ANDREI A. ORLOV

Abraham Among Golems

Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
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The *Imago Dei* Traditions in the Jewish Pseudepigrapha

Mohr Siebeck

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When Abraham our father observed, and looked, and saw, and investigated, and understood, and carved, and hewed, and combined, and formed, and succeeded, the Lord of all was revealed to him. And he made him sit in his lap and kissed him upon his head.

Sefer Yeṣira 61

Preface

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Milwaukee
Palm Sunday, 2024 Andrei A. Orlov

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Part II: *Imago Dei* Statues

Abbreviations

ÄA	Ägyptologische Abhandlungen
AB	Anchor Bible
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AGAJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
Akk	*Akkadica*
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ArBib	Aramaic Bible
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
ASTI	Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BAC	Bible in Ancient Christianity
BaF	Baghdader Forschungen
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BERG	Beiträge zur europäischen Religionsgeschichte
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BiOr	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BR	*Biblical Research*
BRLJ	Brill Reference Library of Judaism
BROA	Biblioteca del Próximo Oriente Antiguo
BSJS	Brill's Series in Jewish Studies
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAMA	Contexts of Ancient and Medieval Anthropology
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
CHANE	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
CRB	Cahiers de la Revue Biblique
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium

CTM	*Concordia Theological Monthly*
CTR	*Criswell Theological Review*
EB	Eichstätter Beiträge
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
EstBib	*Estudios Biblicos*
ET	*Expository Times*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FS	Fruhmittelalterliche Studien
FSBP	Fontes et Subsidia ad Bibliam Pertinentes
GAP	Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
GRBS	Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HR	*History of Religions*
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUAS	Hebrew University Armenian Studies
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IHC	Islamic History and Civilization
Imm	*Immanuel*
JANER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JARCE	*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBTh	*Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie*
JCPS	Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JJTP	*Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JRitSt	*Journal of Ritual Studies*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JSHRZ	Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period*
JSJSS	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period Supplement Series
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*

JSPSS	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
JTI	*Journal of Theological Interpretation*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
JU	Judentum und Umwelt
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LIS	Literatura Intertestamenària Supplementa
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
MARI	*Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires*
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NHMS	Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies
NHS	Nag Hammadi Studies
NIVAC	The NIV Application Commentary
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
ORA	Orientalische Religionen in der Antike
OTF	Oriental Translation Fund
OTL	Old Testament Library
PHSC	Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts Series
PVTG	Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece
RB	*Revue biblique*
REJ	*Revue des études juives*
RevQ	*Revue de Qumrân*
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
RSBW	Routledge Studies in the Biblical World
RSR	*Recherches de science religieuse*
SAALT	State Archives of Assyria Literary Texts
SANE	Sources from the Ancient Near East
SANER	Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records
SAPERE	Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam REligionemque pertinentia
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SBLSP	*Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SE	*Studia evangelica*
SGRR	Studies in Greek and Roman Religion
SGTK	Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions
SJ	Studia Judaica
SJJTP	Supplements to the Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJOT	Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament
SJS	Studia Judaeoslavica
SPB	Studia Post-Biblica

SSLJM	Sources and Studies in the Literature of Jewish Mysticism
ST	*Studia Theologica*
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
TB	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TBN	Themes in Biblical Narrative
TCS	Text-Critical Studies
TED	Translations of Early Documents
ThZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
UNT	Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
VC	*Vigiliae christianae*
VIRA	*Voprosy instorii religii i ateizma*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WAWSSBL	Writings from the Ancient World Supplements SBL
WBC	Westminster Bible Companion
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WZKM	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*
YJS	Yale Judaica Series
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ŹM	Źródła i monografie
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZRGG	*Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*

Introduction

In recent decades there has been a fundamental reorientation in the scholarly approach to ancient Near Eastern cultic images. The current situation reflects a move from the traditional view of the cultic statues as merely idolatrous representations, an attitude epitomized in the apologetic rhetoric of some biblical narratives,[1] to a more nuanced understanding of the divine images as paradoxical conduits of the divine presence.[2] This paradigm shift sheds profound light on the construction of various divine mediators in the Jewish literary environment, whose role, like that of the ancient Near Eastern cultic images, was also to mediate the deity's presence. Recent studies on polemics against idolatry in the Hebrew Bible and extrabiblical Jewish literature have demonstrated that these Jewish developments not only represent narratives that attempt to reject pagan representations of God but also those in which traditions of cultic statues were polemically appropriated into the biographies of biblical patriarchs and prophets who became envisioned as carriers of the sacred.

Although idolatry was discouraged in the Jewish religious milieu, the idea of the cultic statue as a medium of the holy was perpetuated[3] in Israelite traditions about the *imago Dei*.[4] Andreas Schüle reports that the prohibition of idolatrous cultic images in Israel

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[1] Some experts interpret these polemical narratives as "an oppositional, ritually oriented, power-centered discourse aimed at reconstituting ancient Israel's disrupted cultic and political structures." N. B. Levtow, *Images of Others: Iconic Politics in Ancient Israel* (BJSUCSD, 11; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 86.

