

Knowledge Transmission in the Context of the Watchers' Sexual Sin with the Women in *1 Enoch* 6-11

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SUMMARY: The first part of this research scrutinizes previous scholarly opinions concerning the belonging of the motif of instruction to the original narrative. While the conclusions of especially Nickelsburg and Hanson are negative, the mainly thematic criterion used by them in the separation of the literary strata indicates that they could not see any thematic connection between the Watchers and the motif of knowledge transmission. The second part of the research shows the interrelationship between the mythological origins of scribal and medical knowledge transmission in cuneiform sources and the response of Jewish priests in Babylonia. The latter group rejected Babylonian cuneiform arts and opted for Aramaic type of knowledge with the creation of a different ideal scribe from before the flood (Enoch), different transcendent channel of knowledge transmission (angels faithful to God), and different channel of knowledge transmission from father to son in patriarchal and Levitical genealogies. The third part of the research explores the metaphorical meaning of especially the “great sin” of “fornication” committed by the Watchers. The sin of fornication with women and successive defilement of the Watchers have to be interpreted in relation to the metaphorical, not literal, meaning of these terms found in the biblical account where they often figuratively express apostasy from the God of Israel and idolatrous relationship with other gods.

KEYWORDS: 1 Enoch, Book of Watchers, fallen angels, sexual sin, knowledge transmission, Mesopotamian background

SŁOWA KLUCZE: 1 Henoch, Księga Czuwających, upadli aniołowie, grzech seksualny, przekaz wiedzy, kontekst kultury starożytnej Mezopotamii

I. Knowledge Transmission as a “Contaminating” Element in the Original Narrative?

Reconstructing the purported Book of Noah incorporated into the *Ethiopic Enoch*, August Dillmann (1883, 352) noted that in *1 En.* 6-11 the verses that name Shemihazah (6:3-8; 8:1-3; 9:7, and partly 10:1, 11) come from a Jewish Gnostic material together with 39:1, 2a; 54:7-55:2; ch. 60; 65:1-69:25. These texts were incorporated into the *Book of Noah* and are consequently later

than the book itself. The rest of Enochic books does not name Shemihazah but only Asael. Following Dillmann's intuition, Beer (1900, 225) systematically divided chapters 6-11 into two accounts: the first one (6:2b-8; 7:3-6; 8:4; 9:1-5, 9-11; 10:4-11:2) relates the story of the transmission of mysteries to mankind by unfaithful angels, which causes the spread of sinfulness and the coming of the flood from which only Noah and his family are to be saved. The second account concentrates on the fall of the angels, conception and birth of the giants, which leads first to the preliminary and then to the final punishment of the evil angels. (7:1b; 8:1-3; 9:6-8; 10:1-3). According to the German exegete, 6:1-2a together with 7:1a, 2 constitutes an introduction and linking thread of the two accounts. These two interwoven accounts represent two different traditions, one ascribed to Shemihazah, while the other to Asael. The connection between the two accounts is facilitated by the same role of women in both traditions where they are presented as the ones who seduce the angels into sin.

While analyzing *1 En.* 6-11 Nickelsburg (1977, 386) inverts Dillmann's assertion and for him the Shemihazah story (7:2-6; 8:4; 9:1-11; 10:1-16, 20; 10:17-19, 21-11:2) is the oldest literary stratum in the myth. The material about Asael (7:1de; 8:1-2, 3; 9:6, 8c; 10:4-8) has been interpolated into the Shemihazah account, but similarly to the latter narration, it also reflects a world desolated by war in consequence of an angelic revolt. The element of instruction is a secondary contamination from the Asael material (7:1de; 8:3; 9:8c; 10:7) and does not belong to the original form of that story. The basic opposition in the Shemihazah story is between the superhuman giants and the whole of human race which they are laying waste. The wars of the Diadochi (323-302 BC) seem to be the best historical setting that bears similarity to the battles of the giants. During these two decades of continued war, bloodshed, and assassination Palestine especially felt the brunt, and changed hands at least seven times in twenty-one years. While discussing the motif of the angelic sexual sin with women in the Shemihazah narrative Nickelsburg suggests that claims of certain of the Diadochi concerning the divine origin of their fathers served as a catalyst for the formation of the Shemihazah account. Its author intended to ridicule these claims by demonstrating that the fathers of the Diadochoi were divine, but they were not gods but angels who rebelled against God. Nickelsburg himself confesses that this hypothesis is hardly demonstrable mainly because of limited evidence concerning such claims of divine origin of the Diadochoi.

