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Mesopotamian Elements and the Watchers Traditions

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Introduction

By the time of the exile, early Watchers traditions were written in Aramaic, the vernacular in Mesopotamia. Besides many writings associated with Enoch, several works composed in Aramaic came to light from the Qumran library. They manifest several specific common characteristics concerning their literary genres and content. These are worthy of further examination.[1] Several Qumran Aramaic works are well acquainted with historical, literary, and other traditions of the Eastern diaspora, and they contain Mesopotamian and Persian elements.[2] Early Enoch writings reflect a solid awareness of certain Mesopotamian traditions.[3] Revelations on the secrets of the cosmos given to Enoch during his heavenly voyage reflect the influence of Mesopotamian

1. Characteristics of Aramean literary texts were examined by B.Z. Wacholder, "The Ancient Judeo-Aramaic Literature 500–164 BCE: A Classification of Pre-Qumranic Texts," in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, JSOTSup8, ed. L.H. Schiffman (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 257–81.

2. The most outstanding example is 4Q242, the Prayer of Nabonidus that suggests knowledge of historical legends on the last Neo-Babylonian king Nabunaid (555–539 BCE). On the historical background of the legend see R. Meyer, *Das Gebet des Nabonid*, SSAW.PH 107, no. 3 (Berlin: Akademie, 1962). 4Q550 uses Persian names and the story reflects the influence of the pattern of the Ahiqar novel; see I. Fröhlich, "Stories from the Persian King's Court. 4Q550 (4QprESTHAR^{a-f})," *Acta Ant. Hung*. 38 (1998): 103–14.

3. H. L. Jansen, *Die Henochgestalt: eine vergleichende religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Skrifter utgitt av det Norske videnskaps-akademi i Oslo. II. Hist.-filos. klasse no. 1 (Oslo: I kommisjon hos J. Dybwad, 1939) examined the figure of Enoch in the light of the Mesopotamian tradition years before the finding of the Qumran manuscripts. On the figures of the Watchers in the background of Mesopotamian tradition, see Amar Annus, "On the Origin of Watchers: A Comparative Study of the Antediluvian Wisdom in Mesopotamian and Jewish Traditions," *JSP 19* (2010): 277–320.

cosmological lore.[4] The figure of Enoch, and the elements of the revelation tradition associated with him, originates in the figures of the Mesopotamian *apkallū-s* (wise ones), more exactly in the figure of the Mesopotamian diviner-king Enmeduranki, and in the tradition about divine revelation given to him.[5] Thus it can be assumed that the kernel of the Enochic tradition, the *Book of the Watchers* (*1 Enoch* 1–36), was shaped either in a Babylonian Jewish diaspora community or perhaps in a community of returnees that maintained traditions from the Babylonian exile. This group of writings might have been expanded by later additions to the text.[6]

The narrative of the Watchers (*1 En.* 6–11) belongs to the earliest textual layer of *1 Enoch* and represents one of the earliest traditions of the collection. In chapters 6–11 two distinct narratives exist: the narrative on Shemihazah and that on Asael.[7] The bulk of this early tradition is contained in the Shemihazah story (*1 En.* 6:1–7:62). According to the Shemihazah story, a group of the sons of heaven (6:2), whom the text refers to as the Watchers (*ʿîrîn* as in Dan. 4:10), glimpses the daughters of men, desires them, and decides to descend to them. Their leader Shemihazah (*šmyḥzh*) considers the plan to be sinful, and he does not want to bear the responsibility alone (6:3). Therefore, the Watchers, in order to fulfill their plan, swear to unite on Mount Hermon (*1 En.* 6:6). Then the Watchers ". . . began [to go in to them, and to defile themselves with them and (they began) to teach them] sorcery and spellbinding

4. P. Grelot, "La Géographie mythique d'Hénoch et ses sources," *RB* 65 (1958): 33–69; Grelot, "La Légende d'Hénoch dans les Apocryphes et dans la Bible," *RSR* 46 (1958): 5–26, 181–210; Grelot, "L'Eschatologie des Esséniens et le livre d'Hénoch," *RevQ* 1 (1958–59): 113–31; Grelot, "Hénoch et ses écritures," *RB* 82 (1975): 481–500, written before the publication of the Aramaic fragments.

