

## UTNAPISHTIM IN THE BOOK OF GIANTS?

One relatively unexplored motif that can be observed in certain strands of early Jewish interpretation of the figure of Noah as "Flood-hero" revolves around the question of his true lineage and identity. Is Noah of pure human stock, the legitimate seed of Lamech, or is he in actuality one of the infamous נִיבֹרִים, that bastard race of "Giants" engendered through the miscegenation of the fallen Watchers and mortal women that created havoc on earth from the era of Yared until the onset of the Deluge? While the Hebrew Bible is silent regarding the possible hybrid pedigree of Noah, it is clear from several extrabiblical sources that there existed a tradition which alleged that the Flood-hero was a "Giant."

The initial published columns of the so-called *Genesis Apocryphon* (= 1QapGen) will serve to introduce this motif.<sup>1</sup> Therein we are immediately confronted with the suspicion of Lamech that his newborn son Noah is not in fact legitimately his child but was the product instead of an illicit liaison between Batenosh, his wife, and one of the angelic Watchers:

Then I considered whether the pregnancy was due to the Watchers and Holy Ones . . . and I grew perturbed about this child. Then I, Lamech, became afraid and went to Batenosh, [my wife . . . saying,] Everything will you truthfully tell me . . . you will tell me without lies . . . you will speak truthfully to me and not with lies. . . . (1QapGen 2:1-7)

Batenosh assures Lamech that the child is indeed his own:

I swear to you by the Great Holy One, by the Ruler of Hea[ven] that this seed is yours, that this pregnancy is from you, that from you is the planting of [this] fruit . . . [and that it is] not from any alien, or from any of the Watchers, or from any heavenly being . . . I tell you this truthfully. (1QapGen 2:14-18)

However, Lamech remains unconvinced of the verity of Batenosh's disclaimers until he has the opportunity to consult his grandfather Enoch "to learn from him the truth of the whole matter" (1QapGen 2:22). The proceedings of this consultation, conducted via the agency of Lamech's father Methuselah, apparently occupied the subsequent three columns of the scroll, and results in Enoch's explicit declaration that Noah's parentage is "[not from] heavenly [beings], but rather from Lamech [your son]" (1QapGen 5:4).

But why does Lamech suspect his wife of adulterous behavior? Is it simply a circumstantial suspicion based on the almost universal licentiousness that characterizes the final generations of the antediluvian era? (see *b. Sanh.* 108a). Another parallel text, *I Enoch* 106-7, suggests rather that it is the *appearance* and/or *behavior* of the infant Noah that distinguishes him from contemporaneous mortals. Herein we read:

And after (some) days my son Methuselah took for his son Lamech a wife, and she became pregnant by him and bore a son. And his body was white

<sup>1</sup> I translate from the textual edition provided by J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I: A Commentary* (2d rev. ed.; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971).

like snow and red like the flower of a rose, and the hair of his head (was) white like wool . . . and his eyes (were) beautiful; and when he opened his eyes, he made the whole house bright like the sun so that the whole house was exceptionally bright. And when he was taken from the hand of the midwife, he opened his mouth and spoke to the Lord of Righteousness. And his father Lamech was afraid of him and fled and went to his father Methuselah. And he said to him: "I have begotten a strange son; he is not like a man, but is like the children of the angels of heaven, of a different type, and not like us. And his eyes (are) like the rays of the sun, and his face glorious. And it seems to me that he is not sprung from me, but from the angels. . . . And now, my father, I am entreating you and petitioning you to go to our father Enoch, and learn from him the truth, for his dwelling is with the angels. (*I Enoch* 106:1-7; see also vv. 10-12)<sup>2</sup>

The reply of Enoch echoes that found in IQapGen:

And now make known to your son Lamech that the one who has been born is truly his son. And call his name Noah. . . . And now, my son, go, make known to your son Lamech that this child who has been born is truly his son, and (this) is no lie. (*I Enoch* 106:18; 107:2)<sup>3</sup>

Thus it is the manifestation of some markedly supernatural features that creates doubt in the mind of Lamech regarding the parentage of his son. Despite these unsettling phenomena, Lamech is set at ease by the emphatic pronouncement of Enoch that the infant is undoubtedly legitimate. The supernatural attributes, rather than indicating divinity, actually designate the child as a chosen agent of God.<sup>4</sup>

Yet something remains askew in the scenario just sketched. Why were the supernatural signs not immediately recognized as evident indications of God's favor?<sup>5</sup> Why

<sup>2</sup> Translation is that of M. A. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch: A New Edition in the Light of the Aramaic Dead Sea Fragments* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1978) 2, 244-45. Note that IQ19 frag. 3, and perhaps frags. 13-14, provides a Hebrew parallel text to portions of the Enoch passage. See *Qumran Cave I* (ed. D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik; DJD 1; Oxford: Clarendon, 1955) 85.

