

CHAPTER VII

DIVINE RADIANCE IN THE BOOK OF JOB

The book of Job contains some of the most intriguing references to divine radiance in the Biblical canon. Unlike some of the material cited in chapter 3, in Job we do not find phrases containing linguistic peculiarities clearly derived from the borrowing of Akkadian *melammu* terminology.¹ However, we do find several verses which show conceptual links to the idea of *melammu*.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Akkadian concept of *melammu* carries with it a group of associated concepts: an outer covering indicating strength; supremacy over other beings; ability to inspire terror; radiance. In several verses, Job does not manifest just one of the many ideas associated with *melammu* in Akkadian. Rather, we find in these verses a collocation of concepts closely parallel to the group of concepts associated with *melammu*.

It is possible to argue that the group of concepts in Job developed independently of those associated with *melammu*. But there are several reasons to question the idea of independent development. Chief among these are the known links between Job's language and other ancient Near Eastern languages,

¹ Several of these verses do indeed contain linguistic peculiarities. However, it is difficult to argue that these peculiarities indicate borrowing from Akkadian, since the language of Job is so poorly understood. It is possible that these unusual phrasings are related to the language of Job.

and known parallels between Job's genre and ideas and similar literary works from Mesopotamia.

The language of Job is notoriously difficult. Its difficulty has led medieval and modern scholars to consider the possibility that it is either written in a dialect other than standard Biblical Hebrew, and the possibility that it was translated from an original which was composed in another Semitic language.² The language of Job “contains far more than the normal admixture of Aramaic, more than any other book of the Old Testament.”³

Freedman and Rendsburg have both argued that the language of the book reflects the northern dialect of Biblical Hebrew.⁴ Others have argued that the book's dialect reflects influence from a South or Central Semitic language, one of the precursors to Arabic.⁵ But as Pope has noted, the best explanation for the parallels between Job's unusual

² See Ibn Ezra on Job 2:11, who argues that Job is a translation of a non-Hebrew original. N. H. Tur-Sinai (aka H. Torczyner) held that the poetic parts of Job were a (sometimes faulty) Hebrew translation of an Aramaic original. (N. H. Tur-Sinai, *Sefer Iyyov* [Heb.], 2nd rev. ed. [Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1972]. See especially pages 367-372.)

³ Marvin Pope, *Job* (3rd ed. Anchor Bible Commentary; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), xlix.

⁴ Freedman bases his argument on orthographic peculiarities in the MT of Job, in which first-weak verbs are written with a defective spelling, whereas they tend to be written *plene* in other books of the Hebrew Bible. These defective spellings may derive from diphthong collapse which took place in Northern Biblical Hebrew at a fairly early stage: the diphthongs /aw/ and /ay/ collapsed into the long vowels /o/ and /@/, respectively. Normally long vowels would tend to be written defectively, while diphthongs would tend to be written *plene*. Defective spelling therefore reflects diphthong collapse. Hoffman has disputed Freedman's contention, noting that there is no greater occurrence of defective spellings in books that are known to be northern, such as Hosea. He argues that Freedman's model of orthographic development in Biblical Hebrew is overly simplistic. See D. N. Freedman, “Orthographic Peculiarities in the Book of Job,” *Eretz Israel* 9 (1969): 35-44; Gary A. Rendsburg, *Evidence for A Spoken Hebrew in Biblical Times* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microforms, 1980): 10-11; Y. Hoffman, *Shelemut Peguma: Sefer Iyyov ve Rik"o* (Blemished Perfection: The Book of Job in Its Context; Heb.) (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1995), pp. 194-199.

⁵ A. Guillaume, “The Arabic Background of the Book of Job,” *Promise and Fulfilment: Essays Presented to S. H. Hooke* (1963): 106-127, and *Studies in the Book of Job* (1968).

vocabulary and the vocabulary of Arabic is that the latter has “by far the richest vocabulary and language of all the Semitic languages.”⁶ The parallels do not, therefore, show that Job was influenced by a South or Central Semitic language. Rather, they show that the vocabulary of this book draws on a range of Semitic roots, including those not otherwise attested in Biblical Hebrew. Modern scholarship knows of these roots only from Arabic, but they may have been current in Hebrew and in other Northwest Semitic languages at the time of the author.

Hoffman has argued that the unusual vocabulary in the book is the product of several factors. The first is style-switching.⁷ This technique consists of the deliberate use of foreign words, in order to give the reader the impression that the society described in the book is non-Israelite. Secondly, argues Hoffman, the difficult language is intentionally obscurantist. The author seeks to write in an obscure manner because he has little new to say, but many speeches to write. The obscure language intends to bridge the “gap between the very few new themes (in the speeches of Job and his friends, which contain much thematic repetition) and the large volume of speeches which contain no new elements.”⁸

⁶ Pope, xlix.

⁷ This term is used by Kaufman and by Rendsburg to describe the phenomenon in which aspects of a particular language or dialect are applied to a character's speech, in order to associate that character with that language. The association is effective even if the character's speech is missing many aspects of that language. Thus, the Aramaisms in Balaam's language associate Balaam with “foreign parts” even though the base language of his speeches is Hebrew. (S. A. Kaufman, “The Classifications of the Northwest Semitic Dialects of the Biblical Period and Some Implications Thereof,” *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Panel Sessions: Hebrew and Aramaic (1988): 41-57; G. A. Rendsburg, “Bilingual Wordplay in the Bible,” *VT* 38 [1988]: 356.)