He further notes that the redactional motif of instruction introduced into the Shemihazah material (8:3) deals with astrology and the occult arts, that is with astrological prognostication on the basis of astronomical information.

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The knowledge Enoch receives from the angel Uriel in *1 En.* 72-82 concerns the movement of the heavenly bodies, not astrological prognostication, hence the objection to astrological prognostication from *1 En.* 8:3 does not apply to the Astronomical Book. When explaining the origin of the motif of knowledge transmission he adduces the Greek myth about Prometheus as the proper background for the Watchers' didactic activity. In his commentary on *1 Enoch* published in 2001 Nickelsburg takes a rather agnostic position concerning the origin of divinatory practices described in *1 En.* 8:3: "Divination from omens in heaven and on earth is far too widespread a phenomenon in the Mediterranean world to allow us to identify the specific historical objects of this author's polemic" (2001, 199). He then adduces several examples from the Old Testament, Qumran, New Testament, Latin and Greek sources, which, however, do not bear on the interpretation of the Enochic passage. From the information that the Etruscans derived some of their divinatory methods from earlier Babylonian sources, Nickelsburg concludes that "the present passage (that is 8:3, HD) refers to a practice that could have existed at a variety of places in the lands of the eastern Mediterranean" (2001, 200). Although much has been written about Babylonian magic and astrology from 1979 up to 2001, and much new information is being published and studied right now, Nickelsburg (2001, 200, n. 54, 59) cites only three outdated publications by Morris Jastrow (1898, 1911, 1914) about the Babylonian religion.

Paul Hanson (1977) claims that the Shemihazah cycle (6:1-2a; 6:2b-8; 7:1-6; 8:4; 9:1-10:15; 10:16-11:2) constitutes a core narrative which interprets and develops Gen 6:1-4, and which subsequently was amplified with the episode about Azazel and with materials developing an euhemeristic theme (7:1de, 8:1-3; 9:6, 8c; 10:4-10). The last phase of the development of *1 En.* 6-11 is an elaboration of the combined Shemihazah-Azazel narrative by the addition of a new cardinal theme (8:1-2, 3; 7:16 [*sic!*]; 9:6, 8c; and 10:7d-8a), namely that evil entered the world as a result of secret teachings that certain angels brought with them and passed on to humans. The culture-hero tradition has a long history in Babylonian literature extending from the earliest texts down to the Berossus's account, and a form of it is found in Gen 4 with some Babylonian background as well. The Enochian redactor therefore might have imitated the earlier examples that existed in the Semitic world and the Prometheus's story does not necessarily constitute the best example of the sort. Hanson adduces examples from Mesopotamian primeval tradition about Ziusudra and the *apkallus*, together with culture heroes described by Philo of Byblos in the *Phoenician Story*. There also exists a negative version of the culture hero tradition found in Mesopotamian,

Greek, and biblical (Gen 4:22-24) literature that describes the steady degeneration of the civilized life caused by the teachings of the euhemeristic heroes.

Hanson and Nicklesburg's conclusions about the literary separation between the Asael and Shemihazah traditions on the one hand, and the motif of knowledge transmission on the other, introduced a separation between the mythological motif about the primeval transmission of knowledge and the sexual misconduct of the Watchers. Additionally, both scholars claimed that the motif of knowledge transmission is a secondary development in the narrative, and consequently of lesser importance for the overall explanation of the two main literary strata in *1 En.* 6-11. While Nickelsburg points to the Greek Prometheus myth as a proper background for the Watchers' transmission of knowledge to women, Hanson makes a recourse to the culture-hero tradition commonly present in the Near Eastern myth. The separate interpretation of each literary stratum in the myth has been criticized by John Collins (1978, 316) who stresses that we do not have any proof that the Shemihazah story and Asael material circulated independently. Consequently a separate interpretation of one of these two literary strata cannot be purposefully discussed without taking into account the second narrative. Additionally, Nickelsburg's interpretation of the giant's violence wrought upon the earth and humanity in terms of Hellenistic tradition about the divine origin of the Diadochi is based on rather limited Greek evidence.¹

