



GIANTS, THE BOOK OF

GIANTS, THE BOOK OF, a book mentioned as a canonical work of Mani in the Coptic *Kephalaia* (chap. 148), in the *Homilies* (p. 25.3-4), and *Psalms* (p. 46.29), as well as in the Chinese compendium of Mani's teachings, third article (Copt. *pčōme nngigas*, *pčōmennsalašire*; Chin. *ju huan*). In *Mir. Man.* III, text b, l. 134-35, the work is called *kawān* (*k'w'n*, *kw'n*) "giants." If the recipient was Mār Ammō, it may have been a Parthian translation. But it could also have been addressed to a priest called Frih-Mār-Ammō and written in Middle Persian. It is mentioned by the Arabic title *Seḫr al-jabābera* in Ebn al-Nadīm's *al-Fehrest* (ed. Tajaddod, p. 399, tr. Dodge, p. 798; cf. also Ġaẓanfar in Henning, 1943, p. 72). In *Kephalaia* (ed. Polotsky and Böhlig, p. 5, l. 25), the *Book of Giants* is missing in a list of Mani's works. Instead, there appears a "writing on the subject of the Parthians," which was assumed to be the *Book of Giants*. This is hardly compatible with the fact that the *Book of Giants* had so far been attested by quotations in Middle Persian, Sogdian, and Old Turkish, but not in Parthian.

Written records. Most of the extant fragments of the *Book of Giants* were presented by Walter B. Henning in 1934 (pp. 29-32), and especially in 1943 (fragments A to G; fragment F probably came from another cosmogonical text, see Sundermann, 1973, p. 12; fragments H to V contain extracts, quotations, and allusions). Although none of fragments presented by Henning can be fully identified by referring to the title, the subject of the texts concerns the events of primeval gigantomachy. Supplements were provided by Werner Sundermann in 1973 (Text 22, pp. 77-78, page heading [*gwyš*]nm'[*zyndr'n r'y*],



and perhaps text 20, pp. 76-77), 1984 ([*lgwyšn yg*] *m'zyndr'n r'y* “[Discourse] on Demons,” page heading), and the corrected Russian version, 1989. An unpublished piece containing the subject of the *Book of Giants* is fragment 7447 of the Otani collection. The assumption by Marc Antoine Kugener and Franz Cumont that the quotations in the 123rd homily of Severus of Antioch also came from Mani’s “Book of Giants” was contested on solid grounds by John C. Reeves (pp. 165-74).

The *Book of Giants* has so far been attested in the following languages: Middle Persian (Henning, 1943, Texts A [partially], D; Sundermann, 1973, text 22; idem, 1984=1989, text L), Parthian version (perhaps Sundermann, 1973, text 20), Sogdian version (Henning, 1943, texts C, E, G; Henning’s double-sheet half in Sundermann, 1994, pp. 45-48; Otani 7447), Old Turkic (Henning, 1943, text B, with reference to the Le Coq and Bang editions). Thus the *Book of Giants* has so far only been transmitted in the East Manichean tradition by the collection of texts in Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Kyoto. Nor is anything left of the original Aramaic text. But through the use of material from the *Book of Giants* in Coptic Manichean writings, the work had also become known among the Manicheans of western countries (Henning, 1943, Texts M, P, Q, R, S).

Content. The *Book of Giants* tells the story of those demons who were chained up by the Living Spirit, assisted by his seven sons, in the seven lower firmaments of the sky, and of whom two hundred had been able to free themselves and return to earth. Here the human race had already spread, and it was the period of the apostle Enoch. The demons, traditionally called “guardians” (Aram. *ṭr*, Gk. *egrégoros*, Sogd. *pāše*), subjugated humanity and established a tyrannical rule of terror, and, with the daughters of mankind, they begot a race of giants (Aram. **gabbārē*, Gr. *gígantes*, Copt. *nngigas*, Mid. Pers. *kawān*, Sogd. *kawišt*).