⁸ Hoffman, 209.

Finally, foreign words are used in order because of a literary convention found in ancient Near Eastern theodicies. Other ancient Near Eastern theodicies are written in a difficult and obscure language.⁹ The Akkadian compositions known as *Ludlul B@l Nem@qi* (I will praise the lord of wisdom)¹⁰ and the Babylonian Theodicy¹¹ are representatives of this genre, as is the Sumerian work which Kramer published under the title *Man and His God*.¹²

The similarities between Job and these works have been discussed extensively in the scholarly literature. It is not possible to summarize each of the various treatments here.¹³ However, to situate Job within the context of these Mesopotamian works, it is useful to note a comment of E. A. Speiser. He notes that these major Mesopotamian works share the common conclusion that

Although the blameless may be exposed to suffering,
deliverance is sure to come to him in the end. The ways of

⁹ Hoffman argues that Job's author was aware of this genre, if not of specific works (*Ibid.*). Jacob Klein (*Iyyov*, Entsiklopedia Olam HaTanakh series [Tel Aviv: Davidson-Iti, 1982], 222) notes that these works were popular texts in the first millennium cuneiform academies and could very likely have been known to Job's author.

¹⁰ W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), 21-62; E. Leichty, "Two New Fragments of *Ludlul*," *Orientalia* 38 (1959): 361-363; D. J. Wiseman, "A New Text of the Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer," *Anatolian Studies* 30 (1980): 101-107; W. L. Moran, "Notes on the Hymn to Marduk in *Ludlul B@l N@meqi*" *JAOS* 65 (1984); *Studies in Literature from the Ancient Near East Dedicated to S. N. Kramer*: 255-260. See further the discussion in Pope, lxi-lxiv.

¹¹ Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 63-67. See also the original treatment by Benno Landsberger, "Die babylonische Theodizee," *ZA* 43 (1936): 32-76 and J. Gray, "The Book of Job in the Context of Ancient Near Eastern Literature," *ZAW* 82(1970): 251-269.

¹² S. N. Kramer, "Man and His God: A Sumerian Variation on the Job Motif," *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*, eds. M. Noth and D. Winton Thomas (VTS 3; Leiden: Brill, 1955). See also the review essay by Gerald L. Mattingly, "The Pious Sufferer: Mesopotamia's Traditional Theodicy and Job's Counselors," *The Bible in Light of Cuneiform Literature: Scripture in Context III*, ed. W. W. Hallo et al., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies* 8 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 1990), 305-319, and Jacob Klein's treatment in *Iyyov*, 222-229.

¹³ See in particular the treatments of Gray, Pope, Mattingly, and Klein, cited in the previous notes. See also Moshe Weinfeld, "Job and Its Mesopotamian Parallels," *Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F. C. Fenshaw* (ed. W. Claassen; JSOT Supp. Series 48; Sheffield: Sheffield, 1988): 217-226. I have cited only the most important of the Mesopotamian works which bear similarities to Job. Pope, Mattingly, and Klein discuss several additional ancient works.

the gods are indeed inscrutable, but the truly meritorious need never despair of ultimate salvation.¹⁴

Because they share common assumptions and conclusions, the Mesopotamian works are seen as part of a cultural continuum. Because Job reflects many of the same concerns, it is usually seen as part of this continuum as well.

As Pope notes, there is textual evidence within the Bible for seeing Job as part of a non-Israelite cultural continuum. Ezek. 14:14 speaks about the ancient worthies Noah, Job, and Daniel.

It had long been appreciated that the Daniel mentioned in connection with Noah and Job implied a Dan(i)el legend older than that of the biblical book of Daniel, whose historical setting is given as the neo-Babylonian and the early Persian periods. This more ancient Danel we now know in a long epic poem from Ugarit dating about a millennium earlier than the Babylonian exile.¹⁵

The Daniel of Ezek. 14:14 is a figure in a non-Israelite literary epic. It is fairly clear that the Biblical Noah story is part of a cultural continuum which includes the narrative in tablet 11 of the Akkadian Gilgamesh epic, as well as the Atra-hasis epic and the Sumerian flood story. It is reasonable that Job, mentioned in the same context, should also be part of such a continuum, and the works cited above provide evidence that such a continuum existed.

¹⁴ E. A. Speiser, "The Idea of History in Ancient Mesopotamia" (1955), republished in *Oriental and Biblical Studies: Collected Writings of E. A. Speiser*, eds. J. J. Finkelstein and M. Greenberg, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967), 307.

