

Here we see the plural Elohim of Genesis 1 as the seven angels, Yahweh in his plurality, creating the man figure in his image. Like Philo, the Ophites regarded the different names and titles for the second God as indications of his different aspects or powers: 'He who was the first descendent of the mother is called Yaldabaoth; he, again, descended from him, is named Iao; he, from this one, is called Sabaoth; the fourth is named Adoneus; the fifth Eloeus; the sixth **Oreus** and the seventh and last of all Astanphaeus' (*Against Heresies* I. 30.5). All these names are recognizable: Iao is one of the variant forms of Yahweh; Adoneus is Adonai; Eloeus is God; **Oreus** is Light; and Astanphaeus is Crown (from the Hebrew *ha-tsaniph*, the royal/high-priestly turban). These seven are also give the more familiar names of the archangels and identified with the living creatures who surrounded the cherub throne. There is, as we have seen, a problem of numbers in the Hebrew texts; one tradition knew four archangels and four living creatures, another knew seven archangels. Here in the Ophite system there are also seven living creatures, the first four of which are familiar:

[The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second God](#) (page 177)

Margaret Barker

¹ The probable meaning of this and the following names is thus given by Harvey : Ialdabaoth, *Lord God of the Fathers* ; Iao, *Jehovah* ; Oreus, *Light* ; Astanphæus, *Crown* ; Sabaoth, of course, means *Hosts* ; Adoneus, *Lord* ; and Eloeus, *God*. All the names are derived from the cabbalistic theology of the Jews.

² Hence their name of Ophites, from *ὄφις*, *a serpent*.

³ The Latin has *evertisse*, implying that thus Nous was more degraded.

[The Writings of Irenaeus](#)

By Saint Irenaeus (Bishop of Lyon.)