The extant fragments mention one of the leaders of the demons, Šahmīzād (Mid. Pers. *šhmyz’d*, Sogd. *šxmyz’t*), his sons, the giants *Sām* (Mid. Pers. *s’m*, Sogd. *Sāhm*, *s’hm*) and *Narīmān* (Mid. Pers. *nrym’n*, Sogd. *Pātsāhm*, *p’ts’xm*), another leader, *Wirōgdād* (Mid. Pers. *wrwgd’d*, Old Turk. *Wrukdad*), his son *Māhaway* (Mid. Pers. and Sogd. *m’hw*) and other names; they describe the fight among the demons, the killing of 400,000 just men, the struggle of *Sām* against the sea monster *Leviathan* (*lwy’tyn*), and the terrible nightmares announcing the punishment of the demons. To seek their interpretation, the winged *Māhaway* is sent to the apostle Enoch (Mid. Pers. *hwnwx*, Old Turk. *Xonug*), who was carried to heaven. Finally, the four avenging angels,



identified as Raphael, Michael, Gabriel, and Israel (Hebr. Uriel; Mid. Pers. *rwp'yl*, *myx'yl*, *gbr'yl*, *sr'yl*) put an end to the evil doings of the demons and incarcerated them and their sons, i. e., the giants.

Sources. The main sources, already named by Isaac de Beausobre, are: the apocryphal works ascribed to the prophet Enoch (and a *Graphé tōn Gigántōn*). Jozef T. Milik managed to identify fragments of a work from the Enoch literature among the Qumrān texts. This work does not appear in later Christian versions, but shows such affinities with the Manichean pieces that he provisionally referred to it as a *Book of Giants* (Milik, ed., pp. 57-78). Another question is whether this Jewish *Book of Giants* was later replaced in the Christian Enoch tradition by a Book of Parables (Greenfield and Stone, 1977, pp. 51-65 and 1979, pp. 89-92). It certainly served Mani as the main source of his *Book of Giants*, as shown by textual comparisons and the similarity or correspondence of many names: Aram. *Šemīhazah* = Man. *Šahmīzād*, Aram. *Ohyah* = Man. *Sām*, explained in a Sogd. text as [ʿwxlyʿ] (Henning, 1943, p. 70), Aram. *Hahyah* = Man. *Narīmān*, explained in the same place as 'xy', Aram. *Baraq'el* = Man. *Wirogdād*, Aram. *Māhaway* (*mhwy*) = Man. *Māhaway*, Aram. *Ḥobābiš* (*ḥwbbš*) = Man. (Mid. Pers.) *hwb'byš*. The Qumrān fragments of the Enoch book also resemble the Manichean *Book of Giants* because they consider figures of the Mesopotamian *Gilgamesh* epic as giants (Milik, ed., pp. 29, 313; see also Reeves' interpretation of 'tnbyš in the Mid. Persian text as *Utnapištim*; see Reeves, 1993, pp. 114-15).

Reeves, who follows Milik's theory, so far as the dependence of the Manichean on the Aramaic *Book of Henoah* from Qumrān is postulated, has edited, with detailed commentaries, a summary of eleven Qumrān fragments that presumably belong to the *Book of Henoah* (Reeves, pp. 51-164). The question still remains to find out what connection exists between the *Book of Giants* and *Graphé tōn Gigántōn* or *Liber de Orgia nomine gigante* (Henning, 1943, p. 52).

Despite the names of *Sām* and *Narīmān* (but not *Rostam*!) known from the Iranian epic tradition, the story of the giants is not of Iranian origin. Due to *Ġāzanfar*'s reference to these figures, *Cumont* had once assumed the *Book of Giants* to be of Iranian origin. But the *Turfan* texts and *Dead Sea Scrolls* contradicted this theory. The Iranian names in the *Book of Giants* in the East Manichean tradition are translations, not original. Today an Iranian influence can at most be assumed, as *Geo Widengren* does, by ascribing an Iranian, *Zurvanite* background to the Enoch texts (Widengren, 1966, pp. 151-77). But this can hardly be ascertained regarding the myth of the giants (Widengren,



1961, pp. 80-82).