<sup>3</sup> Knibb, *Ethiopic Book*, 247, 249.

<sup>4</sup> One need only cite the manner in which Jewish tradition embellishes the birth of the divinely chosen agent par excellence—Moses. See *b. Sotā* 12a: משה נחמלא, "and the Sages say that when Moses was born, light filled the entire house"; also cited by Rashi to Exod 2:2 and *Exod. Rab.* 1:24. The sages base this opinion on a *gezerah shawah* linking Exod 2:2 and Gen 1:4. Like Noah, Moses was also endowed with the gift of speech at birth: וּבְיוֹם שֶׁנִּלְדָּתִי מִצְאָתִי פִתְחוּן פִּי וְהִלַּכְתִּי בְרַגְלֵי דְחַבְרָתִי עִם אָבִי וְאִמִּי, "and on the day that I [Moses] was born, I manifested the gift of speech, and walked about on my own two feet, conversing with my father and my mother" (*Deut. Rab.* 11 end).

While on the subject of the peculiar appearance displayed by the infant Noah, it is exceedingly interesting to note that there is a persistent tradition that Noah was one of those favored individuals who were born in a circumcised state. See *'Abot Rab. Nat.* A chap. 2 (Schechter 6b); *Tanḥuma, Noah* §5; *Tanḥuma Buber, Noah* §6. In light of *Jub.* 15:27, which holds that the angels were created in a circumcised state, one cannot blame Lamech for suspecting the possible angelic parentage of his "son," had Noah displayed this physical sign at birth. Unfortunately, IQapGen lacks the reasons why Lamech suspects adultery, and *I Enoch* 106-7 does not mention circumcision.

<sup>5</sup> One reason for hesitation has been masterfully explored by A. Caquot in "Les enfants aux cheveux blancs: Réflexions sur un motif," in *Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1974), 161-72, esp. 168-71. According to Caquot,



are we taken through the narrative detour that produces a refutation of the ascription of a "Giant" status to Noah? Were there traditions extant that alleged that the Flood-hero was actually a "Giant"?

Consider some passages from a third text emanating from the same textual milieu responsible for the production of IQapGen and *I Enoch*—the so-called Pseudo-Eupolemus:

Eupolemus in his work *On the Jews* says that the Assyrian city of Babylon was first founded by those who were rescued from the Flood. They were giants (and) built the recorded Tower. When it collapsed due to the action of God, the giants dispersed over the whole earth.<sup>6</sup>

In some anonymous writings we discover that Abraham traced his lineage to the giants. When these (giants) were living in Babylonia, they were slain by God on account of their impiety. One of them, Belos, escaped death (and) settled in Babylon, and after building a tower lived in it. It was called Belos after its builder Belos.<sup>7</sup>

In these admittedly problematic fragments occurs the tradition that both IQapGen and *I Enoch* 106–7 are at pains to refute: the notion that the biblical Flood-hero was in fact a "Giant."<sup>8</sup> While most of the "Giants" perished in the Deluge on account of

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the attributes displayed by the infant Noah "sont un signe équivoque"; that is to say, the signs could be interpreted in either a favorable or an unfavorable sense. For example, the antediluvian Giants also possessed the gift of speech at birth: רבי לוי אומר היו מולדין בניהם והיו פרים ורבים: כמין שרץ גדול ששה בכל לידה באותה שעה היו עומדין על רגליהם ומברכים בלשון הקדש ומרדין לפניהם כצאן, "R. Levi said: They [the Watchers] engendered their offspring, and they multiplied like some kind of giant reptile—six (being born) at every birth. Immediately upon birth they would stand up upon their feet and speak Hebrew and cavort before them [their parents] like lambs" (*Pirqe R. El.* 22). Text cited from the edition of M. Higger, *Horeb* 9 (1946) 147 lines 4–6. For an unfavorable significance to a "luminous birth," note *Vita Adae et Evae* 21.3: "And she [Eve] bore a son, and he was lustrous [Latin *lucidus*]. And at once the infant rose, ran, and brought in his hands a reed and gave it to his mother. And his name was called Cain." Translation is that of M. D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve," in *OIP* 2, 264.