[2] For this shift, see Z. Bahrani, *The Graven Image: Representation in Babylonia and Assyria* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

[3] On this transition, see S. L. Herring, "A 'Transubstantiated' Humanity: The Relationship between the Divine Image and the Presence of God in Genesis i 26 f.," *VT* 58 (2008) 480–494; idem, *Divine Substitution: Humanity as the Manifestation of Deity in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Ph.D. diss.; University of Aberdeen, 2011); idem, "Moses as Divine Substitute in Exodus," *CTR* 9 (2012) 53–68 idem, *Divine Substitution: Humanity As the Manifestation of Deity in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (FRLANT, 247; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

[4] Regarding the *imago Dei*, see J. Barr, "The Image of God in the Book of Genesis – A Study in Terminology," *BJRL* 51 (1968) 11–26; S. N. Bunta, "The Likeness of the Image: Adamic Motifs and *Ṣelem* Anthropology in Rabbinic Traditions about Jacob's Image Enthroned in Heaven," *JSJ* 37.1 (2006) 55–84; D. Callender, "The Primal Human and the Image of God," in: *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives* (eds. M. S. Odell and J. T. Strong; SBLSS, 9; Atlanta: SBL, 2000) 175–193; D. Clines, "Humanity as the Image of God," *TB* 19 (1968) 53–

did not put an end altogether to the idea of the "image of God." It is remarkable that very much at the same time when prophets like Deutero-Isaiah and Ezekiel poured scorn on the idols, the idea of the "image of God" was very much alive in another strand of biblical tradition that is probably about contemporaneous with these prophets: according to the priestly telling of creation in Gen 1:1–2:4a it is not lifeless matter, not a man-made statue, but humans as living beings that are envisioned to be indeed the true image of God.[5]

Schüle maintains that we have strong reason to assume that the idea of humankind as the image of God in Gen 1–9 "has been developed on the background of this ancient view of divine presence in the shape of images. This view, however, has been so transformed that not a material object, a statue, but Man as a living being[6] took on the role of the image."[7]

103; E. M. Curtis, *Man as the Image of God in Genesis in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Parallels* (Ph.D. diss.; University of Pennsylvania, 1984); A. Goshen Gottstein, "The Body as Image of God in Rabbinic Literature," *HTR* 87 (1994) 171–195; Herring, *Divine Substitution*, 88ff; P. Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse* (Neuchâtel: Secrétariat de l'Université, 1940); J. Jervell, *Imago Dei. Gen 1, 26 f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (FRLANT, 76; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960); G. Jónsson, *The Divine Image: Genesis 1:26–28 in a Century of Old Testament Research* (ConBOT, 26; Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1988); O. Keel and C. Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998); L. Köhler, "Die Grundstelle der Imago-Dei-Lehre," *ThZ* 4 (1948) 16–22; J. Kutsko, "Will the Real *Selem Elohim* Please Stand Up? The Image of God in the Book of Ezekiel," *SBLSP* 37 (1998) 74–81; J. Middlemas, *The Divine Image: Prophetic Aniconic Rhetoric and Its Contribution to the Aniconism Debate* (FAT, 2.74; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); R. Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005); M. Miller, "In the 'Image' and 'Likeness' of God," *JBL* 91 (1972) 289–304; C. Patton, "Adam as the Image of God," *SBLSP* 33 (1994) 294–300; J. Sawyer, "The Meaning of 'In the Image of God' in Genesis I–XI," *JTS* 25 (1974) 418–426; A. Schellenberg, *Der Mensch, das Bild Gottes? Zum Gedanken einer Sonderstellung des Menschen im Alten Testament und in weiteren altorientalischen Quellen* (AThANT, 101; Zürich: Züricher Verlag, 2011); P. Schwanz, *Imago Dei als christologisch-anthropologisches Problem in der Geschichte der Alten Kirche von Paulus bis Clemens von Alexandrien* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1969); M. Smith, "The Image of God. Notes on the Hellenization of Judaism, with Especial Reference to Goodenough's Work on Jewish Symbols," *BJRL* 40 (1958) 473–512; G. Sterling, "'The Image of God': Becoming Like God in Philo, Paul, and Early Christianity," in: *Portraits of Jesus: Studies in Christology* (ed. S. E. Myers; WUNT, 321; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012) 157–173; idem, "Different Traditions or Emphases? The Image of God in Philo's De Opificio Mundi," in: *New Approaches to the Study of Biblical Interpretation in Judaism of the Second Temple Period and in Early Christianity* (ed. G. A. Anderson et al.; STDJ, 106; Leiden: Brill, 2013) 41–56; A. Wagner, *Gottes Körper: Zur alttestamentlichen Vorstellung der Menschengestaltigkeit Gottes* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2010); C. Welz, "*Imago Dei*: References to the Invisible," *ST* 65 (2011) 74–91.