5. James C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition*, CBQMS 16 (Washington DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), 116. On the Mesopotamian background of the Enoch figure and of the Son of Man figure, see H.S. Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man*, WMANT 61 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988). See also S. Bhayro, "Noah's Library: Sources for 1 Enoch 6–11," *JSP* 15 (2006): 163–77. It is again the group of the Mesopotamian *apkallu-s* (sometimes viewed negatively and counted as demonic and evil beings in Mesopotamian tradition itself) that A. Annus understands to be the origins of the Watchers. See Annus, "On the Origins of Watchers," 282.

6. A similar case is the Danielic collection, the earliest pieces of which demonstrate a good knowledge of Mesopotamian lore.

7. Early scholars dealing with this work have already noted this fact. R.H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1893), 13–14, differentiated between two narratives in the text of *1 En.* 6–11. More recently Paul D. Hanson, "Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6–11," *JBL* 96 (1977): 197–233 and G.W.E. Nickelsburg, "Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6–11," *JBL* 96 (1977): 383–405 have analysed the constituents of the text and they too differentiated between two sources.

[and the cutting of roots; and to show them plants" (7:1). The women became pregnant from them and bore children, who became Giants. The Giants "were devouring [the labour of all the children of men and men were unable to supply] them." (7:4). After this, the Giants begin to devour men, and then ". . . they began to sin against all birds and beasts of the earth] and reptiles . . . and the fish of the sea, and to devour the flesh of one another; and they were] drinking blood. [Then the earth made the accusation against the wicked concerning everything] which was done upon it" (7:5-6).[8] These then are the transgressions, which finally bring about the punishment of the flood (*1 En.* 9:1ff). Thus the story serves as a justification for the catastrophic punishment wreaked upon humanity.

The Asael story (*1 En.* 8:1-2) is not a retelling of the story of the Watchers; it is rather a commentary on certain elements of the narrative. It mentions Asael who taught metalworking, making weapons and jewels for men, and the knowledge of eyeshadows, of precious gems and dyes of mineral origins for women.[9] The section on Asael's teaching is followed by a report on the teachings of Shemihazah and his companions; they taught the interpretations of heavenly *omina*, each Watcher teaching the signs of the natural phenomenon that was included in his name (*1 En.* 8:3-4).

The whole section ends with a report of the punishment of Asael and the Watchers. Asael was punished by the angel Raphael for the sin Asael perpetrated; he was bound and cast into darkness, where the Watchers will stay until "the great day of judgment" (*1 En.* 10:4-7). On the other hand, the punishment mentioned in the Shemihazah story is the binding of Shemihazah and his companions by Michael "for seventy generations" after they were forced to witness their children, the Giants, perish (*1 En.* 10:11-12). The devastation of the flood following these events signifies the purification of the earth (*1 En.* 10:1-3, 20-22).[10] The narratives on Shemihazah, Asael, and the flood revolve around the problem of the origin of evil. The Shemihazah narrative is similar to Gen. 6:1-4, which is also connected with the flood. The relation of the two stories is complicated. The story of Shemihazah and his companions is a

8. Translated by J.T. Milik, based on the Aramaic text reconstructed by him; see Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (London: Clarendon, 1976), 166–67.

9. *1 En.* 65:6 supplements the list of the teachings of Asael by adding that the Watchers also taught people to cast metal and to make cast metal statues. According to *1 En.* 69, a Watcher named Penemue taught people writing and the use of ink and papyrus, practices that later could be the source of several misunderstandings. For further discussion of these traditions associated with the angel Penemue, see the essay by Leslie Baynes in this collection.

