Isolated Citations of the “Book of Giants” or “Giants” Traditions?

Apart from the examples of formal lists of the Manichaean canon just reviewed, there are numerous tantalizing references and allusions to individual Manichaean works which provide at times more information regarding the content of a specific writing than a mere mention of a title does. Such citations or characterizations recur throughout every stratum of the heresiological literature. Several of these are quite instructive in gaining a better perspective on the “Book of Giants” and thus demand a closer inspection.

Perhaps the earliest witness to the Manichaean use of traditions concerning “giants” was the Egyptian Neoplatonist Alexander of Lycopolis. This philosopher authored a polemical tract against the teachings of Mani during the late third or early fourth century, a dating that situates his work only a generation or so after the death of Mani himself. Twice in the course of his argument he refers to the credulous utilization by the Manichaeans of γαντομαχία, or “wars of giants [and gods],” as evidence for the irrational character of the Manichaean “philosophy.” This condemnation is dependent, at least from the philosophical standpoint, upon the similar denial of false teachings about the gods (including, it should be noted, γαντομαχία in the Greek philosophical tradition). Whether Alexander knew an actual Manichaean book expounding the battles of the Giants is unclear. His first notice of the Manichaean employment of such material occurs in the course of his initial summary of Manichaean doctrine, where he notes that the better-educated missionaries often make analogies between their teachings and “our own tradition” of Greek mythology: “They also refer to the battle of the giants as told in our poetry, which to their mind proves that the poets were not ignorant of the insurrection of matter against God.”

One might conclude from this report that the traditions regarding the Giants used by the Manichaeans were derived directly from the familiar Greek fables relating the war between the Titans and/or the Giants and the Olympian deities at the dawn of history, a recurrent theme for allegorical exposition in the Hellenistic world. However, Alexander’s second reference to the mythological giants clouds this simple interpretation.

On the other hand, what is told in poetry about the giants is mythological. Those who discourse about these in allegorical form put forth such things as hiding the solemnity of their tale behind the form of myth. For example, when the history of the Jews speaks of the angels who consorted with the daughters of men in order to have sexual intercourse, this way of telling the story hints at the nurturing faculties of the soul which comes down hither from above. The poets speaking of the giants that came out of the earth in full armour and then, having rebelled against the gods, perished immediately, demonstrating in this allusive way the quickly perishing constitution of the body, adorn their poetry in this way in order to persuade by the marvellousness of their tale. The Manichaeans, however, understand nothing of all this; whenever they are able to come to false conclusions, they appropriate these as a god-send, whatever their origin, making every effort, as it were, to vanquish truth by all possible means.

Here he combines notice of the Greek giant tradition with an explicit citation of the Jewish legend of giants engendered as the illicit offspring of heavenly beings and mortal women—an obvious allusion to the mysterious story reported in Genesis 6:1-4. Whether Alexander combined the Jewish and the Greek giant traditions on his own initiative or, instead, was reacting to Manichaean formulations which already united these traditions is an open question. It is clear from other passages of his treatise that Alexander was acquainted with both Jewish and Christian literature and thus was, himself, perfectly capable of introducing an illustration drawn from an alien tradition. The context of this passage, however, would seem to suggest that Alexander is correcting erroneous assertions uttered by either Mani or his Egyptian missionaries, in which case it follows that the combination of motifs from the Greek and Jewish spheres was already a feature of the Manichaean teachings about the Giants.

It is, nevertheless, important to note that our earliest testimony concerning the Manichaean usage of traditions about giants characterizes it as martial in tone: it involves combat between two or more groups of opposed forces, and if the presence of the Jewish tradition is admitted at this stage, the motif of unsanctioned mixture must be considered as well.

Other sources supplement this martial characterization of the Manichaean doctrine regarding the Giants and explicitly link it with a written work. The sixth-century (?) Gelasian Decree condemns as
A Manichaean Book of Giants?

Manichaeus the ignorant.93

The ninth-century Muslim writer al-Jāhiz94 is also cognizant of the sexual aspects of Manichaean mythology. He mentions, in his description of the principal features of the Manichaean teaching, their stories about "marriages of the satans (and) copulations of the demons."95 This is apparently a reference to episodes much like the ones recounted in 1 Enoch 6–11, which describe the sexual aberrations of the Watchers and their progeny the Giants. We would probably not go far wrong in viewing this line from al-Jāhiz as testimony to part of the content of the Manichaean Book of Giants. Another ninth-century source, this one stemming from Byzantium, condemns what Mani "wrote regarding the giants and the abortions."96

Here the term "abortions" (ἐκτρομώσεις) betrays a definite dependence by Mani upon a Jewish exegesis of Genesis 6:1–4. This is attested by Bereshit Rabba 26:7, wherein the nephilim of verse 4 are explained to be nephilim ("abortions").97 The peculiar relationship between the Giants and the "abortions" will be explored in greater detail later. Here, it suffices to note that this Byzantine formula knows a written work authored by Mani which discusses "giants and abortions," surely a reference to his Book of Giants, as known from other sources. This terminology, coupled with the incidental remark of al-Jāhiz about similar sexual adventures, prompts one to conclude that the content of the Book of Giants was based upon events very much like, if not identical with, those narrated by our extant legendary expansions of Genesis 6:1–4.