¹⁵ Pope, Introduction, xxxiii

None of this, however, solves the problem of the date of Job's composition. There are several reasons for the difficulty in dating Job. First, there are no clear historical referents in the book. Secondly, the unusual language of the book does not permit its placement within the known development continuum of Biblical Hebrew. The criteria we have for distinguishing among Early Biblical Hebrew, Standard Biblical Hebrew, and Late Biblical Hebrew simply do not work for Job, given its unusual language. A range of dates has been suggested by 20th century scholars. Albright argued for a date in the sixth or fifth centuries, based on the “cosmopolitan atmosphere” prevailing during this period, when the author could have become conversant with a wide range of Northwest Semitic literature.¹⁶ Albright's argument does not have a particular textual or linguistic basis, but the date he conjectures is typical of dates suggested by other scholars. Pfeiffer has compared material in Job to material in Second Isaiah and has argued that the material from Job is earlier.¹⁷ Gordis has argued for a date early in the post-exilic period, based on the fact that Job is familiar with the idea of an afterlife, but rejects it.¹⁸

¹⁶ W. F. Albright, “Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom,” *Wisdom in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (VT Supp. 3; Leiden: Brill, 1955), 14.

¹⁷ R. H. Pfeiffer, “The Priority of Job over Isa. 40-55,” *JBL* 46 (1927), 202-206. H.L. Ginsberg reached the opposite conclusion, in “Job” (*Encyclopedia Judaica* 10:111-121). He compared the parallelism in Isa. 44:24 (ק' מאתי []) to that in Job 9:8 (גטה שמים לבדו ודרך על במתי ים), “I stretch out the heavens myself, I make a heaven for the earth with no one with me”) and argues that Job is based in Isaiah, since the word לבדו (himself) is likely based on a misreading of לבדי (myself). He also cites similar passages in Job 12:9 (based on Isa. 41:20), Job. 13:28 (based on Isa. 50:9), Job 15:35 (based on Isa. 59:4) (Ginsberg proceeds from a study by M. H. Segal, entitled “Parallels Between Job and Other Books of the Bible” [Heb.], *Tarbiz* 20 [1950]: 35-48.) Ginsberg's arguments are more persuasive than Pfeiffer's, since they are more specific and are based on a number of verses.

¹⁸ “That he was able to dismiss it with no argument suggests the earlier period of the Second Temple, when the idea (of an afterlife) was beginning to make headway but had not yet won general acceptance.” R. Gordis, *The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 216.

Pope, however, notes certain problems with a sixth or fifth century date of composition. He notes that Job is entirely lacking in any nationalistic Israelite motifs, motifs which one would expect in a book composed during the exilic or early post-exilic period.¹⁹ He argues that much of the material in Job is pre-exilic: “It would not be unreasonable to suppose that there was an ancient Job legend and epic circulating in Syria-Palestine in pre-exilic times.”²⁰ He does not assign a firm date for the book's final redaction, but surmises that the dialogue was composed in the seventh century.²¹

Although the available evidence does not provide a clear date for the book's composition, the current study may contribute relevant information towards resolving this problem. Except for the studies by Pfeiffer and Ginsberg (which compare verses in Job to similar ones in Second Isaiah), the broader studies mentioned above compare large motifs in Job with their ancient Near Eastern counterparts. However, the current study examines very specific imagery found in the book of Job, and explores its similarity to the Mesopotamian concept of

¹⁹ Pope, Introduction, xxxv. The idea that all works composed in the exilic or early post-exilic period were replete with nationalist motifs can legitimately be questioned. However, the total absence of such motifs in Job is notable, and scholars sometimes use this particularity to help date the book in the absence of the more usual linguistic guidelines concerning its date.

²⁰ Pope, Introduction, xxxvii.

²¹ Pope, Introduction, xl.

melammu. The first chapter of this thesis examined the development of this concept diachronically. *Melammu* is expressed in different ways in different time periods. If we can identify material in Job which seems to be influenced by the Mesopotamian concept of *melammu*, we may be able to correlate this material with the way *melammu* was expressed in a particular period. This period would then be a *terminus a quo* for the composition of that part of Job. In this way, the present study may be able to inform the dating of the book.

Job 40:10

The verse most commonly cited in discussions of *melammu* in Job is Job 40:10. Verses 6-14 form the larger context of the passage:

(6) אֲנִי אֶבְרָא אֶת־עֵינַי מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם) אֲשַׁלֵּחַ אֶת־רִיבֹנִי(אֶת־עַלְמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם
 (7) אֲנִי אֶשְׁאֵל וְאַתָּה תֵּעָדָה אֵלַי, אֲשַׁלֵּחַ אֶת־עֵינַי אֵלַי
 (8) אֲנִי אֶשְׁאֵל וְאַתָּה תֵּעָדָה, אֲשַׁלֵּחַ אֶת־עֵינַי אֵלַי אֶת־עַלְמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם
 (9) אֲנִי אֶשְׁאֵל וְאַתָּה תֵּעָדָה אֵלַי אֶת־עַלְמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם, אֲשַׁלֵּחַ אֶת־עֵינַי אֵלַי
)(אֲנִי אֶשְׁאֵל וְאַתָּה תֵּעָדָה אֵלַי אֶת־עַלְמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶת־עַלְמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם)
) אֲנִי אֶשְׁאֵל וְאַתָּה תֵּעָדָה אֵלַי אֶת־עַלְמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶת־עַלְמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם .
 (10) אֲנִי אֶשְׁאֵל וְאַתָּה תֵּעָדָה, אֲשַׁלֵּחַ אֶת־עֵינַי אֵלַי אֶת־עַלְמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם
 (11) אֲנִי אֶשְׁאֵל וְאַתָּה תֵּעָדָה, אֲשַׁלֵּחַ אֶת־עֵינַי אֵלַי אֶת־עַלְמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם
 (12) אֲנִי אֶשְׁאֵל וְאַתָּה תֵּעָדָה, אֲשַׁלֵּחַ אֶת־עֵינַי אֵלַי אֶת־עַלְמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם

- (6) Then the Lord replied to Job out of the tempest and said:
- (7) Gird your loins like a man; I will ask and you will inform Me.
- (8) Would you impugn My justice? Would you condemn Me that you may be right?
- (9) Have you an arm like God's? Can you thunder with a voice like His?
- (10) Deck yourself in exaltation (*gaLon*) and highness (*gobah*), and clothe yourself in supremacy (*hod*) and dignity (*hadar*).

- (11) Scatter wide your raging anger; see every proud man and bring him low.
- (12) See every proud man and humble him, and and bring down the wicked where they stand.
- (13) Bury them all in earth; hide their faces in a hidden place.
- (14) Then even I would praise you, for the triumph your right hand has won you.²²

Verses 6-14 form a logical unit, beginning with God's challenge to Job and ending with the conditions under which the challenge would be met. It is therefore reasonable to consider Job 40:10 within the context of this larger unit.

Most discussions of the similarity between Job 40:10 and the concept of *melammu*, however, focus on the phrasing of v. 10b.²³ The verse bears substantial similarity to Ps. 104:2 in its use of the phrasing “wearing (or being clothed in) *hod* and *hadar*.” In arguing for a parallel between *melammu* imagery, on the one hand, and Ps. 104:2 and Job 40:10 on the other, Weinfeld has pointed to the clothing imagery, which is found in both the Biblical and the Mesopotamian material. As discussed in chapter 2, however, the use of clothing imagery in Biblical metaphor is widespread. Therefore its use in the phrases “You are clothed in *hod* and *hadar*” (Ps. 104:2) and “Wear *hod* and *hadar*” (Job 40:10) is not unusual. The clothing imagery in these verses does not show that they are influenced by the tendency of Akkadian to use

²² Translation of vv. 6-9 and 11-14 is based on NJPS. Translation of v. 10 is my own, and the reasons for the changes from NJPS are explained below.

²³ M. Weinfeld, “*HaEl HaBore BiVreshit Alef UViNvuat Yeshaya HaSheni*,” (God the Creator in Genesis 1 and in the Prophecy of Second Isaiah, Heb.), *Tarbiz* 37 (1968): 130-132. The parallel is also mentioned by Jacob Klein in comments on this verse in *Iyyov*, p. 208.

clothing imagery in reference to *melammu*, and this imagery is therefore not decisive in establishing a direct link between this verse and *melammu* imagery.

However, there are many other elements that do link this verse to such imagery. These include the rhetoric of the verse, in which wearing *hod* and *hadar* are signs of dominion, and the surrounding context, in which the wearer of *hod* and *hadar* expresses his dominion by subduing and humbling the proud. This type of imagery is closely parallel to the portrayal of the king in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions.

In these, the king is portrayed as battling against enemies who are consistently called “insubmissive,” or “proud,” and sometimes, “wicked.” These portrayals appear in the titulary with which every royal inscription begins. Examples can be cited from the titularies of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III.

Ashurnasirpal II:

muβekniβ læ magirΣt Aββur βa pæ[¶] @liβ u βapliβ
subduer of those insubmissive to Aββur to the borders above and below²⁴

Shalmaneser III:

βa sikipti la mægir[¶]βu iltakkanuma
who always achieved the defeat of those insubmissive to him²⁵

²⁴ From the Standard Inscription at Nineveh, quoted from *RIMA* 2, A.0.101.40, p. 308, line 4.

²⁵ From a stone statue at Calah, quoted from *RIMA* 3, A.0.102.16, p. 74, line 4

*mukabbib kibæd æyabÿβu
muparrir kiΔrÿ multarÿ
dæ'ib kullat nækirÿβu*

who treads upon the neck of his enemies,
who scatters the coalitions of the proud
who threshes all those hostile to him²⁶

Thus, the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions consistently describe the kings as battling enemies, who are insubmissive and proud. The role of the king is to cause these to submit to his authority.

In descriptions of submission, these inscriptions emphasize the role of the *melammu* of the national god Aββur, who is portrayed as the king's patron deity.²⁷ I will cite several examples from an inscription of Shalmaneser III.

From the 1st regnal year, campaign against Ûubuβkia:

*pulÿe melamme βa Aββur b@lija isÿupΣβunΣti
urdûni βep@ja iΔbutΣ*

Fear of the *melammu* of my lord Aββur overwhelmed them,
They came down to me and seized my feet.²⁸

²⁶ From the stone throne base in the throne room at Fort Shalmaneser, quoted from *RIMA* 3, A. 0.102.28, p. 102, lines 8-9. The translation I have presented follows *CAD* renderings and is more literal than that in *RIMA*. Other citations from the annals which describe enemies as proud and insubmissive are cited above in Chapter 3, at pages 306-309.

²⁷ This point is extensively discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 125-128.