It is difficult not to agree with Collins's argumentation not only because the available textual evidence presents one narration, but also because Nickelsburg's argumentation about the "contamination" of the Asael narrative by the motif of instruction seems to be based mostly on thematic, not literary, grounds. His division of *1 En.* 6-11 into separate literary strata at times seems to be based on thematic rather than literary argument. For instance, the ascription of 10:7-8 to the Asael narrative (1977, 384, 397; 2001, 165) is based on the thematic motif of instruction present there, not on any literary analysis what would indicate literary incongruencies in the text. Concerning the "contamination" of the Asael's material with the

¹ Kvanvig (1988, 97-98) accepts Nickelsburg's historical reconstruction of the Shemihazah story, and also claims with M. Hengel (*Judentum und Hellenismus*, pp. 486-503) that the "structure of knowledge" (8:1; 9:6-7; 10:7-8) comes as a reaction against the new Hellenistic wisdom and way of life which influenced the Jewish community in Jerusalem and surroundings. Such a claim concerning Watchers' knowledge cannot be sustained anymore, see Drawnel 2010a. Kvanvig's acceptance of Nickelsburg's position led him in his research in a wrong direction. Although he carefully scrutinized Akkadian sources (Kvanvig 1988, 160-213; 313-315), he concentrated on Mesopotamian antediluvian traditions, and neglected Mesopotamian social background of the Aramaic terms (*1 En.* 8:3) preserved in Qumran manuscripts.

motif of instruction, he claims that the “contaminating” verses are excised from the text purely on the thematic grounds (Nickelsburg 1977: 385-6, cf. pp. 397-399).

In his commentary on *1 Enoch* Nickelsburg (2001, 184; cf. 1979, 385-386) forcefully argues that the motif of instruction is secondary because (1) in 7:1 and 9:8 it intrudes between Watchers’ intercourse and conception of the giants. Moreover, (2) chapter 6 does not prepare the introduction of this motif (3) that does not have any consequence in the subsequent description of the state of the world; (4) additionally, the motif is not mentioned in the indictment in 10:11. (5) Without it the narrative constitutes a logical succession of events: marriage, begetting giants, devastation of the earth by the giants. It is not difficult to notice that, except for the first argument, the adduced reasons for the “contamination” of the Asael narrative are thematic, not literary. Additionally, it is not at all certain that the motif of instruction in 7:1 and 9:8 destroys the literary pattern “intercourse-conception-birth”, intruding thus between the intercourse and conception of the giants. Although such a pattern is sometimes found in the biblical texts (Gen 4:1, 17; 38:2-3; Exod 2:1; 1 Chr 7:23), there are many occurrences which mention only conception and birth, while intercourse is assumed, but omitted (e.g., Gen 16:11; 21:2; 29:32, 33, 34, 35; 30:23; Judg 13:3, 5, 7; 1 Sam 1:20; 2:21; 2 Kgs 4:17). In Gen 6:4 the text speaks about intercourse and birth while conception of the giants is omitted, but present in *1 En.* 7:2 (Ms G^C; Eth). Additionally, the author of *1 En.* 7:1 develops the biblical text and adds between the intercourse and conception not only the motif of instruction, but also the statement about the defilement of the Watchers (Eth; G^{C+S} μαίνεσθαι ἐν αὐταῖς). Thus it is evident that he creatively used the biblical tradition and adapted it to his needs.