10. Nickelsburg, "Apocalyptic and Myth."

logical and continuous narrative, whereas Gen. 6:1–4 seems to be a series of theological reflections on the story narrated in *1 Enoch*.[11] As to the background and meaning of the story of the Watchers, earlier theories saw historical and mythological motifs behind the narrative. The motif of the integration of heavenly and earthly beings would have referred to and negatively judged the mixed marriages of the priests in the postexilic era, objected to by Ezra. The motif of the bloodshed would have mirrored the wars of the Diadochi.[12] Other theories look for mythological models, seeing the motif of the teachings of the Watchers as modeled after the myth of Prometheus, Asael being a *protos heuretes*. Of course, neither historical-sociological nor mythological models, including Greek images, can be ruled out. However, observation of only one or two motifs of the narrative does not illuminate the background and meaning of the whole story. Many elements of the story, such as cannibalism and consuming blood, the basically negative nature of the teachings of the Watchers, magic and interpretation of *omina*, are left unexplained. In order to ascertain the background and the exact meaning and message of the narrative, all major elements of the narrative must be considered. This can be followed by a discussion of the issue of foreign literary influences. The traditions associated with the Watchers were relevant themes in Qumran literature. They were often cited and referred to in other works, certainly because the meanings were considered relevant for the spiritual world of the community.[13] The Watchers supposedly held significance for them, and motifs associated with them embodied basic ideas of the Essene tradition.[14] Notions that are related to each of the motifs of the story are those of *sin and impurity* and *magic and the demonic*.

11. Scholars generally consider the Shemihazah story as an expansion and explication of Gen. 6:1–4. There is no room here to discuss the relation of the two texts; this will be the aim of a further study.

12. D. Suter, "Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest: The Problem of Family Purity in 1 Enoch 6–16," *HUCA* 50 (1979): 115–35; R. Rubinkiewicz, "The Book of Noah and Ezra's Reform," *FO* 25 (1988): 151–55; Nickelsburg, "Apocalyptic and Myth in 1 Enoch 6–11," 383–405.

13. The *Nachleben* and infuence of the Watchers' story in the literature of Qumran requires a separate study. See the essay by Samuel Thomas in this collection.

14. According to P. Sacchi, the peculiar conception of evil based on *1 En.* 6–11 was a distinct ideological tradition that was the catalyst of the schism between the group and Judaism in the fourth century BCE. Michael Stone and David Suter date the schism to the third century. See G. Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of Ways Between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 76–77.

Sin and Impurity, and the Story of the Watchers

The purity system of ancient Israel is acquainted not only with physical impurities, but also ethical ones.[15] Ethical impurity grows out of situations that are controllable and are not natural or necessary, such as delaying purification from physical impurity, polluting specific *sancta*, sexual transgressions, idolatry, and murder. The locus of uncleanness may be the person, but proscriptions refer more to the pollution of the sanctuary or land.[16] Punishments of these sins are more severe than the consequences of physical impurities. Punishment of the sinner is usually the banishing/driving away (*kārēt*) from the land or the extinguishing of one's family.[17] The main list of ethical impurities is in the Holiness Code (Lev. 17–26). Sins are related to four categories: sexuality, violence, death, and magic.

1. Sins related to sexual relations are cases of the *zenūt,* usually translated as fornication, which includes all kinds of illicit sex: sex among blood relatives, with another's wife, homosexual relations, sex with a menstruating woman, and prostitution (see Lev. 18:1-30; 19:29). A special case in the list is *kilayim*, the prohibition of mixing together different kinds of animals, plants and materials in human clothing (Lev. 19:19, Deut. 22:9-11). A special case of *zenūt* not listed in Lev. 17–26 is remarriage with one's divorced wife with her, in the meantime, having been remarried and then divorced or widowed (Deut. 24:1-4; cf. Jer. 3:1).

2. Sins related to blood: bloodshed (Deut. 21:1-9; cf. Gen. 4:10, Ps. 106:38-39)

3. Sins related to the dead: a corpse left on the tree for the night (Deut. 21:22-23; cf. 11QT 64:11-12).

4. Sins related to magic: "Do not resort to ghosts and spirits or make yourselves unclean by seeking them out. I am the LORD your God" (Lev. 19:31). Magical practice is sometimes conceived as *zenūt* (Lev. 20:6), and those who practice it are to be killed (Exod. 22:17).

15. On the distinction between types of purity based on nonbiblical anthropological evidence, see L.N. Rosen, "Contagion and Cataclysm: A Theoretical Approach to the Study of Ritual Pollution Beliefs," *African Studies* 32 (1973): 229–46.

16. W.D. Davies, *The Territorial Dimension of Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); D.P. Wright, "Unclean and Clean, Old Testament," *ABD* 6:729–41, esp. 738–39.

17. For example, the Assyrian exile of Israel is explained in 2 Kgs. 17:5–23 as a punishment resulting from "the sin of Jeroboam," the improper cultic practice of the northern kingdom.

