

Issues Regarding the Association of Enoch with Idrīs and Seth

The first person who devoted himself to philosophy was Idrīs. Thus was he named. Some called him also Hermes. In every tongue he hath a special name. He it is who hath set forth in every branch of philosophy thorough and convincing statements. After him Balinus derived his knowledge and sciences from the Hermetic Tablets and most of the philosophers who followed him made their philosophical and scientific discoveries from his words and statements....

[Bahá' u' lláh](#)

“And mention in the Book Idris; he was a true man, a Prophet. We raised him up to a high place.”

Surah of Mary (56), ayat (verse) 56 (The Koran Interpreted, a classic verse translation by A.J. Arberry, originally published in 1955)

Other prophets to whom the Qur'ān devotes notable space are Adam (e.g., 2:30–38; 7:11–25); Noah (7:59–64; 11:25–49) Lot (11:77–83), Joseph (12:3–101), David (21:78–80; 38:17–26)

and Solomon (27:15–44). The Qurʿān also names Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Aaron, Job, Jonah, Zechariah, John the Baptist, Elijah, Elisha, the three “Arabian” prophets Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, and Shuʿayb, the problematic Idrīs—usually identified with Enoch—and Dhū al-Kifl (literally, he who holds a security or pledge).

Roberto Tottoli, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, “Prophets”

A prophet named Idrīs is mentioned in the Koran in Suras 19:57–58 and 21:85. The commentators identify him with Enoch, whom God “took” (Gen. 5:22–25), namely, that he did not die. The Muslims shaped the character of Idrīs, the brother of “Noah,” in keeping with Jewish *aggadah*, as already found in Ben Sira, Josephus, and the books of the Pseudepigrapha, in various languages, which are attributed to Enoch. The brother of “Noah” was well versed in books and was therefore named Idrīs (“the expounder of books”). Like the Jews, the Muslims occasionally identify him with Elijah, as well as with al-Khaḍir.

(Sarna, Nahum M., et al. “Enoch.” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. 2nd ed. Vol. 6. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. 441-442. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 16 Apr. 2011.)

In the Qur'ān (19:57–58, 21:85), Idrīs is said to have been an "upright man and a prophet," who was "raised to a high place." While Idrīs's identity within the Qur'ān is uncertain, Muslim writers, drawing upon Jewish sources that venerate him, have regularly identified him with Enoch (Arab., Akhnūkh). He is said to have introduced several sciences (Fraade, Steven D. "Enoch." *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Ed. Lindsay Jones. 2nd ed. Vol. 4. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. 2802-2804. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web.)

Enoch. Descendant of Adam (7th generation), in the Hebrew Bible. According to Genesis 5. 24, he was one who 'walked with God and he was not; for God took him'. From this, he became central in apocalyptic speculation. Many legends became attached to him and several pseudepigraphical books bear his name.

1 Enoch, or Ethiopic Enoch, contains a series of revelations to Enoch. The book is composite, and chs. 37–71, the 'Similitudes' or 'Parables', have attracted special attention because of their use of the term 'Son of Man'.

2 Enoch, Slavonic Enoch, or The Book of the Secrets of Enoch, recounts a tour by Enoch of the seven heavens.

3 Enoch is a Hebrew Merkabah text to be dated perhaps to the 5th–6th cents. CE.

In Islam, the figure in the Qur'ān (19. 57 f., 21. 85) of Idrīs is usually identified by Muslims with Enoch.

("Enoch" *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*. Ed. John Bowker. Oxford University Press, 2000. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press.)

Idrīs, an immortal figure in Islamic legend, mentioned in the Qur'ān (Islamic sacred scriptures) as a prophet. According to the traditions of the Sunnah, the major sect of Islam, Idrīs appeared sometime between the prophets Adam and Noah and transmitted divine revelation through several books. He did not die but was taken bodily to paradise to spend eternity with God. Popular legend also credits him with the invention of writing and sewing and of several forms of divination. He is regarded as the patron saint of craftsmen and Muslim knights.

Scholars, however, have not been able to assign Idrīs a definite historical identity. On linguistic grounds he has been variously identified as the biblical Ezra, the Christian Apostle Andrew, Alexander the Great's cook Andreas, and sometimes as the biblical Elijah or Muslim al-Khidr. Parallels have also been drawn between the biblical Enoch and Idrīs, on the basis of several striking similarities: both are pious men taken physically to paradise, and both live a reputed 365 years, suggesting that they had originally been sun gods. Idrīs (and Enoch) has also been woven into the Islamic

mythology surrounding the Greco-Egyptian god Hermes Trismegistos as the first incarnation of the tripartite Hermes.

("Idrīs." *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011.)

Classical commentators used to popularly identify Idris with Enoch, the patriarch who lived in the Generations of Adam. An example is İsmail Hakkı Bursevî's commentary on *Fusus al-hikam* by Muhyiddin ibn 'Arabi. Most modern scholars, however, reject this identification because they argue that it was made without any true proof. As Qur'anic translator Abdullah Yusuf Ali says in note 2508 of his translation:

Idris is mentioned twice in the Quran, viz., here and in Chapter 21, verse 85, where he is mentioned as among those who patiently persevered. His identification with the Biblical Enoch, may or may not be correct. Nor are we justified in interpreting verse 57 here as meaning the same thing as in Genesis, v.24 ("God took him"), that he was taken up without passing through the portals of death. All we are told is he was a man of truth and sincerity, and a prophet, and that he had a high position among his people.

—Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*

(Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, "Idris")