2. Importance of the Motif of Instruction for the Interpretation of *1 En.* 6-II

Hanson and Nickelsburg’s literary analysis led them to the conviction that the motif of knowledge transmission in the two separate narratives about Shemihazah and Asael somehow “contaminated” the course of “logical” presentation of the text. Since they were unable to show any necessary connection between the sexual defilement of the Watchers and the motif of knowledge transmission, and since there are two different Watchers connected with these supposedly two different narratives, they assumed that the motif of knowledge transmission is foreign to the earlier strata in the process of

the text transmission.² However, a detailed analysis of the list of sciences in *1 En.* 8:3 allows a precise identification of the social group in Late Babylonian society that was disguised by a Jewish priestly scribe as fallen Watchers. The myth in *1 En.* 6-11 unequivocally connects the motif of knowledge transmission with the Watchers, and the analysis of single Aramaic terms that denote the content of Watchers' teaching points to a priestly group of medico-magical scholars in ancient Babylonia called in Akkadian *āšīpus* that served for the Jewish scribe as a model for the description of the Watchers in the myth.³ Some other elements in the myth confirm this first intuition.⁴ Thus the list of magical and medical knowledge together with some terms that denote celestial and terrestrial divination is easily identified as belonging to Babylonian scribal craft (*tupšarrūtu*) and medico-magical knowledge (*ašīpūtu*) studied and practiced by the Babylonian exorcists – *āšīpus*. All this evidence points to Babylonia as the place where the myth of the fallen Watchers was composed, and the social context of Babylonia in Persian, Hellenistic, and Arsacid periods constitutes the proper background for the interpretation of the myth. Therefore, the motif of knowledge transmission in *1 En.* 6-11 is inherently connected with the bearers and transmitters of that knowledge and with the flow of the narrative, and must not be interpreted as a “contamination” of the original text.

The question arises as to the reasons for the composition of such an unequivocal condemnation of Babylonian culture and scribal arts that dealt with magic, healing, and astrology. The evidence readily available in Jewish literature from the Second Temple period, especially in the Qumran scrolls, unequivocally indicates that Jewish scribes were interested in horoscopes (4Q186; Albani 1999), and even in such magical practices as healing, exorcism, and protection against demons (4Q510, 4Q511; 4Q560; 11Q11; cf. 4Q242). Although the emerging picture of Jewish scribal arts at Qumran and elsewhere is quite fragmentary, nevertheless some astrological and divinatory (4Q318, selenodromion and brontologion) methods point to the type of knowledge practiced by Babylonian learned scribes. What is more, the description of the periods of lunar visibility in 4Q208 and 4Q209 are based on the numeri-

2 Note that both Hanson and Nickelsburg often divide the text of the myth on the basis of content-oriented criteria only, which must necessarily lead to a certain arbitrariness in their choices, and is necessarily linked with their own understanding of the text. It does not mean that the text of *1 En.* 6-11 did not undergo some redactional elaborations; the motif of knowledge transmission, however, appears to be eliminated by these scholars mostly on the basis of content oriented criteria, which in this case does not appear to be sufficient.

3 See Drawnel 2010a, 382-394.

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cal patterns found in Tablet 14 of the astrological series *Enūma Anu Enlil*.⁵ In the light of appropriation of Mesopotamian style lunar calculation, and in light of Qumran interest in magic, and divination, it appears difficult to understand why the content of the Watchers' teaching appears in the myth as one of the main reasons that cause human sinfulness and desolation of the earth (*1 En.* 8:2; 10:8).⁶ Contrary to Nickelsburg's opinion, the separation between astronomy and astrology in antiquity was rather blurred, if existed at all, and it is not evident that schematic astronomy in *1 En.* 72-82 is not related to Babylonian scribal craft succinctly presented in *1 En.* 8:3.

One may attempt to explain the strong opposition of Levitical scribes against the teaching of the *āšipus* disguised as Watchers by making a reference to the relations within the Babylonian society in the Persian and Hellenistic periods. According to what we read in the Babylonian literature of that period, two priestly groups, *kalūs* and *āšipus*, boasted themselves about their ancestors and created long genealogies that reached back several generations and stressed the antiquity of priestly families and of cuneiform learning, of which they remained the most important bearers.⁷ It remains beyond doubt that these two priestly groups not only boasted about their education but also their knowledge was indeed extensive and comprised not only literature related to their professional occupation, but also highly sophisticated mathematical astronomy and astrological texts of different types. The cuneiform sources in Late Babylonian period, however, mention the *āšipu* more often, probably not only because of his literary production, but also because of his professional activities of an exorcist and incantation priest, profession that had an impact on the society at large. The group of Aramaic scribes called *sepīru* is also attested in the period under consideration, their social standing, however, appears to be of much lesser importance. They do not belong to the priestly class, their genealogies are not attested, and their writings are today gone because of perishability of the writing material they used in their literary activity. The preserved legal texts attest that they were often employed as witnesses in legal matters.