Results of ethical impurities are summarized in Lev. 18:27-30: "The people who were there before you did those abominable things and the land became unclean. So do not let the land spew you out for making it unclean as it spewed them out. Observe my charge, therefore."[18] Qumran texts enrich the biblical theory of impurities.[19]

The sins of the Watchers are their transgression of the cosmic order and mixing with earthly women, and their teaching of magic. They became impure by this process (*1 En.* 7:1; cf. 4Q531 1, 1). The *Book of Giants* qualifies their relation as a case of *zenūt* (4Q203 8, 9), one of the main categories of ethical impurities. On an analogical basis the mixing of heavenly and earthly beings can also be a violation of the *kilayim*, prohibition of the mixing of categories. The practice of magic is again an ethical impurity according to the biblical system.

The sins of the Giants, sons of the Watchers are violence, bloodshed (cannibalism), sins against the animals, birds, and fishes, and drinking of blood (*1 En.* 7:4-5). Homicide is among the sins that make the land impure (Deut. 21:9). Cannibalism is not known from the biblical system. The meaning of the sins committed against the animals is not clear; it can be a violation of the prohibitions concerning food. This presupposition is confirmed by the report on their consuming of blood, which is a violation of the biblical prohibition (Gen. 9:3-4). These are the sins of the Watchers and their offspring that made the earth impure. The resultant flood is not only a punishment of these sins but also, at the same time, a purification of the earth.

The Giants in the Enochic Tradition

1 En. 15:8 refers to the offspring of the Giants as demons (Ethiopic *nafsat*, Aramaic רוחא).[20] These beings are spiritual in nature, following their fathers' nature; they do not eat, they are not thirsty, and they know no obstacles. Their

18. The citation is a summary of the Holiness Code in Lev. 17–26. The land is the Land of Canaan into which the people were about to enter.

19. The Temple Scroll (11QT) considers as impure the non-observance of the dietary laws (11QT 48:6–7), the bodily signs of mourning (tattooing) (11QT 48:10), covenant and marriage with the "inhabitants of the land," which constituted idolatry (11QT 2:1–15, cf. Exod. 34:10–16), burial grounds not separated from surroundings (11QT 48:11–17), the non-separation of sufferers from bodily impurities (flux, leprosy, plague, scab, menstruating women, women after childbirth), and idolatry repeatedly mentioned as *zenūt* defiling the land. 4QMMT (4Q394–399) adds to the list of impurities the offering taken from the pagan corn, and highlights cases of forbidden marriages (priests' marriage with commoners' daughters) as cases of *kilayim*.

destructiveness first and foremost affects children and women, as they were born of women.[21] The Giants are also the protagonists of the *Book of Giants*. The Aramaic fragments belonging to these manuscripts from Qumran are not contained in the Greek and Ethiopic translations. According to the narrative of a Qumran fragment, one of the Giants took to the air "as whirlwinds, and he flew with his hands/wings as [an] eagle."[22] According to this, Giants were shaped like human figures that could fly like the wind.

Although the story of the Watchers in the *Book of the Giants* does not mention any demons,[23] the motifs of the story are related to the realm of the demonic. The characteristics of the Giants evoke the Mesopotamian tradition about the *utukku-s*, a term generally used for demonic beings. The Enochic Giants have the same characteristics as the Mesopotamian demons; they are tall and obtrusive beings, roaming in bands, attacking their victims indiscriminately. They ravage the work of humans,[24] devour the flesh of animals and humans, and consume their blood. They are born from a sexual union of heavenly and earthly beings, considered in the Enochic story to be impure.

The punishment for the sins of the Watchers is binding them and casting them into darkness. Asael is bound by the angel Raphael and Shemihazah is bound by Michael. Demonological texts regularly mention that the demon is binding his victim. The witch, a constant figure of the Mesopotamian incantation series, *Maqlû*, binds her victim by her practices. The binding effect of the witchcraft is mentioned in the title of a series of incantations entitled "The pregnant woman who was bound."[25] The bonds made by witches can be solved by another kind of magic—healing incantations.