<sup>6</sup> Apud Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.17.2–3: Εὐπόλεμος δὲ ἐν τῷ περὶ Ἰουδαίων τῆς Ἀσσυρίας φησὶ πόλιν Βαβυλῶνα πρῶτον μὲν κτισθῆναι ὑπὸ τῶν διασωθέντων ἐκ τοῦ κατακλισμοῦ· εἶναι δὲ αὐτοὺς γίγαντας οἰκοδομῆν δὲ τὸν ἱστορούμενον πύργον. πεσόντους δὲ τούτου ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας τοὺς γίγαντας διασπαρῆναι καθ' ὕλην τὴν γῆν. Text cited from Eusebius *Werke Achter Band: Die Praeparatio Evangelica. Erster Teil. Einleitung, Die Bücher I bis X* (ed. K. Mras; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1954) 502–3.

<sup>7</sup> Apud Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.18.2: ἐν δὲ ἀδεσπότης εὗρομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ ἀναφέροντα εἰς τοὺς γίγαντας, τούτους δὲ οἰκοῦντας ἐν τῇ Βαβυλωνίᾳ διὰ τὴν ἀσέβειαν ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν ἀναιρεθῆναι, ὧν ἓνα Βῆλον ἐκφεύγοντα τὸν θάνατον ἐν Βαβυλῶνι κατοικήσαι πύργον τε κατασκευάσαντα ἐν αὐτῷ διατᾶσθαι, ὃν δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ κατασκευάσαντος Βῆλου Βῆλον ὀνομασθῆναι. Text cited from Mras, 504–5.

<sup>8</sup> The inclusion of references to the tower and Abraham render it certain that the Flood-survivor(s) discussed by Pseudo-Eupolemus is(are) the biblical one(s). As B. Z. Wacholder perceptively observed: "The version of the flood and the tower, however, is scriptural, except that Noah and his descendants, perhaps including Abraham, are considered giants" ("Pseudo-Eupolemus' Two Greek Fragments on Abraham," *HUCA* 34 [1963] 89). Here one might conveniently note that according to Epiphanius, *Panarion* 39.3.2, the Gnostic sect of Sethians maintained that Ham b. Noah was actually one of the bastard offspring of the Watchers; that is to say, a Giant.

their wickedness, Noah (= Belos) and his seed were delivered from death. So little in question is Noah's "Giant" pedigree that Abraham, the biological progenitor of the Jews themselves, can trace his lineage back (via Shem b. Noah) to these same "Giants."

Why is there such interest here in the fortunes of the "Giants"? Current scholarship would attribute their presence in the fragments of Pseudo-Eupolemus to that writer's unabashed syncretistic agenda. Most commentators, to a greater or lesser extent, hold that Pseudo-Eupolemus is driven by a desire to amalgamate and coordinate the mythological traditions of the ancient Near East, Palestine, and Greece.<sup>9</sup> His inclusion of "Giants" material reflects his idiosyncratic combination of the Jewish traditions undergirding Genesis 5–11 with the Greek gigantomachy traditions. This prevailing interpretation garners some support from another portion of fragment 1, wherein identifications are offered by Pseudo-Eupolemus between prominent ancient Near Eastern and Greek culture heroes (e.g., Enoch = Atlas).

Despite the prima facie plausibility of this understanding of Pseudo-Eupolemus, recent textual discoveries suggest that there may be another explanation for that writer's form of the "Giants" tradition. In 1971, J. T. Milik astounded the scholarly community when he reported the discovery of what he termed "un Livre des Géants" among the Aramaic fragments of *1 Enoch* that had been recovered from the caves at Qumran.<sup>10</sup> What was astonishing about this discovery was Milik's subsequent demonstration that this Qumran Book of Giants was the textual *Vorlage* for one of the standard canonical texts of Manichaeism — Mani's Book of Giants.<sup>11</sup> Milik's recovery of the Qumran Book of Giants confirmed the earlier suspicions of W. B. Henning that Mani had employed an Aramaic source for the composition of his own narrative.<sup>12</sup>