[5] A. Schüle, "Made in the 'Image of God': The Concepts of Divine Images in Gen 1–3," *ZAW* 117.1 (2005) 1–20 at 2.

[6] However, we should note that in Mesopotamia and Egypt the cultic statues were similarly considered by their makers as "living" entities. Stephen Herring remarks that "in Mesopotamia, the ontological life of the image is not only aesthetic. Indeed, the distinction between what is 'real' and what is 'representation' becomes blurred, so that the image is, itself, treated as a living thing." Herring, *Divine Substitution*, 18.

[7] Schüle, "Made in the 'Image of God,'" 11. Bogdan Bucur likewise submits that "humanity

The replacement of cultic statues made by human hands with the *imago Dei* representations created by God was not novel.[8] Nevertheless, it was a significant development because, according to this worldview, human bones and flesh were predestined to become the raw material for new divine images.[9] This paradigm shift is already detectable in the first chapters of the Hebrew Bible. Scholars insist that the biblical accounts of humankind's creation, presented in the initial chapters of the Book of Genesis, bear striking affinities to ancient rituals of cultic statues' inductions and animations.[10] These initiatory and enlivening practices were known in Ancient Egypt as the *wpt-r* or "opening of the mouth" ritual.[11] In

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is, ontologically and functionally, the true statue of God." B. G. Bucur, *Scripture Re-envisioned: Christophanic Exegesis and the Making of a Christian Bible* (BAC, 13; Leiden: Brill, 2018) 32.

[8] In ancient Near Eastern sources, *ṣalmu* was used to designate the relationship between a deity and a king. Walker and Dick show that "[m]outh-washing was not confined to the ritual for the dedication of divine statues. It was also used in rituals for divine symbols … for cultic impedimenta, for the king himself … and in a variety of other fragmentary ritual contexts." C. Walker and M. Dick, *The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian Mīs Pî Ritual* (SAALT, 1; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2001) 71. On the king's role as a divine image, see also Herring, *Divine Substitution*, 31–47; Curtis, *Man as the Image of God in Genesis in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Parallels*; P. Machinist, "Literature as Politics: The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic and the Bible," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 455–482; idem, "Kingship and Divinity in Imperial Assyria," in: *Text, Artifact, and Image* (eds. G. M. Beckman and T. J. Lewis; BJS, 346; Providence, RI: Brown University, 2006) 160–164.

[9] Herring recognizes that "the priestly use of *ṣelem* ('image') in the Hebrew Bible shares a similar conceptualization of presence with the Akk. *ṣalmu*." Herring, "A 'Transubstantiated' Humanity," 489. Fletcher-Louis also urges that "the phrase צלם אלהים must be interpreted in the light of the Akkadian phrase *ṣalam ili/ilāni*, since *ṣalmu* is the most common word denoting the physical image of a god within Mesopotamian religion and the Babylonian exile is the most likely setting for the development of the Priestly theology of creation." C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Worship of Divine Humanity and the Worship of Jesus," in: *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (ed. C. C. Newman et al.; JSJSS, 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 112–128 at 122.

[10] Fletcher-Louis mentions that "by using the language of the cult object for the creation of humanity in God's 'image (צלם),' Gen 1 sets up the prelapsarian humanity as the legitimate cult's embodiment of the one creator God, in a way that is analogous to the relationship between pagan gods and their idols. And if the true humanity is God's idol, then it stands to reason that where that true humanity is found it should be given the same kind of cultic devotion that pagans give to their idols." C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Alexander the Great's Worship of the High Priest," in: *Early Christian and Jewish Monotheism* (eds. L. T. Stuckenbruck and W. Sproston North; JSNTSS, 63; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004) 71–102 at 72.

[11] On the *wpt-r* ritual, see T. J. C. Baly, "Notes on the Ritual of Opening the Mouth," *JEA* 16 (1930) 173–86; S. Bjerke, "Remarks on the Egyptian Ritual of Opening the Mouth and Its Interpretation," *Numen* 12 (1965) 201–216; A. Blackman, "The Rite of Opening the Mouth in Ancient Egypt and Babylonia," *JEA* 10 (1924) 47–59; G. Y. Glazov, *The Bridling of the Tongue and the Opening of the Mouth in Biblical Prophecy* (JSOTSS, 311; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); B. Finnestad, "The Meaning and Purpose of Opening the Mouth in Mortuary Contexts," *Numen* 25 (1978) 118–134; H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, *Die Vision von der Statue im Stein: Studien zum altägyptischen Mundöffnungsritual* (Schriften der Philosophisch-Historischen Klasse der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, 5; Heidelberg: Winter, 1998); D. Lorton, "The Theology of Cult Statues in Ancient Egypt," in: *Born in Heaven Made on Earth: The Making*