"Binding" is a constant motif in the Mesopotamian creation myth *Enūma elīš,* in which the triumph of the gods over their demonic enemies is marked by binding the enemies. Triumphant Ea binds Apsu, the primeval ocean, and

20. For a discussion of the Watchers traditions and later demonology, see the essays by Kevin Sullivan and Silviu Bunta in this collection.

21. This part of the tradition is known only from the Greek and the Ethiopic translations. 4Q204, the fragment that supposedly contains this part of the text, is not legible at this place. It is to be supposed that this part was also contained in the Aramaic text tradition of the Enochic collection.

22. 4Q530 7ii4, see L.T. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 128–34.

23. See, though, *1 En.* 19:1, and the essay by Randall Chesnutt in this volume.

24. 4Q531 2+3, 1–10 speaks in more concrete terms than the Shemihazah story, and mentions that the Giants were devastating fruit, wheat, trees, sheep, and cattle.

25. V. Haas, *Magie und Mythen in Babylonien: von Dämonen, Hexen und Beschwörungspriestern*, Merlins Bibliothek der geheimen Wissenschaften und magische Künste 8, (Gifkendorf: Merlin, 1986), 170.

builds his house over his breast. He also binds Apsu's helper, Mummu. Marduk binds Tiamat; after splitting Tiamat in two, he forms the netherworld from the monster's inner parts.[26]

Magical Arts

In the Shemihazah story, the Watchers teach humans magical practices: "sorcery (*ḥršh*) and spellbinding (*ksph*) [and the cutting of roots (Gr. *ridzotomia*); and to show them plants . . ." (*1 En.* 7:1). The first two nouns are general terms for magical practices. The "cutting of roots" means, in all probability, the making of herbal ingredients for magic and making amulets containing herbs and roots.[27]

Asael and his companions teach men metallurgy, the making of weapons and jewels. To the women they teach the art of makeup and cosmetics, the most precious and choice stones, and all kinds of coloured dyes (*1 En.* 8:1). Metallurgy and smithing are very closely related to the notion of magic. Ironsmiths were considered sorcerers in the belief system of the ancient and modern Near East.[28] Weapons made by forgers were attributed to magical power. Jewels served originally as amulets with apotropaic function.[29]

The ancient magical origin of makeup, especially the painting of eyes and lips, is well known, and similarly the magic of jewels.[30] In *Enūma elīš*, the Mesopotamian creation myth, all the gods at war wear amulets, using their magic power against their enemies. According to the myth of *Inanna's (Ištar) Descent into the Netherworld,* the fertility goddess going to the netherworld must

26. Ibid., 92.

27. The Talmud is acquainted with two sorts of *kemi'ot* (amulets): a written one (a parchment with quotations from various sources, including the Scriptures), and the *kame'a šel iqrin*, an amulet made from roots of a certain plant (*Shab.* 61b).

28. On the general idea see M. Eliade, *Forgerons et alchimistes*, Homo Sapiens (Paris: Flammarion, 1956). In Ethiopic, ironsmith and magician are denoted by the same word (*duban-ansa*); see W. Leslau, *Concise Dictionary of Geʿez (Classical Ethiopic)* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1989), 181; similarly the descendants of Cain, who are ironsmiths in the Bible (Gen. 4:16-24), in the later tradition related to them are associated with magical motifs (Syriac "Cave of Treasures," folia 12a, col. 2; for an edition, see C. Bezold, *Die Schatzhöhle* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1883; reprint Amsterdam: APA-Philo Press, 1981]). In the Ethiopian tradition the belief that ironsmiths have magic capabilities and knowledge is alive to this day; they are considered sorcerers and therefore members of other groups do not marry their daughters to them. In an incantation of the series *Maqlû* (II.128) the witch (*kaššaptu*) is called "silversmith," whose spells could be undone or removed by the incantation. See G. Meier, *Die assyrische Beschwörungssammlung Maqlû neu bearbeitet* (Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1967)

29. Haas, *Magie*, 197–98.

30. Ibid.

part with one of her seven magical powers, represented by an item of her garments and jewels, at each gate of the netherworld. At the end of her journey she arrives naked and powerless before Ereškigal, the lady of the netherworld. In the Sumerian variant of the myth, two pieces of Ishtar's cosmetics and jewels are specified as having the power of sexual attraction: her eye-mascara is called "Let a man come, let him come," and her pectoral is called "come, man, come."[31]

The holistic worldview of the Mesopotamians considered everything an omen for future events, and the interpretation of *omina* was generally practiced. Such traditions were collected and systematized in a series of interpretations. A collection of interpretations on heavenly phenomena and meteorological *omina* can be found in the series *Enūma Anu Enlil* (When Anu and Enlil) from the Neo-Babylonian era.[32] Its content is similar to the teachings of Shemiḥazah and his companions that are referred to in the Enochic story.