⁵ See Drawnel 2007.

⁶ Although the book of Deuteronomy condemns the practice of divination in Israel (e.g. Deut 18:11, 14), Isa 3:1-3 indicates that diviners, magicians, experts in charms made part of Jewish society: "For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah stay and staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water; the mighty man and the soldier, the judge and the prophet, the diviner (קֹסֵם) and the elder, the captain of fifty and the man of rank, the counselor and the skilful magician (הַחֹכֵם הַרְשִׁים) and the expert in charms (גִּבּוֹן לְאֵשׁ)." VanderKam (2010, 19-21) notes some of general similarities between the crafts of the diviner and the prophet, and, by extension, of the apocalypticist.

⁷ For the reconstructed genealogies of Sîn-leqi-unninnī, a *kalū* priest and Ekur-zakir, an *āšipu* priest, from the Seleucid period, see Hunger 1968, 17-18.

According to what we know from the Enochic literature, it is much easier to connect the scribe of righteousness who writes a memorandum of petition for the Watchers (13:4) with the Aramaic *sepīru* who is known to perform similar duties in his scribal career. Although we cannot know today whether the Jewish scribes in Babylonia performed the duties of a *sepīru*, the use of Aramaic in the Enochic literature and the Aramaic version of the cuneiform learning about the moon make the comparison between these two groups fruitful for the understanding of that literature. The belonging of Jewish scribes to a group of Aramaic scribes of lower social standing in comparison with the priestly exorcists explains well the reasons that adduced a Jewish author living in Babylonia to choose the latter as negative heroes of his mythological story. The extremely broad learning of the *āšīpu* and his practice of medico-magical methods of healing must have caused high respect and position of authority in the Babylonian society of the Persian, Hellenistic and Arsacid periods. Additionally, the transmission of scribal and professional knowledge from father to son within the closed circle of family members in Babylonia created a closed group of professionals, and made any attempt for an outsider to join them futile.

The Jewish priests living in the Babylonian diaspora in such or similar circumstances felt a pressing need of preserving their national and patriarchal faith on the one hand, and of creating an alternative for the Babylonian broad learning and education on the other hand. The response was gradual and resulted in different types of Aramaic compositions. The Jewish priests⁸ decided to present the Akkadian *tupšarrūtu* and *āšīpūtu* as stemming from an angelic rebellion against the God of Israel. The myth of the fallen Watchers/*āšīpus* in unequivocal terms condemns Babylonian knowledge and scholarship and precludes its continuation within the circles of Jewish learning. The Levitical author of the *Visions of Levi* unequivocally opts for Aramaic ספר “scribal craft” (*VLev.* 88, 90, 98) as the object recommended for the study by priestly apprentices. Thus instead of Akkadian scholarship an Aramaic type of scribal craft was preferred and presented as an ideal to cherish and to transmit to the next generations of priestly descendants. The Jewish scribes were probably aware of the fact that the Aramaic ספר was influenced by Akkadian learning (lexal lists in *VLev.* 31-46a; periods of lunar visibility in 4Q208 and most of 4Q209; *1 En.* 73:4-8). Such an

⁸ Since there exist formal similarities and vocabulary contacts between the *Aramaic Astronomical Book* (4Q208-4Q211) and the *Visions of Levi* (so-called *Aramaic Levi Document*, cf. Drawnel 2010b), it is plausible to assume that the two documents were penned by Levitical priests, see Drawnel 2006. The myth of the fallen Watchers in *1 En.* 6-11 shows the same interest in knowledge transmission found in these two Jewish compositions.