the ancient Near East these rites are called the "washing of the mouth" (*mīs pî*)[12] and the "opening of the mouth" (*pīt pî*).[13] Recent studies have convincingly es-

of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East (ed. M. Dick; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999) 123–210; M. Matthieu, "Drevneegipetskij obrjad otverzanija ust i ochej," *VIRA* 5 (1958) 344–362 [Russian]; I. Moyer and J. Dieleman, "Miniaturization and the Opening of the Mouth in a Greek Magical Text (PGM XII.270–350)," *JANER* 3 (2003) 47–72; E. Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual* (2 vols.; ÄA, 3; Weisbaden: Harrassowitz, 1960); J. F. Quack, "Königsweihe, Priesterweihe, Isisweihe," in: *Ägyptische Mysterien?* (eds. J. Assmann and M. Bommas; München: Wilhelm Fink, 2002) 95–108; A. M. Roth, "The pśš-kf and the 'Opening of the Mouth' Ceremony: A Ritual of Birth and Rebirth," *JEA* 78 (1992) 113–47; idem, "Fingers, Stars, and the 'Opening of the Mouth': The Nature and Function of the nṯrwj-blades," *JEA* 79 (1993) 57–79; idem, "Opening of the Mouth," in: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (ed. D. B. Redford; 3 vols.; New York, Oxford University Press, 2001) 2.605–609; idem, "Opening of the Mouth," in: *The Ancient Gods Speak: A Guide to Egyptian Religion* (ed. D. B. Redford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 293–298; A. R. Schulman, "The Iconographic Theme: 'Opening of the Mouth' on Stelae," *JARCE* 21 (1984) 169–96; M. J. Smith, *Liturgy of Opening the Mouth for Breathing* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1993); idem, *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 349–387; H. J. Thissen, "Ägyptologische Beiträge zu den griechischen magischen Papyri," in: *Religion und Philosophie im alten Ägypten. Festgabe für Philippe Derchain zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 24. Juli 1991* (eds. U. Verhoeven and E. Graefe; OLA, 39; Leuven: Peeters, 1991) 298–300; J. Vergote, "Sur les mots composés en égyptien et en copte," *BiOr* 18 (1961) 213–214; B. Urrutia, "Psalm 51 and the 'Opening of the Mouth' Ceremony," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 28 (1982) 222–223; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of Opening the Mouth* (Books on Egypt and Chaldea; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1909); L. V. Zabkar, "Adaptation of Ancient Egyptian Texts to the Temple Ritual at Philae," *JEA* 66 (1980) 127–136. On animation of divine statues in Hermeticism, Orphism, and Neoplatonism, see C. Addey, *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism: Oracles of the Gods* (Ashgate Studies in Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity; New York: Routledge, 2014); P. Boyancé, "Théurgie et télestique néoplatoniciennes," *RHR* 147.2 (1955) 189–209; E. R. Dodds, "Theurgy and Its Relationship to Neoplatonism," *JRS* 37 (1947) 55–69; idem, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966) 291–295; A. Haluszka, "Sacred Signified: The Semiotics of Statues in the Greek Magical Papyri," *Arethusa* 41 (2008) 479–494; W. J. Hanegraaff, *Hermetic Spirituality and the Historical Imagination: Altered States of Knowledge in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022) 65ff; M. Idel, "Hermeticism·and Judaism," in: *Hermeticism and the Renaissance* (ed. I. Merkel and A. G. Debus; Folger Books: Associated University Presses, 1988) 59–76; S. I. Johnston, "Animating Statues: A Case Study in Ritual," *Arethusa* 41 (2008) 445–477; T. C. Krulak, *The Animated Statue and the Ascension of the Soul: Ritual and the Divine Image in late Platonism* (Ph.D. diss.; University of Pennsylvania, 2009); idem, "Powers and *Poiēsis*: Statue Animation and Divine Manifestation in Proclus Diadochus' *Commentary on the Timaeus*," in: *Divine Powers in Late Antiquity* (A. Marmodoro and I.-F. Viltanioti; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 88–107; H. Lewy, *The Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic, and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire* (ed. M. Tardieu; Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978) 495–496; R. Majercik, *The Chaldean Oracles: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (SGRR, 5; Leiden: Brill, 1989) 26ff; I. Tanaseanu-Döbler, *Theurgy in Late Antiquity. The Invention of a Ritual Tradition* (BERG, 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013); A. Uždavinys, "Animation of Statues in Ancient Civilizations and Neoplatonism," in: *Late Antique Epistemology. Other Ways to Truth* (eds. P. Vassilopoulou and S. R. L. Clark; London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 118–140; A. Van den Kerchove, *La voie d'Hermès: Pratiques rituelles et traités hermétiques* (NHMS, 77; Leiden: Brill, 2012) 201–222; C. van Liefferinge, *La théurgie des Oracles chaldaïques à Proclus* (Kernos Supplément, 9; Liège: Centre International d'Étude de la Religion Grecque Antique,

tablished that some biblical accounts preserved memories of these vivification rites. Amy Balogh contends that "the paradox of idols – that they were consid-

1999) 92–97; I.-F. Viltanioti, "La statue vivante en Grèce ancienne: de la représentation symbolique au réceptacle de la divinité," in: *Arts et Religions* (eds. A. Dierkens, S. Peperstraete, and C. Vanderpelen-Diagre; Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2011) 17–30.