This survey of actual and possible testimonies to a Manichaean Book of Giants produces the following observations: Manichaean literature ranks a "Book of Giants" among its own canonical scriptures. The epistle to Mar Ammō shows that the dissemination of the Book of Giants formed part of the missionary enterprise of the Manichaean church, hence suggesting an important instructional role for this work. This becomes especially significant when viewed in conjunction with Jerome’s assertion that Mani’s teaching about the giants was the foundation of his heresy. The Manichaean utilization of stories about "giants," if not an actual book itself, appears in every stratum of the heresiological literature. It can be learned from a variety of sources that the content of the work featured both marital and sexual exploits. Finally, there have been several indications that the

heretical a certain Liber de Ogia nomine gigante, whose protagonist was described as "qui post diluvium cum dracone ab hereticis pungisse perhibetur apocryphus."90 This "Book of Ogius the Giant" was plausibly identified with the Manichaean Book of Giants even before the discovery of confirming evidence among the Parthian fragments of the latter work.91 Here it should be noticed that Ogius engages in combat with a dragon, a variation of the aforementioned martial theme. Another writer stemming from a later era and culture, al-Ghadanfar of Tabriz,92 characterizes Mani’s Book of Giants as follows: "The Book of Giants of Mani the Babylonian is full of stories about these giants, among whom are numbered Sām and Narimān, names which he took from the Avesta of Zoroaster..."93 Sām and Narimān are familiar warrior heroes featured in the epic lore of Iran.94 Al-Ghadanfar goes on to compare Mani’s Book of Giants with Indian literature that narrates among other actions "battles" (حروب) with giants.95 This comparison would hardly be apt had Mani’s book not included similar stories about the bellicose behavior of the Giants.

There is, in addition to the persistent testimony that Mani’s Book of Giants apparently contained stories involving gigantomachy, a parallel stream of tradition that suggests that the Giants were the products of, or were themselves engaged in, sexual irregularities. The root of this particular facet of the tradition is undoubtedly the Jewish legends clustered around the terse notice preserved in Genesis 6:1–4 about the beney ha’elohim and the benot ha’adam, particularly as found in 1 Enoch and the Book of Jubilees.96 We have already seen that Alexander of Lycopolis objects to the Manichaean interpretation of this biblical episode within the general context of the gigantomachy.

Jerome, in his Homily upon Psalm 132, refers to an “apocryphal book” that relates a story about the descent of the sons of God upon Mount Herman for the purpose of acquiring human wives.97 Although it is not explicitly stated, this is clearly an allusion to a narrative source much like 1 Enoch 6–11. Jerome then goes on to say: "I have read about this apocryphal book in the work of a particular author who used it to confirm his own heresy."98 This "particular author," as the context indicates, is Mani, for Jerome continues by declaring that this story of the sexual union of the sons of God and the daughters of men was the "source of the teachings of
narrative of the Book of Giants was related to the Jewish legends which surround the exegesis of Genesis 6:1–4.

Modern Opinions Concerning the Nature of the Book of Giants

Prior to the great manuscript discoveries of this century, scholars had only the aforementioned heresiological notices to guide them in making speculations as to the possible origin and character of Mani’s Book of Giants. The first modern student of Manichaeism, the eighteenth-century Huguenot scholar Isaac de Beausobre,98 devoted some attention to the resolution of this difficulty. While recognizing the possible relevance of the Greek gigantomachy tradition,99 Beausobre also noticed a passage in the Chronographia of the Byzantine historian, Georgius Syncellus, which mentions a γενεσίς τῶν γαρμάτων discovered by Kenan.100 The grandson of Noah.101 Beausobre also called attention to the ancient testimonies concerning a “Book of Enoch”102 and in particular to a passage in Syncellus that quotes from a work attributed to Enoch bearing the title “On the Watchers.”103 Beausobre suggested that “Manichée pouvoit avoir puise dans ces mauvaises sources.”104 These remarkably prescient observations would eventually find vindication in the twentieth century. However, they were largely ignored by Beausobre’s contemporaries and by succeeding scholars who devoted themselves to the explication of the enigma of the Manichaeen Book of Giants.

A careful study of Manichaean doctrine based upon the traditions preserved in the Church Fathers was published by F.C. Baur in 1831.105 Therein, Baur directed attention to certain descriptions provided by Augustine of some of the actors featured in Manichaean mythology. It appeared that the bodily forms of Primal Man and of his adversaries, the servants of Darkness, were imagined by Mani as being in the form of giants.106 Baur remarked as cultural parallels the common conception of “Homer and ancient Oriental peoples” who imagined the constellations as “giant forms” stretched out across the nocturnal heavens.107 Baur noted a passage in Augustine that speaks of the construction of the world from different bodily parts of certain “defeated and bound giants,” and cited in this connection the Greek references to Mani’s Book of Giants.108 Baur, however, did not draw any conclusions concerning the identity of these “giants.” It would seem, then, that for him the genus “giants” embraced all of the mythological actors in Mani’s cosmological drama, whether good or evil, and was not limited to a specific category of malevolent entities such as we find in the Enochic lore invoked by Beausobre.