The Story of the Watchers as a Myth of the Origin of Evil

The story of the Watchers is a myth that speaks to the origin of evil in the world.[33] According to the narrative of the Enochic collection this is the first event following creation (the material of Gen. 2–5 [with the exception of the reference to the patriarch] is not included in the Enochic collection). The first stage of the birth of evil is dysfunction in the cosmic order, a result of the mixing of heavenly and earthly beings, a deed considered as a sin related to sexual relations (*zenut*), and a case of ethical impurity (sin resulting in the impurity of the committer and the land). Sins of heavenly beings (bloodshed, consuming blood) are again considered sins that make impure the sinner and the land he or she lives in; therefore evil in the world originates from sins resulting in impurity (ethical impurities). Initiators of the sins are the heavenly beings who descend to the earthly women, driven by their desire. The Watchers are conscious of the nature of their deeds. They even agree together to commit the sin collectively. The narrative does not mention human responsibility. The authors and agents of the deeds are the Watchers. The Giants, the beings born from the cosmic dysfunction, initiate further anomalies

31. Innana's descent to the nether world, lines 22-23. For the text and translation, see *ETCSL (The Electronic Text Corpus of the Sumerian Literature* [Oxford], http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.1.4.1#).

32. W.H. van Soldt, *Solar omens of Enuma Anu Enlil: Tablets 23 (24)-29 (30)*, Uitgaven van het Nederlands historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul 73 (Istanbul: Nederlands historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1995).

33. On the problem, see G. Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis*, 72–73.

in the world. These anomalies are ethical sins resulting in the defilement of the earth. Impurity of the earth results in the punishment of the flood.

The story of the Watchers is an independent story that is parallel to the narrative of Gen. 6:1-4 about the angels and the daughters of men, and not an interpretation of Gen. 6:1-4.[34] The story of the Watchers contains a message that cannot be found in Gen. 6:1-4. It is a determinist myth and an alternative tradition to the message of the primeval history of Genesis. In the Enochic tradition evil originates from the deeds of the Watchers, after creation. According to Genesis, the origin of evil is due to human disobedience (Gen. 2–3). The tradition of the Watchers is often referred to in Qumran texts, with the implication that this is the origin of evil. On the other hand, the biblical story of Gen. 2–3 is almost never mentioned at Qumran.

The author(s) of the Enochic story in the *Book of the Watchers* consciously use Mesopotamian lore to theorize about the origins of evil. The bearers of evil and impurity are demonic beings, the offspring of the Watchers. For the author and audience, demons are working in world history. The story of the Watchers (*1 En.* 6–11) was written following the Babylonian exile. The *terminus ad quem* is the end of the third century BCE. Its language is Aramean, the vernacular of Mesopotamia and the *lingua franca* of the exiled Judaeans from the sixth century BCE.

The attitude of the Enochic collection toward the Mesopotamian world and tradition is manifold. The figure of Enoch and the revelations given to him reflect a working knowledge of the Mesopotamian traditions about the *apkallū*, the antediluvian sages, a priestly tradition from the city of Eridu.[35] In

34. There is no room here to go into the problems of the relation of the two texts. Although Wellhausenian text criticism assigned Gen. 6:1-4 to the Yahwistic source, there is no evidence for an early provenence of this short and disjointed text that may even be a series of reflections of a Priestly redactor (fourth century c. BCE). The Enochic story of the Watchers is backgrounded by a tradition not dependent upon Gen. 6:1-4, which was formed prior to the end of the third century date of the manuscripts of the *Book of the Watchers* as they are known to us. The Enochic story is thought by some scholars to be an interpretation of Gen. 6:1-4. See D. Dimant, "1 Enoch 6–11: A Fragment of a Parabiblical Work," *JJS* (2002): 223–37. Similarly S. Bhayro, "Daniel's 'Watchers' in Enochic Exegesis of Genesis 6:1-4," in *Jewish Ways of Reading the Bible*, JSSSup 11, ed. G.J. Brooke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 58–66, and Archie T. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6.1-4 in Early Jewish Literature* WUNT 2.198 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005). For a different view see Philip R. Davies, "And Enoch Was Not, For Genesis Took Him," in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb*, JSOTSup 111, ed. Charlotte Hempel and Judith M. Lieu (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 97–107. See, too, the essay by Chris Seeman in this volume.