When one examines the extant published fragments of the Qumran and Manichaean recensions of the Book of Giants, an interesting feature can be observed. The Book of Giants — like Pseudo-Eupolemus — includes "pagan" characters among its *dramatis personae*. The surviving snippets of Pseudo-Eupolemus feature Greek, Hebrew,

<sup>9</sup> A representative group would include Wacholder, "Two Greek Fragments," 83–113; idem, *Eupolemus: A Study of Judaeo-Greek Literature* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974) 287–93; M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) 1. 88–92; J. J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (New York: Crossroad, 1983) 39; P. W. van der Horst, "The Interpretation of the Bible by the Minor Hellenistic Jewish Authors," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. M. J. Mulder; CRINT III/1; Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 540–42.

<sup>10</sup> J. T. Milik, "Problèmes de la littérature hénochique à la lumière des fragments araméennes de Qumrân," *HTR* 64 (1971) 366–72; idem, "Turfan et Qumran: Livre des Géants juif et manichéen," in *Tradition und Glaube: Das frühe Christentum in seiner Umwelt* (ed. G. Jeremias et al.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971) 117–27; idem, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976) 298–339.

<sup>11</sup> For Milik's demonstrations, see the works cited in the preceding note. A thorough examination of the ancient testimonies regarding a "Book of Giants" authored and/or used by Mani and his followers can be found in the first chapter of my *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> W. B. Henning, "Ein manichäisches Henochbuch," *SPAW* (1934) 27–35, esp. 29–30; idem, "Neue Materialien zur Geschichte des Manichäismus," *ZDMG* 90 (1936) 2–4; idem, "The Book of the Giants," *BSCOAS* 11 (1943) 52–74.



and Babylonian actors among the cast of "Giants."<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the Book of Giants, so tantalizingly fragmentary, also preserves the names of "pagan" characters—most remarkably, some of the major characters featured in the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, also apparently numbering them among the roster of the doomed Giants.<sup>14</sup> Milik convincingly demonstrated that the  $\text{ܩܝܢܝܢ}$  of the Qumran fragments and the *Hōbābīš* of the Manichaean version refer in fact to *Huwawa/Humbaba*, the fearsome monster fought by Gilgamesh and Enkidu, whose name appears on tablets 2–5 of the standard Babylonian version of the epic.<sup>15</sup> Significantly, Milik also called attention to the double occurrence of the name "Gilgamesh" in the Aramaic fragments.<sup>16</sup>

Since Milik's groundbreaking work, further fragments of the Manichaean Book of Giants have been identified and published by W. Sundermann.<sup>17</sup> In these fragments, a new character appears on the narrative scene: a Giant named Atambīsh. Here are the relevant citations:

Sām, one of the Giants (superscription). Then Sām said to the Giants: Come here that we might eat and be happy! On account of sorrow no bread was consumed. They slept. Māhawai went to Atambīsh (and) related everything. Again Māhawai came. Sām saw a dream. He came up to heaven. Upon earth fever broke out. All of the water was consumed. From the water wrath went out. (The tutelary spirits?) were invisible. He (Sām) beheld before him the rulers of heaven. . . .<sup>18</sup>

(recto) Then Atambīsh two hundred . . . he seized . . . he cut off (?) before (?) . . . he smashed and he tossed [to] the four end[s] of the ea[rth]. And he . . . . . (?) . . . he took. And those three Giants who were with Atambīsh were slain. And he came (?) before those Wa[tch]ers and Giants who were with him. And when tho[se . . . Atambīsh. . . .<sup>19</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See the full texts of the two fragments attributed to Pseudo-Eupolemus: fragment 1 apud Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 9.17.2–9 (Mras, 502–4); fragment 2 apud Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 9.18.2 (Mras, 504–5).

<sup>14</sup> For the published fragments of the Qumran Book of Giants, see Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 300–317; and compare K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984) 258–68. The Manichaean fragments of the Book of Giants are provided by Henning, "Giants," 56–73. For more recent identifications and publications of portions of the Manichaean Book of Giants, see below.

<sup>15</sup> Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 29, 311–13. The name of *Humbaba* also survives in the form "Hummāma," the Manichaean Spirit of Darkness discussed by some Muslim philosophers and heresiologists. See G. Monnot, *Penseurs musulmans et religions iraniennes: 'Abd al-Jabbār et ses devanciers* (Paris: Vrin; Le Caire-Beyrouth: Institut dominicain d'études orientales, 1974) 123–25.