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Aramaic form of Akkadian learning, however, was easily adapted within the structure of Jewish religion and culture, in contradistinction to its much more complicated form in cuneiform. The presentation of Enoch as a scribe of righteousness who proclaims the divine judgment over the Watchers and has access to the heavenly realm in *1 En.* 12-16 provided a mythological, pre-diluvian counterpart to the mythological explanation of the origin of Babylonian knowledge. Then Levi, patriarch of the priestly tribe, was elevated to priestly dignity and depicted as a priestly student of Aramaic עִפְרָיִם. Thus the Aramaic learning became an official element of Jewish priestly education and tradition. Additionally, a chain of knowledge transmission from father to son (*VLev.* 22; 49-50; 57; 84; 88) has been established, as an alternative to the chain of knowledge transmission in cuneiform learned circles. *1 En.* 81:1-82:3 presents Enoch as the one who teaches his son Methuselah and his children/pupils (*1 En.* 81:5b-6; 82:12), but the text indicates that Enoch's knowledge comes from his staying with the angels (*1 En.* 81:1-5a) and in the rest of the *Astronomical Book* from his teacher angel Uriel (72:1; 74:2; 75:4; 79:6; 80:1; cf. chs. 17-36). It has therefore transcendent origins and comes from the heavenly realm through the intermediary of angels. Establishing an alternative chain of knowledge transmission for the Jewish students in Babylonia comes as a response to Babylonian mythology about knowledge transmission, and it counteracts its religious context that indicated different types of divination as transmitted to humanity by gods in pre-diluvian times. The famous text about the origins of divinatory knowledge published by Lambert (1967; 1998) presents Enmenduranki, the antediluvian king of Sippar as the recipient of the knowledge of divination transmitted to him by Šamaš and Adad in the divine assembly. He receives the liver, the Tablet of the Gods, called "a secret of heaven and netherworld," (l. 8 *pirišti šamē u eršetim*) then he transmits his divinely revealed knowledge of *bārûtu* to the citizens of Nippur, Sippar and Babylon, together with lecanomancy, *Enūma Anu Enlil* series (l. 18), arithmetical knowledge (l. 18, "how to make multiplications"). The diviner is then presented as a "learned scholar, who guards the secrets of the great gods," (l. 19, *ummānu mūdū nāšir pirišti ilāni rabūti*) and as the one who passes this knowledge to his son: "[he] will bind by oath before Šamaš and Adad by tablet and stylus the son whom he loves and will teach him".

The Akkadian text sets the divine origin of the divinatory knowledge in the pre-diluvian times and in a mythological context together with the genealogical connection of the diviner to the mythical king of Sippar. The divinatory knowledge is presented as a secret of the great gods and its transmission is limited to the descendants of the diviner. Except for the

knowledge of *bārûtu*, the Akkadian text adds additional type of divination by lecanomancy, together with the official series of the astrological divination called *Enūma Anu Enlil*, and arithmetical calculation. This comes as no surprise because the Akkadian diviners usually showed the breadth of their education by pointing to different types of divinatory and scientific literature that was not limited to the main areas of their expertise.

Of great interest for the Enochic literature is the mentioning of the astrological series *Enūma Anu Enlil* in the list of the sciences revealed by Enmenduranki to the citizens of Nippur, Sippar, and Babylon. The divine origin of this series is also stated in the introduction to the whole work,⁹ but here it is clearly set in the pre-diluvian times. Since the oldest part of the Enochic lore, that is the astronomical calculation of the lunar visibility (4Q208 and most of 4Q209; *I En.* 73:4-8) is based in its main structure on tables A and B of Tablet 14 of the *EAE* series, there is a strong probability that the Jewish author who adapted or adopted this calculation was keenly aware of the fact that it comes from a Babylonian text with clear theological presuppositions concerning its divine origins.¹⁰ This assumption becomes even more credible if one notes the division of the astrological knowledge in the Qumran fragments of *I En.* 8:3 where the fourfold division of the *EAE* series is presented vested in Aramaic terminology.