35. See James C. VanderKam, *Enoch: A Man For All Generations*, Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995).

fact, several elements of the story of the Watchers are shaped by the effect of a gentile Mesopotamian background of the work. Genealogical impurity (the Giants born from the relations of the Watchers and the earthly women) is the first level of the systematic spread of the evil in the world. Elements related to impurity, sin, and intermarriage were those necessary for the self-determination of a group, the keeping of shabbat and special purity rules being the qualities that distinguished the exiles from their native gentile neighbours. The meaning of the Watchers' story is that impurities and sins lead to the defilement of the earth and a catastrophic punishment.

Traditions related to magic and connected with the origin of the evil in the story are a reaction against magic, widely practiced in Mesopotamia. The Mesopotamian elements in the Watchers' story are not simply borrowed; they are recontextualized and appropriated in many ways. Mesopotamian *utukku-s*, the evil spirits, may have served as models to the figures of the Giants. Mesopotamian lists of interpretations of *omina* were referred to in the names of the Watchers who were told to transmit forbidden knowledge.[36] Elements related to magic in the *Book of the Watchers* may be backgrounded by Mesopotamian magical practices that were well known among people living in the Babylonian diaspora.

The fragments of the *Book of Giants* found in Qumran represent a literary tradition related to the core of the Enochic collection, the account of the Watchers contained in *1 En.* 6–11.[37] Due to the fragmentary nature of the text, its plot cannot be reconstructed fully and only some details can be recognized. Events of the antediluvian period are referred to several times. Such are the deeds of the Watchers, their defilements, the begetting of "Giants and monsters," as well as to the devastation and bloodshed of the Giants (4Q531 frag. 1,2 and lines 4-6, 8); and the "great corruption in the [earth]" that they caused (4Q532 frag. 2, 9). The Giants, sons of the heavenly Watchers, are victims of the devastation; they must perish in the Flood, together with humans.[38] Their doom is presaged in several dream-visions related in the *Book*

36. On the scribal series and related literature, see Annus, "On the Origins of Watchers," 287–292.

37. This tradition is not contained in the Greek or in the Ethiopic tradition of *1 Enoch*. Among Qumran texts it is represented by 4Q203, 4Q530, 4Q531, 4Q532, 4Q533. The fragments were edited first by J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch. Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (London: Clarendon, 1976). A further publication of the text (adding to the list 1Q23, 1Q24, 2Q26, 4Q206 2-3, 4Q556, 6Q8, and not including 4Q533), with a commentary is Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran*. The definitive publication, with further additions and joins is from É. Puech, *Qumrân Grotte 4. XXII: Textes araméens. Première partie, 4Q529-549*, DJD 31 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 17–116.

38. The Watchers do not perish in the Flood; their punishment is binding; cf. *1 En.* 10:4-7, 11-12.

of Giants. The interpreter of their dreams is Gilgamesh who probably is an independent figure in the text, and not one of the Giants.[39] His name appears in the company of Giants whose names (Ohyah, Hahyah, and Mahawai) are of unknown origin, and with Watchers, part of those names are unknown from other lists.

The *Book of Giants* makes frequent references to dreams, and sections of dream-visions are found in it. The dreams are oracles on the future destruction of the Giants. Gilgamesh is mentioned twice in the fragments. The first mention is a message of Gilgamesh on the doom of the Giants, in Ohya's words (4Q530 frag. 2ii+6+7i+8+9+10+11+12[?], 1-2). The second time Gilgamesh is the interpreter of a dream, the interpretation being transmitted to the giant Ohya. It cannot be established from the fragments if Gilgamesh belongs to the Giants or not—only his function as a dream-interpreter is certain. It is to be noted that the same fragments mention also Enoch, "the noted scribe" as an interpreter of dreams who is told to be able to "interpret for us" (i.e. for the Giants) a dream (4Q530 frag. 2ii+6+7i+8+9+10+11+12[?], 14). Enoch is an authority in revelation: Mahawai is sent to him in order to learn their fate (4Q530 frag. 2ii+6+7i+8+9+10+11+12[?], 21).