[12] Nathaniel Levtow relays that "the principal source texts for the *mīs pî* are from 7th century B.C.E. Nineveh and 6th century B.C.E. Babylon … The Babylonian Ritual (BR) tablet BM 45749 is from Babylon. Walker and Dick suggest a 6th century B.C.E. date. The majority of the other tablets are from 7th-century B.C.E. Nineveh (many from Assurbanipal's royal library). The rest come from Assur, Sultantepe, Hama, Babylon, Sippar, Nippur, Nimrud, and Uruk and variously date from the 9th through 5th centuries B.C.E." Levtow, *Images of Others,* 90–91.

[13] Concerning the nature of these rituals, Hurowitz clarifies that "'mouth-opening,' done by application to the mouth (and nose?) of tasty and fragrant substances (honey, ghee, cedar, and cypress [resin?]), had the purpose of enlivening and sensitizing the god, and enabling it to eat food and smell incense, while 'mouth-washing,' done with water enhanced with numerous purifying agents and collected in a special vessel, was aimed at achieving total purity and permitting the god to assume his position in the company of the other." Hurowitz, "The Mesopotamian God Image, from Womb to Tomb," 147. McDowell explains that "it is still not clear, however, whether the washing of the mouth and the opening of the mouth, when performed on divine statues, were considered two parts of one longer ritual or two distinct rituals." C. L. McDowell, *The Image of God in the Garden of Eden: The Creation of Humankind in Genesis 2:5–3:24 in Light of the mīs pî pīt pî and wpt-r Rituals of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt* (Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures, 15; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015) 45. On the *mīs pî pīt pî* rituals, see M. F. Ayad, "The Selection and Layout of the Opening of the Mouth Scenes in the Chapel of Amenirdis I at Medinet Habu," *JARCE* 41 (2004) 113–133; I. Baldermann et al., eds. *Die Macht der Bilder* (JBTh, 13; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999); G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008); C. L. Beckerleg, *The Image of God in Eden: The Creation of Mankind in Genesis 2:5–3:24 in Light of the Mīs pî Pīt pî and Wpt-r Rituals of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt* (Ph.D. diss.; Harvard University, 2009); A. Berlejung, *Die Theologie der Bilder: Herstellung und Einweihung von Kultbildern in Mesopotamien und die alttestamentliche Bilderpolemik* (OBO, 162; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1998) 422–473; idem, "Washing the Mouth: The Consecration of Divine Images in Mesopotamia," in: *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in the Ancient Near East* (ed. K. van der Toorn; CBET, 21; Leuven: Peeters, 1997) 68–72; Blackman, "The Rite of Opening the Mouth in Ancient Egypt and Babylonia," 47–59; P. Boden, *The Mesopotamian Washing of the Mouth (Mīs Pî) Ritual: An Examination of Some of the Social and Communication Strategies Which Guided the Development and Performance of the Ritual Which Transferred the Essence of the Deity into Its Temple Statue* (Ph.D. diss; Johns Hopkins University 1998); W. R. Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness: Humanity, Divinity, and Monotheism* (CHANE, 15; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 140–143; M. Civil, "Remarks on Sumerian and Bilingual Texts," *JNES* 26 (1967) 200–211; S. Cohen and V. A. Hurowitz, "'Hukkot ha-ammim hevel hu' (Jer 10:3) in Light of Akkadian 'Parsu' and 'Zaqiqu' Referring to Cult Statues," *JQR* 89 (1999) 277–290; M. B. Dick, "Second Isaiah's Parody on Making a Cult Image (Isaiah 40:18–20 : 41:6–7) and the Babylonian 'Mīs Pî,'" in: *"Lasset uns Brücken bauen …": Collected Communications to the XVth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Cambridge, 1995* (eds. K.-D. Schunck, M. Augustin; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1998) 193–202; M. B. Dick, *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: the Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999); E. Ebeling, *Tod und Leben: Nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1931); J. Faur, "The Biblical Idea of Idolatry," *JQR* 69 (1978) 1–15; Glazov, *The Bridling of the Tongue*; V. A. Hurowitz, "Isaiah's Impure Lips and Their Purification in Light of Mouth Purification and Mouth Purity

ered to be both passive objects that were subject to human manipulation, and, simultaneously, incarnations of powerful cosmic deities – was well known to the biblical authors, many of whom rejected the concept of an idol altogether and spoke explicitly against their use in religious practice."[14] While some Jewish accounts explicitly rejected idolatry, other texts kept alive the memory of ancient vivification rites. The Jewish pseudepigrapha and other extrabiblical literature recall these ancient rites in the construction of exalted identities of Enoch, Abraham, Jacob, Aseneth, or Moses, who are envisioned as the eschatological images of God, predestined to reverse the protoplast's fall.