²⁸ From the earliest known version of the annals, quoted from *RIMA* 2, A.0.102.1, p. 8, lines 27-28.

From the 26th regnal year, conquest of Tanakun, a city in Cilicia:

pul~e melamme βa Aββur b@lija is~upΣβu
uΔûni βeπ@ja iΔbutΣ

Fear of the *melammu* of my lord Aββur overwhelmed them,
They came out to me and seized my feet.²⁹

The *melammu* is directly associated with the submission of the enemies, who are characterized as “proud.”³⁰ There is a fascinating parallel between the group of motifs in Job 40:9-13, and a concept which is repeatedly expressed in the annals. In Job, God's wearing *hod*, *hadar*, *ga'on* and *gobah*, is connected to His subduing the proud. The annals directly correlate the *melammu* of the god to the submission of the proud and unsubmitive. Thus, the *hod*, *hadar*, *ga'on*, and *gobah* in v. 10 fill a rôle which is very similar to that filled by *melammu* in the annals.

In chapters 2 and 3, the meanings of *hod* and *hadar* were fully explored.³¹ I concluded that *hod*, when referring to God, refers to His power, dominion and supremacy, while *hadar* refers to dignity and importance. These words are not

²⁹ From a stone statue at Calah, quoted from *RIMA 2*, A.0.102.16, p. 80, lines 218-219.

³⁰ In the royal inscriptions, the characterization of the enemies as “proud” is typically found in the titulary, at the beginning of the inscription. It refers to all of the enemies as a class. The *melammu* of the god and the *melammu* of the king, however, are mentioned in the narrative of particular battles, which are narrated in the body of the inscription. Thus, the characterization of the enemies as “proud” and the mention of *melammu* are not usually found next to each other in the inscriptions. Nevertheless, the two points relate to the king's battles against his enemies and are frequently found in the inscriptions. Both the characterization of the enemies and the motif of royal and divine *melammu* would be known to anyone familiar with the language of the annals and both are part of what Tadmor has called “the concept of royal omnipotence” (Hayim Tadmor, “Propaganda, Literature, Historiography: Cracking the Code of the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions,” *Assyria 1995*, 326). The enemies are considered “proud” or “arrogant” because they dare to threaten the supremacy of Assur and his representative, the king.

³¹ See especially pp. 221-243 in Chapter 2.

the lexical equivalents of *melammu*, but they are used by Biblical writers who seek to express the concept of *melammu* in its meaning “royal legitimacy” and “overwhelming royal power” in Biblical Hebrew.

In discussing Job 40:10, it is relevant to also explain the meanings of *gaʿlon* and *gobah*. As discussed above in Chapter 3, *gaʿon* means “highness,” “supremacy,” or “self-exaltation,”³² and is parallel to the Akkadian *bēlšumu*, usually translated “lordship.” In Job 40:10, *gaʿon* is used to refer to YHWH, whose self-exaltation is not condemnable arrogance, but an accurate reflection of His stature. Thus, the phrase *gaʿon wa-gobah* should be translated “exaltation and highness.” Job 40:10 means “Deck yourself in exaltation and highness, and clothe yourself in supremacy and dignity.”

Job is challenged (in v. 10, as in vv. 9, and 11-13) by God to show himself as His equal. Job is asked to demonstrate his divine attributes -- if he has any. These include:

1. an “arm like God's,” and a thundering voice like Him (v. 9)
2. the ability to don exaltation, highness, supremacy and dignity (v. 10)
3. the act of scattering anger round (11a)
4. the ability to “bring low” and “subdue” all of the proud, defeat the wicked, and bury their faces in the dust (v.11-13)

If Job has these characteristics, God will acknowledge him as His equal (v. 14). The passage clearly sees the characteristics noted as attributes of God. The divine imagery in

³² P. 318, note 89.

these verses thus refers to God's supremacy and power, expressed through His subduing the mighty and bringing low the high.

The divine characteristics listed here have interesting and important similarities to the characteristics of the Neo-Assyrian king, as detailed in the annals. These include, but are not limited to, linguistic similarities. As discussed in Chapter 3 above (pp. 314-322), the words *hadar* and *gaLon* are used in Isaiah 2:5-22 to express *melam b@lΣti* (“*melammu* of lordship”), which is a royal characteristic of the Assyrian king. It is possible that the two phrases *hod we-hadar* and *ga'on wa-gobah* in Job 40:10 express a similar borrowing, with *hod we-hadar* translating the concept of *melammu*, and *ga'on wa-gobah* translating the concept of *b@lΣtu*, or highness and majesty. In Job 40:9-13, unlike in Isaiah 2:5-22, there is no linguistic anomaly to clearly show that the Biblical passage contains a calque or loan translation from the Akkadian. However, in the surrounding verses, we find a series of divine characteristics which are parallel to those which describe the king in the annals.

The imagery of verses 11-13 have remarkable similarities to the language frequently used in the Neo-Assyrian annals to describe the king's defeat of his enemies:

1. The enemies are called “wicked” and “proud,” and the goal is to “subdue” them and “bring them low.” (Examples of this appear on the preceding pages.) The choice of words is very similar to that found in Job 40:11-12, which call on Job to match God's actions by bringing low and humbling the proud and wicked.