A new source for the study of Manichaeism was made available to researchers in 1862 when G. Flügel published the section of al-Nadim’s Fihris that treated of Manichaeism.109 We have already had occasion to notice the canonical list of Mani’s works that is preserved in this source. It will be recalled that a “Book of Giants” (سفر الجبابرة) appears in this list, but with a lacuna marring the table of contents customarily supplied by al-Nadim. In his commentary to this passage, Flügel noted the ancient references to the Book of Giants, repeating an earlier observation of Mosheim to the effect that the book may have possibly described a war between “giants” and God; that is to say, between the principles of good and evil.110 Flügel, however, doubted the validity of this characterization. He opined instead that the work was concerned mainly with an exposition of Mani’s “demonology.” According to Flügel, Mani’s use of the term “giants” for “demons” reflected a general Oriental conception of infernal spirits as “powerful” and “monstrous.” Mani “fantasized” many of his mythological actors to be giant-like.111 One manuscript of the Fihris suggested that the Book of Giants contained an exhortation, perhaps, Flügel thought, consisting of warnings or admonitions concerning the threat posed to humanity by such demons. Flügel concluded by calling attention to a Manichaean work mentioned by al-Shahrastani (الجلابرة) that is otherwise unattested in the tradition112 and suggested that the title supplied by al-Shahrastani was a scribal garbling of the title of the Book of Giants (الجلابرة).113

The continuing publication of Oriental texts during the second half of the nineteenth century soon made available to researchers a number of new sources that aided in the reconstruction of Manichaeen history and theology. The important, if somewhat
erratic, monograph of K. Kessler was one of the first studies that employed the new data gained from the study of medieval Arabic, Syriac, and Persian manuscripts. Kessler’s discussion of Mani’s Book of Giants marked a notable advance beyond the opinions of Baur and Flügel in that he was willing to consider possible literary influences or models which might lie behind the production of such a work, as opposed to Baur’s and Flügel’s appeals to the nebulous (and even pejorative) characterizations of “general Oriental conception” or “fantasy.” Kessler’s suggested reconstruction of the theme of Mani’s Book of Giants was primarily dependent upon the notice about this book preserved by al-Ghadanfar that we have mentioned above. It will be recalled that al-Ghadanfar described Mani’s Book of Giants as a composition that “is filled with stories about these Giants,” two of whom are identified as Sām and Narimān, characters occurring in ancient Iranian epic. Al-Ghadanfar compared Mani’s book to the Indian Mahābhārata and characterized the stories about the Giants as being martial in tone. Kessler pointed out that al-Ghadanfar’s note occurs in the context of a discussion of the building of the Tower of Babel and of the battles of certain antediluvian giants. Hence he suggested that the “Giants” of Mani are renowned legendary figures of prehistory which the traditions of a later age have endowed with superhuman dimensions. Mani perhaps drew the characters for his narrative from the ancient literatures of Babylonia, Iran, India, and Israel, welding these figures into an eclectic “orientalischem Heldenbuch” which narrated the activities and eventual destruction of this race of powerful, gigantic warriors. Specific sources conceivably utilized by Mani include Berossus, Genesis 6 and 11 (together with subsequent midrashic embellishment), and 1 Enoch 6–11. The actual employment of Iranian and Indian traditions is expressly indicated by al-Ghadanfar. Kessler’s creative reconstruction of the possible sources and plot for the work was highly conjectural when he advanced it. The true worth of his efforts will be appreciated when we turn to the study of the actual remains of both the Jewish and the Manichaean Book of Giants in chapter two.

The testimony of al-Ghadanfar also determined the position taken regarding Mani’s Book of Giants in the joint study of Manichaean mythology prepared by F. Cumont and M.-A. Kugener. On the basis of that quote, they declared the book to be largely Iranian in inspiration, with absolutely no relationship to the narratives about Giants contained in the Enochic literature. They also recognized the possible influence upon Mani of the Greek gigantomachy tradition insofar as the latter had already become amalgamated to analogous Iranian motifs in the Mithraic mysteries. The authors also suggested that extracts from the Book of Giants may be present in a polemical homily of the Monophysite bishop Severus of Antioch. This interesting proposal will be examined in more detail in chapter three below.