In recent years there have been several promising attempts to examine the stories of biblical exemplars in light of ancient Near Eastern traditions of cultic images. As one such study, Stephen Herring investigates the construction of Moses' role as a cultic "statue" in the Book of Exodus. Similar to other stories, the role of a biblical character as the cultic image is developed amid polemics against idolatrous divine representations, epitomized in the Exodus story by the Golden Calf.[15] Herring detects a parallel between Moses and the Golden Calf as two competing paradigms of the divine presence. According to this framework, the Golden Calf supplants the absent Moses as a cultic image.[16] Herring

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in Akkadian sources," *HUCA* 60 (1989) 39–89; idem, "The Mesopotamian God Image, from Womb to Tomb," *JAOS* 23 (2003) 147–157; idem, "What Goes in is What Comes Out: Materials for Creating Cult Statues," in: *Text, Artifact, and Image; Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion* (ed. G. Beckman and T. J. Lewis; Providence, RI: Brown University, 2006) 3–23; T. Jacobsen, "The Graven Image," in: *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (eds. P. D. Hanson, S. D. McBride, and P. D. Miller; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 15–32; J. Kennedy, "Hebrew *pithôn peh* in the Book of Ezekiel," *VT* 41 (1991) 233–235; Levtow, *Images of Others*; M. J. Lundberg, "The '*mīs pî*' Rituals and Incantations and Jeremiah 10:1–16," in: *Uprooting and Planting; Essays on Jeremiah for Leslie Allen* (ed. J. Goldingay; New York: T&T Clark, 2007) 210–227; J. M. Matzon, "Idol Remains: Remnants of the Opening of the Mouth Ritual in the Hebrew Bible," *Studia Antiqua* 12.1 (2013) 33–50; McDowell, *The Image of God in the Garden of Eden*; G. Meier, "Die Ritualtafel der Serie 'Mundwaschung,'" *AfO* 12 (1937–1939) 40–45; Moyer and Dieleman, "Miniaturization and the Opening of the Mouth in a Greek Magical Text (PGM XII.270–350)," 47–72; S. Smith, "The Babylonian Ritual for the Consecration and Induction of a Divine Statue," *JRAS* (1925) 37–60; A. Spycket, *Les statues de culte dans les textes mésopotamiens des origines à la I^re^ dynastie de Babylone* (CRB, 9; Paris: Gabalda, 1968) 37–40; C. Walker, *Material for a Reconstruction of the Mīs Pî Ritual* (Ph.D. diss.; Oxford University Press, 1966); Walker and Dick, *The Induction of the Cult Image*; N. H. Walls, ed., *Cult Image and Divine Representation in the Ancient Near East* (ASOR, 10; Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2005); M. Weinfeld, "Ancient Near Eastern Patterns in Prophetic Literature," *VT* 27 (1977) 178–195; I. Winter, "Idols of the King: Royal Images as Recipients of Ritual Action in Ancient Mesopotamia," *JRS* 6 (1992) 13–42.

[14] A. Balogh, *Moses Among the Idols: Mediators of the Divine in the Ancient Near East* (Lanham, MD: Lexington/Fortress Academic, 2018) 32.

[15] Herring asserts that "the depiction of the calf's creation, consecration, and destruction all point to the interpretation of the calf as a cultic image, believed to substitute, extend, or 'make present' the represented deity in ancient Near Eastern thought." Herring, "Moses as Divine Substitute in Exodus," 55.

[16] A parallel between the human statue and the Golden Calf may be hinted in *b. Sanh.* 65b

expounds that "the calf was made to replace Moses and given its treatment as divine image, to manifest deity."[17] According to Herring, "The final descent scene confirms Moses' role as the 'container' of divine presence. Moses, not the calf, is the visible extension of YHWH among his people."[18]

The development of Moses' cultic profile in the Hebrew Bible recalls the ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian vivification rituals,[19] including the ritual of the opening of the statue's mouth.[20] Some studies emphasize that the motif of Moses' "uncircumcised lips" found in the Book of Exodus should be read against the *mīs pî pīt pî* ceremony, a correspondence that symbolizes Moses' rebirth into a new, divine identity.[21] Given these parallels, scholars espouse that "Moses is best understood as YHWH's idol, undergoing a status change akin to that brought about by the induction ritual for ancient Mesopotamian idols."[22]

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where the creation of a golem is contrasted with the creation of a calf: "Raba said: If the righteous desired it, they could [by living a life of absolute purity] be creators, for it is written, But your iniquities have distinguished between etc. Raba created a man, and sent him to R. Zera. R. Zera spoke to him, but received no answer. Thereupon he said unto him: 'Thou art a creature of the magicians. Return to thy dust.' R. Hanina and R. Oshaia spent every Sabbath eve in studying the 'Book of Creation,' by means of which they created a third-grown calf and ate it." I. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Sanhedrin* (London: Soncino, 1935–1952) 65b.