History and effects of the text. Although the *Book of Giants* belongs to Mani's canonical writings, details of it were inevitably changed and adapted to Iranian, Turkish, or Buddhist concepts and ideas in Iran and Central Asia (Henning, 1943, pp. 55-56). Enoch, for instance, here became a Buddha in the Manichean sense (Klimkeit, 1980; Peters, 1989). A remarkable exegetic intervention is found in Henning's Sogdian text G (ll. 10-11; Henning, 1943, pp. 68-69), which says that the avenging angels appointed "guardians" (*p's[yyt]*) to watch the "demons," although the demons themselves, who had come down from heaven, were the "guardians" of heaven according to the Enoch tradition. The commentator, who recognized the significance of the concept but did not understand why it was used for the captured demons, gave it a "plausible" interpretation.

Mani attributed great importance to the Jewish Enoch writings, which were also the source of his astronomical and calendrical ideas (Henning, 1934, p. 34; Tubach, 1987). Reeves (1992, pp. 185-206) even derives Mani's entire macrocosmic and microcosmic myth from the *Book of Giants*. I feel that this theory does not do justice to the radically dualistic character of Manichean cosmogony and does not account for the much greater phenomenological similarity between the cosmogony of evolved Zoroastrianism and such Gnostic writings as the *Paraphrase of Šem*.

Manichean mural paintings with motifs of trees, as discovered in the Turfan oasis, were assumed to refer to the tree with three trunks from Mani's *Book of Giants* (Klimkeit, 1980a, pp. 252-57; idem, 1980b, p. 373). This theory of course depends on the interpretation of tree motifs and also on the assumption that the quotations from Severus of Antioch go back to the *Book of Giants* (see above).

Meaning of the Book of Giants. Mani's attention may have been drawn to the Enoch literature because of his "interest in myths and legends of the distant past" (Henning, 1934, p. 32). But like any Manichean parable, his *Book of Giants* must also have had a didactic purpose. Gedaliahu Stroumsa rightly points out that the work contained an "essentially religious message" (p. 165). I believe that any attempt at interpreting the *Book of Giants* must be based on the thirty-eighth Kephalaion, "On the light nous and the apostles and saints" (Polotsky and Böhlig, eds., I, pp. 89-102). Here the *Book of Giants* is presented as a parable for the constant challenge of the New on behalf of the Old Man



who is tied up to his body. The Petersburg fragment L of the *Book of Giants* seems to confirm this interpretation (*OLZ* 83, 1988, col. 200), and it may be no coincidence that the Turkish fragment of the book belongs to the same manuscript as the Turkish fragment of the Sermons of the Light-Nous, which, among other things, deals with the struggle between the New and the Old Man (Le Coq, III, p. 15; Sundermann, 1983, p. 241).

To the modern observer, Mani's *Book of Giants* demonstrates, unlike any other Manichean text, the universal religious aspect and the dissemination of this doctrine from Judaeo-Christianity to Buddhism and from the Dead Sea to the cave temples of Dunhuang (Klimkeit, 1980; idem, 1980; Peters, on how the biblical prophet Henoch became Buddha).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

F. C. Andreas and W. B. Henning, *Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan* III, SPAW, Phil.-hist. Kl., Berlin, 1934, pp. 848-912.

W. Bang, "Manichäische Erzähler," in *Le Muséon* 44, pp. 1-36.

Isaac de Beausobre, *Histoire de Manichée et du Manichéisme*, 2 vols., Amsterdam, 1734-39.

F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le manichéisme* I, Brussels, 1908.

G. Flügel, *Mani, seine Lehre und seine Schriften*, Leipzig, 1862.

J. C. Greenfield and M. E. Stone, "The Enochic Pentateuch and the Date of the Similitudes," *Harvard Theological Review* 70, 1977, pp. 51-65.