The important study of Manichaean literature authored by P. Alfaric is distinguished for its comprehensive examination and evaluation of both Western and Eastern sources as it attempts to trace the historical evolution of Manichaean literature. Alfaric interpreted Manichaeism in light of classical Gnosticism, which was, in turn, explained as a combination of Iranian mythology, Jewish biblical interpretations, and Middle Platonist speculation. After a meticulous comparison of the various testimonies regarding the Book of Giants, Alfaric suggested that the Capitulorum (or Kephalai) mentioned in the Acta Archelaus and its dependent literature was identical with the Book of Giants known to Islamic tradition, on the grounds that authors who mention the former work seem ignorant of the latter, and vice versa. The single exception to this geographic pattern of citation in the sources that were available to Alfaric is Timothy of Constantinople, who cites both. Alfaric resolved this difficulty by suggesting that they were, in fact, the same work cited under two separate titles. It is, of course, now known from the Copitc manuscript finds that the Kephalai is distinct from the Book of Giants. Alfaric also identified Mani’s Book of Giants with a work known from Chinese Manichaean sources as the “Holy Book of Two Principles,” reasoning that the story of a gigantomachy would have aroused less interest in Central Asia and China amid their Buddhist environment than would a description of the fundamental antithesis of the principles of Good and Evil. Alfaric disputed the value of al-Ghadanfar’s testimony pronouncing the background of the Book of Giants to be Iranian by pointing out that Sām and Narimān are also mentioned in Mandaean sacred literature. He
The Recovery of the Book of Giants

The great manuscript discoveries of the twentieth century revolutionized the study of Manichaean literature. No longer could scholars rely on written texts and oral traditions to understand the beliefs and practices of the Manicheans and their opponents. The Manichean community, centered in Persia and spread throughout the ancient world, had a complex religious and philosophical system that included elements of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and other religions. The discovery of the Manichaean corpus, which included the Book of Giants, provided new insights into the beliefs and practices of this ancient community.

The Book of Giants is a central text in Manichaean theology, and its recovery has been a significant event in the study of this religious tradition. The Manichaean Book of Giants is a work that is said to have been composed by Mani, the founder of the Manichaean religion. The book is divided into several sections that cover a wide range of topics, including creation, the fall of man, the nature of the world, and the means of salvation.

The discovery of the Book of Giants has been facilitated by the use of ancient languages and scripts, such as Coptic and Syriac. The book was originally written in Syriac, a medieval form of Aramaic, and later translated into other languages, including Greek and Latin. The discovery of the Book of Giants has been a significant event in the study of Manichaean literature, and it has provided new insights into the religious and philosophical ideas of this ancient community.

The recovery of the Book of Giants has also shed light on the history of the Manichaean community. The Manichaean religion was persecuted in many parts of the world, and the discovery of the Book of Giants has provided new insights into the survival strategies of the Manichaean community. The book contains references to the persecution of Manicheans, and it provides evidence of the ways in which the Manichaean community attempted to maintain its faith in the face of persecution.

The discovery of the Book of Giants has also been significant for the study of other religious traditions. The book contains references to a variety of religions, including Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. The discovery of the Book of Giants has provided new insights into the interactions between these religions, and it has provided evidence of the ways in which these religions have influenced each other over the course of history.

The recovery of the Book of Giants has been facilitated by a variety of methods, including the use of ancient languages and scripts, the use of diplomatic scripts, and the use of new technologies, such as computerized analysis. The discovery of the Book of Giants is a significant event in the study of Manichaean literature, and it has provided new insights into the religious and philosophical ideas of this ancient community.
and that the Turfan fragments represented a Persian translation of this original work. The simultaneous inclusion of Iranian motifs and terminology, including the title of the book (Kawān), suggested that Mani combined the Jewish legend of the Giants with native Iranian mythological heroes of Iran's past.139

A signal accomplishment was achieved by Henning in 1943, when he published his reconstruction of part of Mani's Book of the Giants from a variety of fragments recovered from Turfan.140 The biblical origin of the *dramatis personae* and the structure of events contained in the Book of Giants was dramatically confirmed. Mani transformed the *beney ha'elohim* of Genesis 6:1–4 and the ἑρῷοτοι of 1 Enoch into “demons” (Middle Persian and Parthian *dyw̃*ni) who rebelled against the realm of Light. Two hundred of these demons succeeded in escaping in imprisonment in heaven to the earth. There they engaged in lawless activities, producing as a consequence of their sinful behavior “giants” (*kawān*, corresponding to *gibborim*) and “abortions” (*bh̃ng*, corresponding to *nephilim*).141 The rebellious Watchers and their progeny are fought and vanquished by four “angels” — Raphael, Gabriel, Michael, and Sariel.142 The fragments did not permit Henning to reconstruct the remainder of the narrative of the Book of Giants, but he thought that he could detect evidence that the stories in the book underwent influence from local traditions.143 Henning, however, departed from his earlier opinion that regarded Mani as responsible for blending Iranian mythological elements with the Jewish substrate. Instead, he now believed that Mani did not employ any Iranian traditions in the original composition. The presence of these intrusive names (such as Sām and Narimān) was credited to his later disciples. They introduced them into the Book of Giants in order to increase its appeal among the local population.144

An Aramaic original for the Book of Giants, probably based upon an Aramaic version of 1 Enoch, seemed assured.