[17] Herring, "Moses as Divine Substitute in Exodus," 66.

[18] Herring, "Moses as Divine Substitute in Exodus," 66–67. The parallelism between the Golden Calf and a cultic statue in the form of a biblical exemplar can be extended also to Moses' brother – Aaron. Fletcher-Louis maintains that "the making of the Golden Calf in Exodus 32 is a highly ironic and tragic portrayal of Israel's idolatry: Aaron leads the people in making a lifeless divine image of wood and gold which is to be the god to lead Israel into the promised land, whilst atop Sinai God gives to Moses a vision for the true cult in which Aaron himself, the representative of his people, is to be the image – idol – of God." C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "God's Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest: Towards a Historical and Theological Account of the Incarnation," in: *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (eds. T. D. Alexander and S. Gathercole; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004) 81–99 at 92.

[19] On this, see Glazov, *The Bridling of the Tongue*.

[20] For example, Joshua Matzon holds that "the redactor(s) of Exodus may have been fully aware of the opening of the mouth ritual and used it to their advantage following the tripartite pattern of purification, vivification, and enthronement in two recorded episodes, emphasizing the ineffectiveness of the opening of the mouth ritual on the Golden Calf at Sinai in Exod 32 with the effectiveness of the calling of Moses in Exodus 3–4. By comparing the tripartite elements of the opening of the mouth ritual from both accounts, it can be concluded that the writer of Exodus meant to use these two episodes as an example of the validity of Moses as the medium by which God would converse with Israel against the invalidity of the use of cultic images, such as the Golden Calf." Matzon, "Idol Remains: Remnants of the Opening of the Mouth Ritual in the Hebrew Bible," 45. For criticism of Matzon's argument, see McDowell, *The Image of God in the Garden of Eden*, 19–20.

[21] Balogh, *Moses Among the Idols*, xvii.

[22] Balogh, *Moses Among the Idols*, xix–xx. Balogh specifies that "while the biblical authors do not have direct access to the written form of the *mīs pî*, they do intensively engage Babylonian cultural principles and adapt them to their own systems of thought." Balogh, *Moses Among the Idols*, xxxvi.

While Moses' sacred profile and its connection to ancient enlivening rituals have received some scholarly attention, the cultic transformations of other biblical exemplars, including Enoch, Abraham, Jacob, and Aseneth, who are envisioned in the Jewish pseudepigrapha as the eschatological *imagines Dei,* remain largely neglected. Yet, a deeper understanding of these metamorphoses can not only illuminate the anthropological and sacerdotal dimensions of the Jewish pseudepigrapha but also the process of pseudepigraphical attribution.

Our study will explore how the Jewish pseudepigrapha enhanced the biblical cultic anthropologies in which pagan idolatry was confronted by envisioning biblical exemplars as divine "statues" in the form of protological and eschatological *imagines Dei*. A preliminary look confirms that in the Jewish pseudepigraphical accounts, the formation of Jewish patriarchs and prophets as divine images was developed in the context of polemics against idolatrous representations, just like in the Hebrew Bible. Appropriation of this pivotal polemical context finds one of its most forceful expressions in the *Apocalypse of Abraham,* which will serve as a test case for our study. The *Apocalypse of Abraham* is a Jewish pseudepigraphon that contains complex polemics against idolatrous images and simultaneously presents its hero, the patriarch Abraham, as a true vessel of the divine presence and knowledge, the eschatological *imago Dei*.

The first chapter of our study will explore the polemical situation of the eschatological *imago Dei*'s formation. It will analyze the Jewish traditions about Abraham's fight against idols as a relevant instance of such a polemical environment. The chapter will offer a comprehensive survey of the Abrahamic motif from its early biblical roots to later elaborations in Jewish pseudepigraphical and rabbinic accounts. The analysis of the legends about Abraham's rejection of idolatry will demonstrate that this lore has been steadily developed by its Jewish guardians, who enrich the story with creative narrative lines and characters. Behind the intricate details of these elaborations, one can see a persistent ideological tendency in which the cultic images made by human hands, their transformations, and their fiery trials are contrasted with the metamorphoses and ordeals of Abraham, thereby forming a typological antithesis to the hero's role as the eschatological *imago Dei*.