J. C. Greenfield and M. E. Stone, "The Books of Enoch and the Traditions of Enoch," *Numen* 26/1, 1979, pp. 89-103.

G. Haloun and W. B. Henning, "The Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light," *Asia Major*, N.S. 3, 1952, pp.



184-212.

W. Henning, "Ein manichäisches Henochbuch," *SPAW*, Phil. hist. Kl., Berlin, 1934, pp. 27-35; repr. in idem, *Selected Papers I Acta Iranica 14*, Leiden, 1977.

Idem, "The Book of the Giants," *BSO(A)S 11*, 1943, pp. 52-74; repr. in idem, *Selected Papers II, Acta Iranica 15*, Leiden, 1977, pp. 115-37.

H. J. Klimkeit, "Der dreistämmige Baum: Bemerkungen zur manichäischen Kunst und Symbolik," in *Festgabe W. Perpeet*, Bonn, 1980a, pp. 245-62.

Idem, "Der Buddha Henoch: Qumran und Turfan," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte 32*, 1980b, pp. 367-77.

A. v. Le Coq, "Türkische Manichaica aus Chotscho. III," *APAW*, 1922.

J. T. Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4*, Oxford, 1976.

U. Peters, *Wie der biblische Prophet Henoch zum Buddha wurde: Die jüdische Henochtradition als frühes Beispiel interkultureller und interreligiöser Vermittlung zwischen Ost und West*, Bonn, 1989.

H. J. Polotsky and A. Böhlig, eds., *Kephalaia, 1. Hälfte, Manichäische Handschriften der Staatlichen Museen Berlin I*, Stuttgart, 1940.

J. C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions*, Cincinnati, 1992.

Idem, "Utnapishtim in the Book of Giants?" *Journal of Biblical Literature 112*, 1993, pp. 110-15.

Idem, *Heralds of That Good Realm: Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions*, Leiden, New York, and Cologne, 1996, pp. 183-98.

P. O. Skjærvø, "Iranian Epic and the Manichean *Book of Giants*: Irano-Manichaica III," in *AAASH 48*, 1995, pp. 187-223.

G. A. Strausma, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology*, Leiden, 1984.

W. Sundermann, *Mittelpersische und parthische kosmogonische und Parabeltexte der Manichäer*, Berliner Turfantexte 4, Berlin, 1973.



Idem, "Der Chinesische *Traité manichéen* und der parthische Sermon vom Lichtnous," *AoF* 10, 1983, pp. 231-42.

Idem, "Ein weiteres Fragment aus Manis Gigantenbuch," in *Hommages J. Duchesne-Guillemin*, *Acta Iranica* 23, Leiden, 1984, pp. 491-505.

Idem, "Ešče odin fragment iz *knigi gigantov* Mani," *VDI* 3, 1989, pp. 67-79.

Idem, "Mani's *Book of Giants* and the Jewish Books of Enoch: A Case of Termonological Difference and What it Implies," in Sh. Shaked and A. Netzer, eds., *Irano-Judaica: Studies Relating to the Jewish Contacts with Persian Culture throughout the Ages III*, Jerusalem, 1994, pp. 40-48.

J. Tubach, "Spuren des astronomischen Henochbuches bei den Manichäern Mittelasiens," in P. O. Scholz and R. Stempel, eds., *Nubia et Oriens Christianus: Festschrift C. D. G. Müller*, Cologne, 1987 (1988), pp. 73-94.

G. Widengren, *Mani und der Manichäismus*, Stuttgart, 1961; tr. Ch. Kessler as *Mani and Manichaeism*, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, 1965.

Idem, "Iran and Israel in Parthian Times with Special Regard to the Ethiopic Book of Enoch," *Temenos* 2, Helsinki, 1966, pp. 138-77. J. Wilkens, *Neue Fragmente aus Manis Gigantenbuch*, forthcoming.