2. There is a close association in the annals between the *melammu* of the god Aššur and the submission of the enemies.³³ In Job 40:10-13, Job is told to wear *ga'on* and *gobah*, *hod* and *hadar*, preparatory to subduing the wicked and proud. These verses thus describe Job wearing objects which are elsewhere (Isa. 2:10, 19, 21) used as translations of *melam b@lšiti* before doing an action which is very similar to actions accomplished by *melammu* in the annals. The absence of light imagery in Job does not in any way weaken the parallel. In the annals, *melammu* is often used without any relevance to radiance.

³³ This association is detailed in Chapter 1, pages 125-128.

3. The king's actions in war are connected to his attribute of anger.

An example of this connection appears in the titulary of Ashurnasirpal II:

*ezzu læ pædû ßa t@bußu abΣbu
sæ~ip mætæti mußamqit targig*

angry, merciless, whose attack is (overwhelming like) the flood,
who overwhelms the lands, who fells the wicked.³⁴

The similarity between the divine characteristics enumerated in this verse and the royal and divine characteristics portrayed in the royal inscriptions is substantive and specific. However, the question of whether Job borrows from or is influenced by the Neo-Assyrian annals cannot be decisively answered. Although there is a fair degree of similarity between the ideas in the two texts, there is no linguistic peculiarity which would clearly demonstrate dependence. It is possible that authors of the two texts independently generated the similar ideas of subduing the proud and wicked with anger, while decked in exaltation, highness, supremacy and dignity.

Going beyond this unanswerable question, the comparison of the two texts highlights the book of Job's notion of divine behaviour. God is portrayed in these verses

³⁴ From a stone relief found at Calah, containing a mixture of annals and display inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II. Quoted from *RIMA 2*, p. 194, A. 0.101.1, col. i, line 7. Outside the annals, anger is also used to characterize *melammu* and related terms. For example, in describing Anu, the literary composition An-gim dím-ma reads:

ßa pulu~tu ezzeta ramû mar Enlil ßa ana @muqißu taklu

who is clad in angry *pulu~tu*, son of Enlil, who is confident in his strength.

(Quoted from J. Cooper, *The Return of Ninurta to Nippur* [Analecta Orientalia 52; Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1978], 57.)

solely through His attributes of power and control. Job is challenged to imitate God's imperious power, not His wisdom or concern for creation. The similarities between the portrayal of God here and the portrayals of god and king in the Neo-Assyrian annals highlight the nature of the portrayal of God in these verses.

There is also a certain degree of irony in the call to Job to match God precisely in His characteristics of imperious power. In the Neo-Assyrian annals, the king boastfully describes himself as having achieved precisely these characteristics: bringing low the proud and wicked, possessing a lordly *melammu*, raging in conquest. The king's characteristics are similar to those of the divinity. Like Aššur, he has a *melammu*; like Aššur, he is able to achieve the submission of the proud, wicked, and unsubmitive. The book of Job, on the other hand, emphasizes the unbridgeable distance between God and man by using precisely the same characteristics. Job is called on, almost laughingly, to deck himself with *ga'on* and *gobah*, *hod* and *hadar*, to scatter wide his raging anger, to bring low and humble the proud. In dealing with the very same characteristics, the Neo-Assyrian annals emphasize the comparability of god and man while the Biblical text emphasizes the distance between them.

Job 37: 22.

A second passage which contains imagery parallel to that of *melammu* is Job

37:22. The surrounding context in vv. 14-23 is:

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- (14) Listen to this, Job, stand and investigate the miracles of God.
- (15) Do you know what God lays upon them, when His rain clouds appear?
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- (16) Do you know the miracles of Him whose understanding is perfect which are upon the layers of storm-cloud?
- (17) Why your clothes become hot when the land is becalmed by a south wind?
- (18) Stretch out the heavens with him, firm as a mirror of cast metal?
- (19) Inform us what we should say to Him, for we cannot form an argument because of darkness.
- (20) Is He informed when I speak? Should a man say anything when (all) is hidden?
- (21) Now, they do not see the sun, though it be bright in the heavens, until the wind comes and clears them (of clouds).
- (22) By the north wind, the gold arrives; upon God is terrifying *hod*.
- (23) Have we not found Shaddai great in power? Does He not cause judgment and much justice?

³⁵ The word 'or in Job sometimes refers to rain, rather than to light (which is its usual meaning); examples of this may appear in Job 36:30 and 36:32. See further in R. Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 421.