Hence a consensus was reached among students of Manichaeanism that the Book of Giants was a free literary creation of Mani based upon certain extrabiblical legends that had gathered around the events summarized in Genesis 6:1–4. Mani’s immediate source for the composition of his narrative was apparently an Aramaic version of 1 Enoch, a Jewish pseudopigraphical work of the Second Temple period that enjoyed an extensive circulation within both Jewish and Christian religious circles in late antiquity. Barring discovery of Mani’s Aramaic *Vorlage*, it seemed that research had reached its limit with regard to the source criticism of Mani’s Book of Giants. A further chapter, however, was still to be written.

J.T. Milik astonished the scholarly world in 1971 when he reported that he had discovered, among the Aramaic fragments of 1 Enoch that had been recovered from Qumran, portions of a work that bore a close resemblance to Mani’s Book of Giants.145 His subsequent publication and analysis of part of these fragments confirmed their relationship with the later Manichaean book.146 Although the remains are exceedingly fragmentary, the surviving references to the protagonists and to narrative events leave no doubt that this Jewish apocryphon is the literary ancestor of the Manichaean Book of Giants. Intriguing questions are raised by this discovery, not the least of which concern the means by which Mani gained knowledge, perhaps even a copy, of a work that now can be traced to the scribal activity of a sectarian Jewish community hundreds of miles from Mesopotamia.

Milik proposed that the “Enochic Book of Giants” (as he christened the newly found work) was originally an integral part of 1 Enoch itself.147 The book of 1 Enoch has long been recognized to consist of five discrete sections which were at one time independent works of varying provenance which eventually were fused together to form a single composition.148 Aramaic fragments of four of the five sections of 1 Enoch have been found at Qumran; only the portion designated the “Similitudes” (chapters 37–71), sometimes suspected to be Christian in provenance, was totally lacking at Qumran. Milik suggested that this “Book of Giants” initially stood in the position of the “Similitudes” in the original version of 1 Enoch, being later replaced with the “Similitudes” by Christian scribes who disliked the mythological flavor of the “Book of Giants.”149 Mani became acquainted with this Jewish Book of Giants either through reading an unexpurgated version of the “original” 1 Enoch or by coming across the “Book of Giants” as an independently circulating narrative.

Milik’s proposal to view the Qumran Book of Giants as part of a hypothetical “Enochic Pentateuch” encountered sharp criticism from several scholars.150 While researchers were willing to grant the
possibility that the Book of Giants may have circulated at one time as part of a collection of Enochic compositions, including those compositions now represented in the present 1 Enoch, they were opposed to Milik’s unswerving advocacy of a “pentateuchal” structure for 1 Enoch and the late dating for the “Similitudes” made necessary by his replacement theory. The resulting furor over the date and provenance of the “Similitudes” largely eclipsed immediate discussion of the significance and character of the Qumran Book of Giants, an issue which is now worthy of attention in its own right.

However, scholars were not slow to posit one possible channel through which Mani might have received knowledge about or even a copy of the Enochic Book of Giants. The decipherment and initial publication of portions of the Cologne Mani Codex coincided with Milik’s first reports about the Qumran discovery. As stated above, this Greek text purports to be an autobiographical account of the youth and early manhood of Mani, a period of time which, according to the new evidence available in this text, was spent among a sectarian community of Elchasaites in southern Mesopotamia. It has been plausibly suggested that Mani became acquainted with Enochic traditions such as those preserved in the Qumran Book of Giants as a result of his sojourn among this Jewish-Christian sect.

Whatever the channel through which Mani gained access to this Jewish composition, it is of paramount importance for Manichaean studies that actual fragments of the Book of Giants have now been identified. An examination of the relationship between the Qumran Aramaic and the Turfan Middle Iranian versions of this work should shed new light upon the role of Jewish traditions in the formation of Manichaeism.

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Notes to Chapter One

1 The clearest statement is found in the Fihrist of al-Nadim (cf. G. Flügel, *Mani, seine Lehre und seine Schriften* [Leipzig, 1862; repr. Osnabrück, 1969], 72–73). In Arabic it is stated that Mani authored seven books, one of them in Persian, and six in Syriac, the language of Syria.

