-Isaiah's "servant of the LORD" and Daniel's "one like a son of man," in an attempt to underline his crucial role in the eschatological judgment. *2 Enoch* further develops the elevated profile, anticipating his prominent role as the supreme angel Metatron in rabbinic and Hekhalot literature. Some early Christian materials (e.g., Heb. 11:5-6; Jude 14; *Barn.* 4:16) reaffirm the distinguished role of Enoch and the esteemed status of Enochic lore.

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See also: Metatron; Son of Man

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Enoch, Astronomical Book of (1 Enoch 72–82)

The fourth section in *1 Enoch*, chaps. 72–82, calls itself "The Book about the Motion of the Heavenly Luminaries"; in scholarly usage it is often named the *Book of the Luminaries* or the *Astronomical Book*. It contains revelations from the angel Uriel, whom God appointed as the leader of all the celestial lights, to the patriarch Enoch, who transmitted this astronomical wisdom to his posterity.

Contents

In the revelations Uriel discloses information about the movement of the sun, moon, and stars through six gates located on the eastern and six corresponding ones on the western horizon and relates their movements to the annual calendars. The angel tells Enoch that the sun remains for thirty days in each of the six gates (arcs of the horizon) in its two annual passages through

them, with an extra day at the end of each season (the equinoxes and solstices); the result is a solar year lasting 364 days (chap. 72). The writer criticizes those who do not include the extra four days in their reckoning of the year and who thus follow a schematic calendar of 360 days (75:1-3; 82:4-8) — a system well known from cuneiform sources. The stars define the same 364-day calendar, while the moon measures a shorter year of 354 days (74:12-17). Beginning at 75:4, the text takes up other openings in the sky, including twelve gates through which the winds blow (three in each of the cardinal directions); the writer also lists the kinds of weather associated with the different winds (chap. 76). In chap. 77 one reads about the four quarters of the earth and seven prominent mountains, rivers, and islands on it. With chap. 78 the text returns to astronomical topics, especially the moon. The message of the booklet seemingly comes to an end in chap. 79: in v. 1 Enoch tells his son: "I have shown you everything, and the law of all the stars is completed" (see also v. 6: "This is the appearance and the likeness of each luminary that Uriel, the great angel who is their leader, showed me"). Yet, chap. 80:2-8 follows with a revelation about the deterioration of the natural world, including the luminaries, that will occur in the days of the sinners. *1 Enoch* 81:1–82:3 narrate how the angels returned Enoch to his home for one year so that he could pass along the wisdom he received from Uriel to his son Methuselah and his other offspring. Then from 82:4 until the end of the booklet (82:20) astronomical topics are again under consideration. It is clear that some material was lost after 82:20 because the reader is led to believe in 82:13 that a description of the four seasons will follow but only the first two are depicted in the last verses (vv. 15-20).

Textual History

There is relatively early testimony to the existence of an astronomical work associated with Enoch. Pseudo-Eupolemus, often thought to have written in the early second century B.C.E., mentions Enoch as the one who discovered astrology and may say he transmitted the information to Methuselah, although he does not credit him with authoring a book. The *Book of Jubilees* (mid-second century B.C.E.) does refer to an astronomical composition by the seventh patriarch (4:16-25), and the presence of Aramaic copies of such a work in Qumran Cave 4 has offered confirmatory evidence of its early date.

Aramaic

J. T. Milik identified four fragmentary copies of an *Astronomical Book of Enoch* from Qumran Cave 4 (4QEnastr^{a-d} [4Q208-211]). While they have made an invaluable contribution to knowledge about the book, comparing the text of these copies with the Ethiopic versions of *1 Enoch* 72–82 has uncovered a set of problems in the transmission of the booklet. As Milik himself noted, the first copy, 4Q208, which he dated by paleographical criteria to the late third or early second century B.C.E., contains the remains of a lengthy