- 9 The text of the *EAE* astrological series contains two short introductions, similar in content, one in Sumerian, the other in Akkadian. The following text translates the Akkadian version: “When Anu, Enlil, and Ea, the great gods, by their firm counsel established the designs of heaven and earth and (also) established that the creation of the day (and) the renewal of the month for humankind to see were in the hands of the great gods; (then) they saw the sun in (his) gate (and) they made (him) appear regularly in the midst of heaven and earth” (transl. by Rochberg 2004, 70). For the original Sumerian and Akkadian reconstructed text, see Verderame 2002, 9.
- 10 Note that at the end of Table A of Tablet 14 of *EAE* in the description of day 30 of the equinoctial month the preserved text uses the terminology that ascribes a divine status to the moon: *ilu* (dingir) *ina ūmi* (ud) *izzaz* “the god stands during the day” (Al-Rawi and George 1991-92, 55). Knowing that the lunar visibility periods in 4Q208 and 4Q209 are modeled after the schematic equinoctial month presented on Tablet 14 of the *EAE* series, the immediate question that must have sprung to the mind of a Jewish scribe who elaborated or accepted such a computational pattern already elaborated was how astronomical knowledge set in the idolatrous context of Babylonian religion is compatible with principles of Jewish religion. A conscious and planned response must have been formulated, if Babylonian knowledge in its Aramaic form was to be of any use. Knowledge in antiquity does not exist without religious presuppositions. See also the comment by Rochberg (2011, 17): “Nonetheless, in our terms, the “religious” aspect of celestial divination and astrology (and even astronomy) would have to do with the role of the divine in the conception of these disciplines by those who practiced them. This gets to the root of the Mesopotamian scribal notion of knowledge, which is what unites divination, horoscopy, and astronomy in the learned cuneiform tradition. And this way of identifying the elements of knowledge, i.e., systematized, even to some extent codified, knowledge, was connected with the gods from whom it was claimed such scholarly knowledge was derived in the days before the Flood.”

There also exists another, perhaps even more important, reason for choosing pre-diluvian and mythic times for the fall of the Watchers/*āšīpus* and for their activity as teachers of medical, magic and divinatory arts. From the beginning of the twentieth century scholars have compared the fallen Watchers as culture bearers with the early Babylonian tradition about the *apkallus*, an amphibious creature, half-man and half-fish, that came out of the sea and taught humanity primordial arts that initiated human knowledge and arts. Although the Akkadian literature does not contain the etiological story in the exact form transmitted by Berossos, it does, however, present the *apkallus* as scholars and wise men, and some of them are said to be living before the flood.¹¹ A famous tablet from Seleucid Uruk (W.20030, 7) contains the list of seven pre-diluvian kings, each of them accompanied by an *apkallu*.¹² After the flood the list continues with one king in company of an *apkallu*, then there follow eight post-diluvian kings, each with his corresponding *ummānu* scholar. The message of the text is clear: the Babylonian scholars, *ummānū*, have traced their genealogy to the pre-diluvian *apkallus* in order to enhance their social position, but also probably for some political gains.¹³

There exist in Babylonian iconography many representations of the *āšīpus*, usually performing a liturgical act, that are vested as fish-men,¹⁴ which means that they are identified with the mythological *apkallus*, especially with respect to scholarly knowledge. In fact, similarly to the pre-diluvian list of kings and sages, the *āšīpus* considered the mythological *apkallus* to be precursors of the medico-magical practitioners, so that even some distinguished exorcists bore the title of the mythological sages.¹⁵ Additionally, a colophon of a medical text from around eighth century B.C. refers to the medical knowledge it contains as coming from the oral tradition of the *apkallus* from before the flood.¹⁶ This is an obvious attempt to proclaim the medical knowledge as stemming from the highest possible scholarly authority that goes back to the pre-diluvian times. The series *Bīt mēseri* that belongs to the scientific lore

¹¹ For an overview of cuneiform texts speaking about Oannes and *apkallus*, see Streck 2003–2005.

¹² The tablet was published by van Dijk (1962); for a recent elaboration of its content, see Lenzi 2008b.

¹³ See Lenzi 2008b, 160-165.

¹⁴ See Geller 2010, 32, 47, 55, 126.

¹⁵ See Geller 2010, 179, n. 16 to p. 17.