The passage contains various descriptions of natural phenomena, all of which are designed to show Job the fullness of God's power. Verses 20b-23 compare God to the sun, and speak about the clouds passing away to allow glimpses of the sun. The verse most relevant to the parallel to *melammu* is in v. 22. The verse describes “the gold” arriving: this is usually taken as a description of the sun, whose appearance is compared to God.³⁶ The end of the verse is more unusual, since it speaks of “terrifying *hod*” as being upon God.³⁷ The phrase is quite difficult, since it is not clear why the *hod* should be terrifying, or why such *hod* should be upon God. The adjective preceding the noun here is also somewhat unusual.³⁸ It may reflect an adaptation of the Akkadian construct *pulu~ti*

³⁶ J. Klein, in *Iyyov* (Entsiklopedya Olam Ha Tanakh series; Tel Aviv: Davidson-Iti, 1996), 195. Duhm suggested reading זֹהַר (radiance) instead of זֹהַב, to simplify the verse and follow the theme of brightness introduced in v. 21. (B. Duhm, *Das Buch Hiob* [Freiburg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1897], 179). The problem of the arrival from the north (instead of the east, as expected) is unresolved. For this reason, Pope understood the verse as referring to Baal's palace of gold, silver, and lapis-lazuli on Mount Zaphon (M. Pope, *Job* [Anchor Bible Commentary; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965], 287.) The problem with Pope's interpretation is that verse 21 refers to natural phenomena and light (apparently sunlight) and so it seems most reasonable to see v. 22 as continuing this theme.

³⁷ The NJPS translation “the splendour of God is awesome” does not precisely follow the syntax of the Hebrew, since it ignores the phrase *nora' hod*, which is probably a construct, as well as the phrasing ‘*al 'eloah*, which literally means “upon God.”

³⁸ Usually, when an adjective precedes a noun, it serves to make an assertion about the noun, so that the noun serves as subject and the adjective as predicate. Thus, *ʿAddiq attā* (Jer. 12:1) means “You are righteous,” and *yaṣṣar miṣpaʿeka* in Ps. 119:137 means “Your laws are right.” Translating our verse as “Upon YHWH, the *hod* is terrifying,” however, does not help to make the verse's syntax clearer. It leaves the prepositional phrase “upon YHWH” without a clear function in the verse.

melamme, “the terrifying *melammu*.”³⁹ In Neo-Assyrian art, the *melammu* can be depicted as a halo surrounding the sun-disk in which the god resides.⁴⁰ This depiction is very similar to the description of God in these verses: He emerges radiant from the clouded sky, and as He appears, He is surrounded by a sheen of light. The portrayal of God here may be based on the Neo-Assyrian artistic depiction and on the Akkadian phrase *pulu~ti melamme*.

It is admittedly possible to explain the phrase *nora' hod* without reference to Akkadian. There are other Biblical Hebrew constructs using the word *nora'*, such as *nora' tehillof* (“feared in praise,” Exod. 15:11) and *nora' alilâ* (“feared in deed,” Ps. 66:5). But the suggestion that Job 37:23 is based on Akkadian antecedents is not solely the result of the unusual phrase *nora' hod*. It is the combination of similarities here which is very unusual and unexpected. Besides the order of the words *nora' hod*, which is discussed above, the similarities include:

1. Akk. *pulu~ti melammi* refers to the terrifying *melammu*. Artistic depictions of *melammu* show a halo surrounding the god. The imagery in Job 37:22 depicts God appearing with a halo of light surrounding Him.

³⁹ In Akkadian, *pulu~tu* is a noun, and so a more literal translation might be הוד* פהד or הוד* יראת הוד. However, as discussed above in Chapter 1, pp. 110-115, the Akkadian phrase *pulu~ti melamme* means “the terrifying *melammu*,” and so the Hebrew הוד נורא represents the meaning of the Akkadian *pulu~ti melamme*, and also reproduces the order of words in the Akkadian phrase, suggesting that it might be a calque on it.

⁴⁰ Such a depiction appears in 9th c. art from Nineveh, and is represented in figures 4 (p. 165) and 5 (pp. 166-167) in Chapter 1, above.

2. The *melammu* indicates the superior power of its possessor, and his sovereignty and dominion. In the verses following Job 37:22, God is portrayed “great in power and justice.”

There are thus similarities on the level of syntax, imagery, and context. It is possible that these are the result of coincidence, but it is far more likely that they result from some sort of literary borrowing of imagery known to us from Akkadian.

Job 25:2-6

A third relevant passage is Job 25:2-6, and especially v. 2. The language in this passage hints at *melammu*, but nothing in this passage decisively demonstrates such a connection.

This speech by Bildad the Shuhite, states:

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(2) With Him are Dominion and dread,
 He creates peace in his heights.
 (3) Is there a number to His troops?
 On whom does His light not rise?⁴¹

⁴¹ As discussed above (p. 502 n. 35), the word *'or* in Job sometimes refers to rain, rather than to light. But the mention of the moon and the stars in v. 5 suggests that here light is intended. The translation “rise,” for *yaqum* follows Pope, 182. NJPS has the less literal “shine.”

- (4) How can man be in the right before God?
 How can one born of woman be pure?
 (5) Even the moon is not bright,
 And the stars are not pure in His sight.
 (6) How much less man, a worm,
 The son-of-man, a maggot.

The phrasing in the first part of the verse is unusual. In Biblical Hebrew, *paʿad* generally refers to the sense of terror felt by the one who fears, not the causing of terror by the one who inspires fear.⁴² This unusual use of *paʿad* suggests that the term here may be a translation of the Akk. *puluʾtu*. This would fit nicely in the collocation *hamβel wa-paʿad*, since *puluʾtu* collocates with *bēlūtu* (lordship), as in the expression *pulʾat bēlūti*. This Akkadian expression refers to the terror of the king's military might, and is used to refer to the terror that causes enemies to submit to the authority of the king.⁴³ The context in Job suggests that the Hebrew expression *hamβel wa-paʿad* has much the same meaning as *pulʾat bēlūti*. V. 2b speaks of God's ability to create order in the heavens, and the context suggests that 2a mentions the characteristics needed to create this order. As further evidence of the connection between Heb. *hamβel wa-paʿad* and Akk. *pulʾat bēlūti*, we note the reference to military might in v. 3a (“Is there a number to His troops?”). Like *pulʾat bēlūti*, *hamβel wa-paʿad* refers to overwhelming military might which it is useless to oppose.