<sup>16</sup> Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 313.

<sup>17</sup> W. Sundermann, *Mittelpersische und parthische kosmogonische und Parabeltexte der Manichäer* (Berliner Turfantexte 4; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1973) 76–78; idem, "Ein weiteres Fragment aus Manis Gigantenbuch," in *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin emerito oblata* (Leiden: Brill, 1984) 491–505. In addition to these pieces and to the additional texts adduced therein, Professor Sundermann has informed me that yet another fragment from the Book of Giants (M 7800) will soon be published in a forthcoming volume of the periodic *Irano-Judaica* symposia held in Jerusalem.

<sup>18</sup> Leningrad I verso. See Sundermann, "Ein weiteres Fragment," 497–98.

<sup>19</sup> M 5900 [recto?], whose superscription has been restored by Sundermann as "The discourse about the *Māzendārān*"; that is, the Giants. For the text cited, see his *Mittelpersische Texte*, 78.

The personage designated "Atambīsh" would appear to play an important role in the narrative movement of the Book of Giants at these points, and it is frustrating that so little narrative context is available for pinpointing it. Sundermann initially thought that Atambīsh was one of the fallen Watchers, and he suggested an identification with Tamiel, the fifth Watcher mentioned in the list of rogue angels presented in *1 Enoch* 6:7.<sup>20</sup> In a subsequent article Sundermann opined that Atambīsh was in fact a Giant, but put forward no explanation for his peculiar name.<sup>21</sup>

However, given the occurrence of the names of Gilgamesh and Humbaba in the Qumran Book of Giants, and the name of Humbaba in the surviving fragments of the Manichaean Book of Giants, an interesting correlation suggests itself. It seems plausible to postulate that "Atambīsh" represents a later reflex of the name "Utnapishtim," the Mesopotamian Flood-hero from tablet 11 of the *Gilgamesh Epic*.<sup>22</sup>

If this identification is correct, several significant conclusions seem warranted. First, the presence of several literary characters from Mesopotamian epic traditions within a Jewish composition of the Second Temple era attests the wide dispersal of these (and other) motifs among literate circles of the ancient Near East, probably in Aramaic versions.<sup>23</sup> Second, the presence of Atambīsh = Utnapishtim in the Manichaean recension of the Book of Giants is almost certainly dependent on the incidence of the name "Utnapishtim" within the Qumran version of the Book of Giants, presumably now lost or resident within the still unpublished portions of that work. Third, and most significant for our present purposes, the Jewish author(s) of the Book of Giants identified Utnapishtim, the Babylonian Noah, as one of the bastard Giants engendered by the fallen Watchers with mortal women. It is clear from the published fragments of the Book of Giants that a story (*the story?*) of the Deluge once figured in the narrative, but the name of Noah has yet to be identified (or even reconstructed) in this material.

It seems possible that Pseudo-Eupolemus derived his peculiar conceptions about antediluvian history—and, most important, his identification of the Flood-hero as a Giant—from the Book of Giants or an earlier version thereof. The authors of IQapGen and *1 Enoch* 106–7, cognizant of these traditions which hold that the Flood-hero is of suspect parentage, polemicize against this "pagan" motif.

<sup>20</sup> Sundermann, *Mittelpersische Texte*, 78.

<sup>21</sup> Sundermann, "Ein weiteres Fragment," 495 n. 19.

<sup>22</sup> Compare especially the transcription of the name 'tnbyš with Utnapištīm.

<sup>23</sup> One need only cite the international popularity of the Ahīqar romance, assuredly of Mesopotamian origin. The *Prayer of Nabonidus* probably emanates from such a setting. Note also the recent publication by R. C. Steiner and C. F. Nims of an Aramaic version (transcribed in demotic!) of a story about the Assyrian monarch Ashurbanipal and his brother Shamash-shum-ukin ("Ashurbanipal and Shamash-shum-ukin: A Tale of Two Brothers from the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script," *RB* 92 [1985] 60–81). Pseudo-Eupolemus was presumably a member of such a learned scribal circle. For stimulating examinations of this intellectual milieu, see Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 4–58; and especially Wacholder, "The Ancient Judaeo-Aramaic Literature: A Classification of Pre-Qumranic Texts," in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. L. H. Schiffman; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990) 257–81.

John C. Reeves  
Winthrop College  
Rock Hill, SC 29733