The second chapter will continue the in-depth investigation of the polemical context of the *imago Dei*'s formation by concentrating on various depictions of idols found in the first part of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. This part of the pseudepigraphon unveils a gallery of various idolatrous statues that are set in competition with each other, revealing a parodic taxonomy of idols based on the relative superiority or inferiority of their constitutive materials. The chapter will also delve into Abraham's interaction with the idols. Some of the patriarch's encounters with the idols showcase striking correspondences with later Jewish mystical accounts in which Abraham himself manufactured and vivified golems. An important cluster of such allusions can be found in the story of Terah's idol,

Bar-Eshath, an episode that exhibits several features of later golem stories. The detailed investigation of how the *Apocalypse of Abraham* depicts the idols of Terah will disclose the intricacy of their cultic and anthropological symbolism, which not only links them with biblical traditions of divine representations but also with their ancient Near Eastern and later Jewish mystical counterparts.

The third chapter will offer a thorough analysis of the process of the *imago Dei* formation in the pseudepigraphical stories of Adam, Enoch, Jacob, Moses, and Aseneth. The chapter will argue that this process was shaped by earlier memories of the Near Eastern and Egyptian rituals of cultic statue vivification. The first part of the chapter will be devoted to Adam's role as the protological *imago Dei*, which became a crucial conceptual blueprint that played a formative role in the stories of other biblical exemplars. The analysis will establish that Adam's profile as a cultic statue of the deity was steadily developed within various Jewish corpora. In the Jewish pseudepigraphical accounts, earlier biblical traditions about Adam as a divine representation were enhanced by the theme of angelic veneration which further solidified Adam's cultic status. In their turn, rabbinic accounts offered extensive speculations about Adam's golem – a lifeless material precursor of the protoplast's "statue" and its vivification. Some details of this process, including opening Adam's orifices, putting him on his feet, and assigning him a special name, will later become crucial steps in the inauguration of other *imagines Dei*. The second part of the chapter will explore how the Adamic patterns were applied in the stories of Enoch, Jacob, Moses, Aseneth, and the high priest. The chapter will demonstrate that the formation of the biblical exemplars as the protological and eschatological images of God occurs in a distinctive cultic context. In this sacerdotal structure, the biblical characters, like their Near Eastern and Egyptian cultic counterparts, were envisaged as the objects of liturgical veneration.

The fourth chapter will treat the construction of Abraham as the eschatological *imago Dei* in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. The process of the patriarch's inauguration into the office of the eschatological image of God uncovers the complexity of the cultic universe of this early Jewish apocalypse, which was written soon after the destruction of the Second Jerusalem Temple amid challenging efforts to preserve and perpetuate priestly praxis in the absence of the terrestrial sanctuary. It is not coincidental that, in this transitional text, the hero is endowed with multiple sacerdotal functions, including the roles of priest, sacrifice, and cultic statue. This consolidation of several roles into the conceptual profile of a single protagonist betrays an intriguing parallel to some Christological developments contemporaneous with the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, including those found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Much like concurrent Christian traditions that made consistent efforts to reinterpret many decisive moments of Jesus' story, including his suffering and death, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* also attempts to refashion major events within Abraham's biblical career by endowing them with new cultic

credentials. In this radical refashioning, Abraham's entire personality and even his body are construed as a sacerdotal entity – a new anthropomorphic conduit of the divine presence.

The fifth chapter will attend to Abraham's fiery trials in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. These ordeals are depicted in the cultic and anthropological framework of the text as an essential part of Abraham's emergence as an eschatological *imago Dei*. The chapter explores the broader context of the motif of Abraham's fiery tests from its early Second Temple roots in the Book of Daniel, *Book of Jubilees*, and Pseudo-Philo to later rabbinic elaborations. The study will prove that Abraham's fiery trials and the peculiar expression of this theme in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* divulge a forceful antagonistic dimension in the construction of a cultic "statue," a dimension that is absent in ancient non-Jewish vivification rituals. In this novel apocalyptic schema, the hero's metamorphosis into an eschatological image of God occurs during his conflict against antagonistic forces, represented by otherworldly idols and human idolators.

The sixth chapter will offer a detailed examination of Abraham's vision of the protological and eschatological events given to the patriarch in the second part of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. The analysis will suggest that this vision represents an instance of the eschatological image of God's pedagogical instruction. The chapter will trace the roots of this sacred pedagogy to a similar vision given to Adam in his golem condition. The exploration of this imagery will help clarify the epistemological dimension of the *imago Dei*'s formation.

Overall, this study can be seen as an attempt to probe various aspects of the *imago Dei* anthropologies contained within the Jewish pseudepigrapha. The *Apocalypse of Abraham* and its divine statues provide the primary lens by which to understand these anthropologies.

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