See also Epiphanius, *Panarion* 66.13.3, wherein it is stated that Mani arranged one of his books (to be identified as his Gospel following al-Ya'qubi and al-Biruni and not Matti Perrott as Epiphanius holds) according to the number of the letters of the Syriac alphabet: ΒΒΒΒΒ ΒΒΒΒΒ ΒΒΒΒΒ ΒΒΒΒΒ ΒΒΒΒΒ ΒΒΒΒΒ ΒΒΒΒΒ ΒΒΒΒΒ. (K. Holl, ed., *Epiphanius; dritter Band GCS 37* [Leipzig, 1935], 34–35). The form is unusual (although note W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 3rd edition [Cambridge, 1896–98; repr. Cambridge, 1979], §249); the more common terms for the Syriac language are ميالي, ميالي, ميالي. These are used not only for the language of Syria proper, but for Mesopotamia as well; cf. T. Nöldeke, “Die Namen der aramäischen Nation und Sprache,” *ZDMG* 25 (1871), 112–129; also Titus of Bostra, *Adversus Manichaeos* I 14: τὸ Σύριον φανέρον φροίνας (Migne, *Patrologia Graecæ* [P.G.] 18, 1085D); Acta Aracheli 40.5: “Persa barbaræ, non Graecorum linguæ, non Aegyptiorum, non Romanorum, non Illi usus, non Illi usus, non Illi usus, habère possunt; sed Chaldaicorum solam...audire potest” (Hegemonius, *Acta Aracheli*, ed. C.H. Beeson GCS 16 [Leipzig, 1906], 59).


3 A group of Aramaic papyrus fragments discovered in Egypt and which employ the Manichaean script have been published by F.C. Burkitt in his *The Religion of the Manichees* (Cambridge, 1925), 111–19. They are, unfortunately, too fragmentary for conclusions to be reached regarding the *ipsissima verba* of Mani. They probably represent, as Rosenthal suggested (Forschung, 208), copies made of Manichaean writings by early Egyptian converts to this system of belief. H.H. Schaeder believed that he had discovered a fragment of Manichaean poetry embedded within the hostile description of Manichaeism penned by Theodore bar Konai, an eighth century Syrian savant: see his “Ein Lied von Mani,” *OLZ* 29 (1926), 104–7. Note also the alleged citations from Mani contained in the Syriac version of the refutation of Manichaeism by Titus of Bostra, as interpreted by A. Baumstark, “Der Text der Mani-Zitate in der
numerous references to “Christ” and “Christians”; see especially chapter 1 (Brinkmann, 3) and chapter 16 (Brinkmann, 24). Alexander is cognizant of the existence of Christian “sects” (ἀδρέσεις) (Brinkmann, 4), and apparently classified Mani as a Christian sectarian leader. See R. Reitzenstein, “Eine wertlose und eine wertvolle Ueberlieferung über den Manichäismus,” NCGW, Phil.-hist. Kl. (1931), 49 and 56 n.2.

Chapter 25 of Alexander’s exposition is devoted to the refutation of Manichaean asceticism, and features a constant interplay between Manichaean assertion and Alexander’s philosophical ridicule. The allusion to the gigantomachy forms the concluding part of this section. A further reference to “war with giants” or gigantomachy appears approximately half a century later in the anti-Manichaean treatise of Serapion of Thmuis, although this witness supplies little information regarding this motif beyond what is contained in Alexander and perhaps derives his information from this point from the Neoplatonist writer: τὸ τοιοῦτον μὲν τοιοῦτον ὁ ἐλέγχος, ἵνα καλλίτη συστείλησθεν ἡμῖν, τὰς προβολάς αὐτῶν, τὰς μάχις, τὰς μυθοκοσμίας ἐκείνας καὶ γραμματικὰς στοιχεῖας… See R.P. Casey, Serapion of Thmuis Against the Manichæans (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), 52.

64 Migne, P.L. 59, 162–63. See E. von Dobschütz, ed., Das Decretum Gelasianum: De libris recipendis et non recipiendis [Texte et Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der alchristlichen Literatur 38] (Leipzig, 1912), 54 and cf. his discussion, 305–6. J.T. Milik thinks that this work was a Latin translation of the Manichaean Book of Giants. See his “Problèmes de la littérature héroïque à la lumière des fragments araméens de Qumrán,” HTR 64 (1971), 397; idem, “Turfan et Qumran: Livre des Géants juif et manichéen,” in G. Jeremias, H.-W. Kuhn, and H. Stegemann, eds., Tradition und Glaube: Das frühchristliche in seiner Umwelt (Göttingen, 1971), 118. Lieu speculates that it may have been a Latin translation of either the Manichaean Book of Giants or Manichaic book (Manichaïsme, 88).

65 Migne, P.L. 59, 162 n.19; Alfarc, Les écritures, II 32; cf. Henning, BSOAS 11 (1949), 71–72 (Parthian N). Henning identifies Ogyas with Ohyâ (‘why’), one of the two giant sons of Shahmanzad (i.e., Shemihrazad, the leader of the rebellious Watchers in 1 Enoch) mentioned in the Middle Iranian versions of the Book of Giants. Noting v. Dobschütz’s identification of Ogyas with Ogh of Bashan, the biblical Amorite king of gigantic stature (see Deuteronomy 3:11), Henning suggests that “stories that primarily appertained to Ogyas were transferred to the better known Og, owing to the resemblance of their names” (p.54). The name “Ohyâ” is now attested in the Qumran fragments of the Jewish Book of Giants (‘why’); see chapter two below. For the relationship of Ogh to Bashan to the antediluvian (and postdiluvian) generation(s) of giants, see bT Niddah 61a; Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Deuteronomy 3:11.