Previous research associated the figure of Gilgamesh in the Enochic collection with the epic hero.[40] However, no episode known from the epic can be connected with the Gilgamesh of the *Book of Giants*. On the other hand, in Mesopotamian texts beyond the Gilgamesh epic, Gilgamesh is clearly pictured as a netherworld ruler.[41] Described sometimes as "Nergal's little brother" he was a figure with special relation to Nergal, ruler of the netherworld.[42] He appears in the company of chtonic deities as one who sits in judgment in the netherworld.[43] His name is very rarely found in Old Babylonian documents,

39. Gilgamesh is mentioned twice, in 4Q530 frag. 2ii+6+7i+8+9+10+11+12[?], 2) and 4Q531 frag. 22:12; 4Q203 frag. 3:3.

40. D.R. Jackson, "Demonizing Gilgames," in *Gilgames and the World of Assyria*, ed. Joseph Azize (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 107–114; John C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony: Studies in the Traditions*, MHUC 14 (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992); Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "Giant Mythology and Demonology: From the Ancient Near East to the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Die Dämonen—Demons: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt—The Demonology of Israelite-Jewish and Early Christian Literature in Context of Their Environment*, ed. A. Lange and H. Lichtenberger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 318–38; Matthew Goff, "Gilgamesh the Giant: the Qumran Book of Giants' appropriation of Gilgamesh motifs," *DSD* 16 (2009): 221–53.

41. It is worth noting that Gilgamesh is never mentioned in the epic as one who becomes a netherworld god.

42. See A.R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 107.

apart from the several copies of the epics.[44] In turn, religious texts from the late libraries mention him frequently as the sovereign of the underworld who, after his life on earth, became king of the underworld—a Babylonian Osiris, identified with Nergal.[45] Gilgamesh as judge and ruler of the shades in the netherworld had a specific role in ancestor cult and magical healing (incantations).[46] Netherworld connections and mantic functions are regularly interrelated in religious beliefs. Gilgamesh as king of the netherworld interprets *omina* pertaining to kings. "The omen of Gilgameš the mighty king (*amūt gilgameš šarru dannu*), who had no rival" and variations are frequent in the omen tradition of the late period.

Thus, Gilgamesh, as a ruler of the shades in the netherworld, had three primary functions. As a judge, he judged the case of the sufferer (the prayers use legal terminology to speak of the sufferer). As an omen-interpreter he was able to foretell future events and to prognosticate the sufferer's fortune if he dies or remains alive. Finally, as one who had authority over troublesome ghosts he was believed to be an effective healer. The three roles were interrelated, and each of them was related to the healing of a sickness (believed to be caused by harmful magic).[47]

The Gilgamesh motif in the *Book of Giants* reflects a good awareness of the Mesopotamian scholarly tradition of the interpretation of *omina*, taught in the higher-level schools (it is here to be noted that first-millennium scholarship focused more on magic and divination).[48] Several Qumran Aramaic texts witness that Jewish authors were well acquainted not only with literary texts but also with astronomy, calendar, and the tradition of the interpretation of *omina*. The figure of Gilgamesh in the *Book of Giants* reflects knowledge where Mesopotamian elements are used and transmitted with the same meaning as they were applied in the Mesopotamian culture. This figure matched perfectly with the demonic images of the Watchers and the Giants, shaped with the help of characteristic elements from Mesopotamian culture.

43. Ibid., 127.

44. W.G. Lambert, "*Gilgameš in* Literature and Art: The Second and First Millennia," in *Monsters and Demons in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, ed. Ann E. Farkas (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern,1987), 37–52, esp. 46.

45. Ibid., 40.

46. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic,* 127–35.

47. Lambert, *Gilgameš*, 45; see George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic,* 113–14.

48. Petra D. Gesche, *Schulunterricht in Babylonien im ersten Jahrtausend v. Chr. Alter Orient und Altes Testament* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2001), 81–152; David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 25–27.

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