⁴² See further the discussion above in Chapter 3, at pages 315-316.

⁴³ It is discussed above in Chapter 1 at p. 124. It is similar in meaning to *melam bēlūti*.

The two phrases are similar in meaning, and their individual words are also similar: *pa`ad* is identical in meaning to *pulu~tu*, as discussed above, and *hamβel* has a meaning is similar to that of *b®lΣtu*. *Hamβel* is the *hiph`il* gerund of the Hebrew root *mβl*. The *hiph`il* of *mβl* is rare in the Hebrew Bible, appearing only here and in Ps. 8:7 (“you cause him to rule over your handiwork”) and in Dan. 11:39 (“and cause them to reign among the many”), and refers to imposing someone's rule over others. It is thus similar in the way it is used to the Akkadian *b®lΣtu* which refers to the king's dominion over others.

The parallel between the meaning of the phrases *hamβel wa-pa`ad* and *pul~at b®lΣti*, as well as the parallels between their component words, suggests that the Hebrew *hamβel wa-pa`ad* in Job 25:2 is a loan-translation of the Akkadian *pul~at b®lΣti*.

The following verses contain several references to radiance. One of these is in verse 3, “On whom does His light not shine?” This question is in parallel to “Can His troops be numbered?” The two questions are drawn into a closer parallel if we understand the “light” here to be a reference to an aura of power depicted as a halo of light. This may be a reference to the halo of light used to depict the *melammu* (discussed above p. 504, and in Chapter 1, pages 154-156). The verse may thus refer to both the artistic representation of the *melammu* in the Neo-Assyrian period (the halo of light) and to its referent in the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions (the sovereign's military power). If we understand the word *’or* (“light”) in this way, the question “On whom does His light not shine?” would mean “who is not affected by His *melammu*?”

In Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, *melammu* is used to refer to the powerful military forces of the king. (Examples are cited in Chapter 1, at pp. 115-117). When the annals speak of “pouring out” the king's *melammu*, they refer to unleashing overwhelming numbers of troops against the enemy.

If we understand “light” in the first part of Job 25:3 as a reference to *melammu*, a close parallel emerges between the two halves of the verse. *Melammu* refers both to radiance and to military strength, and each half of the verse refers to one of the aspects of *melammu*.

Later on in this speech of Bildad, radiance imagery is used as a symbol of purity: “Even the moon is not bright, and the stars are not pure in His sight” (v. 5). God's brightness and purity are highlighted by the comparison to the moon and the stars. The association between brightness and purity is not found frequently in the Hebrew Bible.⁴⁴ It is, however, frequent in Akkadian, where *ellu* means both “pure” and “bright.” Although this point is not decisive, it could be consistent with an Akkadian background for this speech.

⁴⁴ It is found in Song of Songs 6:10, in the phrase □□□□ □□□ (pure as the sun).

Conclusion

It is fairly clear that the concept of *melammu* lies behind the imagery in Job 40:10. I consider it likely that the author of the other passages cited in this discussion was also aware of the concept of *melammu*. In these passages, divine power and radiance imagery are expressed in phrases similar to those used in Neo-Assyrian annalistic literature, and similar to some of the images used in depicting *melammu* in art of that period. This would suggest that these passages in Job could not have been composed before the ninth century, when the Israelites were first exposed to the Neo-Assyrian empire.⁴⁵ They were probably not composed before the late eighth century, when the intensive contact began between Mesopotamian political centres and those of Biblical Israel.

We cannot argue, however, that these passages were not composed later than the end of the Neo-Assyrian period. As discussed above,⁴⁶ the phrases used in the annals in passages involving *melammu*, the symbolism of *melammu* imagery, and the artistic conventions of depicting *melammu* were still known in the neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods.

⁴⁵ I refer specifically to the Neo-Assyrian period, because of the way in which the Akkadian parallels discussed here are used in Akkadian texts. While *melam b@l@ti* is used in the Neo-Babylonian period as well, it tends to refer to royal legitimacy in that later period. In the Neo-Assyrian period, it refers to royal power, and this seems to be a more precise parallel to the material in Job.

⁴⁶ The use of Neo-Assyrian motifs in later periods is discussed in Chapter 3, p. 295 and pp. 328-330. The survival of motifs into the Achaemenid period is discussed in Chapter 6 at pp. 469-470.

The investigation of the parallels to *melammu* found in Job thus confirms the range of dates for Job advanced by most scholars. The material considered here should be dated somewhere between the eighth and fifth centuries, leaving open the possibility of a pre-exilic date for Job, as Pope argued, or that of a sixth or fifth century date for the book, in accordance with the views of Albright and Ginsberg.