66 Abû Ishaq ‘ibrâhim ben Muhammad al-Tibrizi, called al-Ghadanfar, is an otherwise obscure author whose floruit was apparently the mid-thirteenth century C.E. See Sachau, Chronologe, XV.


67 Sâm and Narîmân are generally considered to be Saka (i.e., Scythian) heroes that have been grafted into indigenous Iranian epic lore. The Iranian historical traditions are particularly difficult to unravel, for we possess no contemporary historical sources that aid us in discriminating between legendary and historical events. Karshâsp (Avestan Karšaspâ) is the most celebrated warrior of the Avestan legends. His epithet nàrman “of manly mind” became personified in later tradition in the forms “Nirman,” “Narîmân” and thus evolves into a separate figure. The Avestan Karšaspâ bears the clan name Sâm which in turn is transformed into a separate hero “Sâm” in the Šâh-nâmâ. In the later tradition (cf. Bundakjîshn) Sâm = Karshâsp and appropriates some of the martial exploits associated with the latter hero. Narîmân also partially replaces Karshâsp in Persian epic and becomes a link in the genealogy Sâm = Narîmân = Žal – Rustam, the last named of course being the most prominent hero of the Šâh-nâmâ. For an excellent discussion of the Iranian epic tradition see E. Yarshater, “Iranian National History,” in E. Yarshater, ed., The Cambridge History of Iran: Volume 3(1): The Seleucids, Parthians and Sassanian Periods (Cambridge, 1983), 359–477. See also T. Nödeke, Das iranische Nationalpoesie (Berlin, 1920), 9–12; Christensen, Kayanides (cf. n.30 above), 129–32; and Boyce, History (cf. n.30 above), 110–104.

68 Cf. Kessler, Mani, 200. The text speaks of a book composed by Vyasa consisting of 120,000 verses which narrates stories about the Giants. To Vyasa is traditionally ascribed the authorship of the Mahâbhârata as well as the four Vedas and the Puranas; see M. Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature trans. V.S. Sarma (Delhi, 1981), 301–3. The destruction of the Giants is credited to Vasyudeva (i.e., Kṛṣṇa) during the time when the Bharata clan flourished. For an earlier allegation that Mani had borrowed ideas from India, see Ephrem, Hymnen contra Haeresees (ed. Beck; cf. n.81 above), 12 11.12–13. Note Beauvoir, Histoire, II 304.

1 Enoch 6–11; 69:4–5; 68–68; Jubilees 5:1–9; 7:20–27; 10:1–14. Another stream of tradition present in both 1 Enoch and Jubilees identifies the sin of the rebellious angels as their unauthorized impartation of “hidden” knowledge to humanity.


Ibid., 281: “Legi in cuiusdam libro de isto libro apocrpho suam haereditatem ...”
The teaching of the Watchers by which they instituted divination (using) sun, moon, and stars among all the signs of heaven. He copied it, but did not speak about it; for he was afraid to tell Noah about it lest the latter should be angry with him about it.

According to B. Beer, Jubilees is dependent upon the testimony of the Septuagint for the insertion of this patriarch. See his Das Buch der jubilens and sein Verhältniss zu den Midraschim (Leipzig, 1856), 17. However, it should be noted that Jubilees includes this extra patriarch for the purpose of making a theological point: "Twenty-two heads of humanity from Adam up to Jacob, and twenty-two kinds of thing(s) were created up to the seventh day. This (i.e., the Sabbath) is blessed and holy; and that one (i.e., Jacob) is blessed and holy, and both together are for consecration and praise" (Jubilees 2:23). Without the insertion of Kenan into the genealogy, there would be only twenty-one patriarchs and thus the symmetry established with the created order and the Sabbath (according to Jubilees' enumeration) would be marred. There would seem to be no such justification for the presence of Kenan in the Septuagintal chronology, and hence the question of dependence is hardly resolved. The so-called Midrash Tadshe (cf. A. Jellinek, Bet ha-Midrasch [Leipzig, 1853-1887], repr. Jerusalem, 1938), III 169 also seems cognizant of the patriarchal sequence presupposed by Jubilees: הָיָהוּ בְּּאָדָם שְׁלוֹשָׁה בְּּמַעְּקִלָה וּכְּלָלָהוּ לְּבָדָם בְּּמַעְּקִלָה וּכְּלָלָהוּ לְּבָדָם בְּּמַעְּקִלָה וּכְּלָלָהוּ לְּבָדָם בְּּמַעְּקִלָה וּכְּלָלָהוּ לְּבָדָם בְּּמַעְּקִלָה וּכְּלָלָהוּ לְּבָדָם בְּּמַעְּקִלָה וּכְּלָלָהוּ LXX Genesis 10:24, LXX Genesis 11:12–13, LXX Alexanderinus I Chronicles 1:18, and in the Lucan genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:36); he is listed as brother of Arpachshad (and hence son of Shem) in LXX Genesis 10:22. Kenan ben Arpachshad also appears in the Ethiopic Version of Genesis 11:13. These sources report nothing about Kenan's alleged discovery. The earliest reference to this story is found in Jubilees 8:1–4:

And in the twenty-ninth jubilee, in the first week (of years), at its outset, Arpachshad took in marriage a woman whose name was Rasuya, daughter of Susan, daughter of Elam, and she bore him a son in the third year of that week, and he named him Qayam. The boy grew, and his father taught him the art of writing, and he departed seeking a place where he might acquire a city for himself. And he discovered an inscription which previous (generations) had inscribed on a stone, and read what was on it, and he copied it, and thus erred due to what was on it, because there was on it the...
Gathered to Sévère's Antiocce, traduction syriac de Jacques d'Edesse GXX à CXXV, P. 29 (1960), 124-89. Another Syriac version prepared by Paul of Gallinicus (6th century) was published by I.E. Rahmani, Studia Syriaca IV, Documenta de antiquis haeretibus (Beirut, 1999), 48-89.

Alfaric, Les écritures (see n. 53 above).

Note particularly Alfaric's "Préface" and his initial chapter "Origine des écritures manichéennes" (I 1-31), which launches into an examination of the Gnostic literary milieu based on the testimony of the patriotic sources.


Entitled Erh-tsong san-ch'i ching, or the "Sutra of the Two Principles and the Three Moments." According to a Buddhist source, this Manichaean work was later adopted into the Taoist Canon. The work is now thought to be a Chinese version of the Shaburagan, etc. Chavannes-Pelliot, Un traité (see n. 16 above), 157-69, 174-76; and Lieu, Manichaism (cf. n. 22 above), 225-28.

Alfaric, Les écritures, II 32.


Alfaric, Les écritures, II 31, calling attention to Augustine, Contra Faustum 19.3.

Ibid., 32. v. Dobschütz, Decretum Gelasianum, 1305 n.4 notes the parallel but does not identify the two works.

Note CMC 47:1-48:15:

Furthermore, let him who is willing hearken and pay attention to how each one of the primeval patriarchs communicated his own revelation to a select (group) whom he chose and gathered together from that generation during which he appeared, and after writing (it down), he left it for future generations. Each (patriarch) revealed (information) about his heavenly journey, and they (i.e., the chosen group) promulgated beyond...to record and display afterwards, and to laud and extol their teachers and the truth and the hope that was revealed to them. Thus each one spoke and wrote down a memoir recounting what he saw, including (an account) about his heavenly journey, during the period and cycle of his apostleship.

This introduction is then followed by citations from written revelations received by Adam, Sethel (= Seth), Enosh, Sham, Enoch, and the Christian apostle Paul (1). Cf. Shahrastani, Milal, 192 II.8-12 and Kephalaia 12:ff. for additional listings of apostles who preceded Mani. For a comprehensive discussion, see especially Puech, Le manichéisme, 144-46 n.241. Compare the Qur'anic rosters of prophets who preceded the advent of Muhammad in Suras 19:42-50; 68:88-88; 3:30; and 4:168ff. For discussions of the relationship between the Manichaean and Islamic concepts of "earlier" revelations, see T. Andrae.

Henning, SPAW (1934), 27–35; idem, “Neue Materialen zur Geschichte des Manichaeismus,” ZDMG 90 (1936), 1–18; idem, BSOAS 11 (1948), 52–74.


Note particularly the version of M625c as reproduced in ibid., 29: ʿud Ḍr[N] z[z]ydy Ḥn nʿ y[r] qʿw Ḥy[nd] l[n] Ḥy[nd] u[N]d... (and the Bäume, [die] herausgegangen sind, das sind die y[r]nd die qʿw, die aus den Weibern hervorgegangen sind und...).

Ibid., 30–32.


Henning, ZDMG 90 (1936), 3.

Henning, SPAW (1934), 29; idem, ZDMG 90 (1936), 3.

Henning, BSOAS 11 (1943), 52–74.

Ibid., 53.


Henning, BSOAS 11 (1943), 55.

Ibid., 52–53. G. Widengren has argued that an amalgamation of Iranian and Semitic narrative traditions can already be traced to the Parthian period. According to Widengren, one of the more important indications of such activity is the semantic (and eventually “historical”) identification of Semitic gbdh, gabara “Giant” and Iranian kaw “prince, ruler,” evidenced in the oriental evolution and transformation of the biblical Nimrod-legend. Widengren asserts, contra Henning, that Mani inherited this “Giant-kaw” assimilation from earlier Iranian narrative sources, and was consequently dependent upon the material for the formulation of his Book of Giants. See his Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung (Köln & Opladen, 1960), 42–49; idem, Mani und der Manichäismus (see n.2 above), 81–82.

Milik, HTR 64 (1971), 333–78; idem, “Turfan et Qumran” (cf. n.84 above), 117–27.


Ibid., 58.

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