¹⁶ “Proven and tested salves and poultices excerpted from the lists, after an oral tradition of the *apkallus* (NUN-ME.MEŠ-e) from before the flood (*ša lām abūbi*), transmitted in Šuruppak in the second year of Enlilbāni, king of Isin, by Enlil-muballiṭ, the *apkallus* of Nippur” (Thompson 1923, 105 iv, lines 21-25; Hunger 1968, no. 533; cf. Reiner 1961, 10); cf. the comment by Geller (2010, 17): “Although the tablet itself is not earlier than the eighth century BC, the poultice is attributed to oral transmitted medical lore dating back to c. 1860 BC, more than a millennium earlier, and ultimately to mythological sages from before the Flood.”

of the *āšipu* contains an incantation with the list of seven *apkallus* that are described as pure *purādu* fish. The sixth *apkallus* in the list is presented as the *āšipu* of the city of Eridu.¹⁷ Thus in order to demote the *āšipu* and his teaching from the position of a wise man that possesses the knowledge of pre-diluvian wisdom, his negative presentation must have been moved back in time to the pre-diluvian, mythic period. One should note, however, that the list of sciences taught by the Watchers in *1 En.* 8:3 properly describes professional interest of the *āšipu* in the Persian and Hellenistic period, and cannot be linked with the myth of the Babylonian *apkallus*.¹⁸

From the point of view of literary criticism, the decision to situate the whole narrative in the pre-diluvian times was certainly influenced by the biblical narrative of Gen 6:1-2,4 and probably by the biblical tradition that located the origins of human culture in the first generations of humanity (Gen 4:17-24). The main reason, however, for choosing the pre-diluvian times was the necessity to respond to the Akkadian myth of the origin of knowledge that located it exactly in the same period and to the identification of the *āšipus* and their medical knowledge with the pre-diluvian *apkallus*. It is not an accident that in *1 En.* 6-11 the patriarch Enoch is not mentioned at all, because the narrative was written not to present a Jewish sage and scholar, but in order to indicate that although the Babylonian science is indeed rooted in pre-diluvian, mythological times, it was brought to humanity by a wrong channel of revelation: rebellious Watchers who commit the sin of fornication. The tragic consequences of the transmission of knowledge are therefore not to be blamed on its intrinsic evil qualities, but on its transmitters who defiled themselves by the fornication with women.

The presentation of Watchers' scribal knowledge as a "mystery" (μυστήριον, *1 En.* 8:3 [G^S]; 9:6 [G^{C+S}]; 10:7 [G^{C+S}]; cf. 16:3 [G^C]) properly corresponds to what we know about scribal knowledge in Babylonia. The colophons of cuneiform tablets often refer to the tablet content as to a text that contains

¹⁷ For the German translation, see Borger 1974, 192.

¹⁸ Recently Amar Annus (2010) identified both the Watchers and the Giants in the *Book of Watchers* and the *Book of Giants* with the mythological *apkallus*. Building upon his earlier research Helge Kvanvig (2011) identifies the fallen Watchers with the *apkallus* while the Giants with the kings associated in the cuneiform sources with the *apkallus*. The identification of the two scholars must be questioned for several reasons, the most important of which is the list of sciences in *1 En.* 8:1 and 3 which can be associated only with the *āšipu* in the Late Babylonian period, and not with his mythological counterpart. Additionally, analyzing the social background of the early Enochic literature, one can hardly speak about the Watchers as representing the mythological *apkallus* because such an approach would deprive the myth of its anchoring in the real life of its author. There are many other arguments that speak against the approach presented in the two mentioned publications, but their problematics will be dealt with in my forthcoming review of Kvanvig's monograph.

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secret scribal knowledge (*pirištu* or *niširtu*).¹⁹ In an *edubba* Sumero-Akkadian composition “In Praise of Scribal Art” the writer connects the concept of *tupšarrūtu* with divine secret that can be revealed by study.²⁰ The transmission of the mysteries to humanity and also to the giants, Watchers’ bastard progeny, ruined Watchers’ didactic authority as teachers of divinely revealed knowledge. Such a move from the side of the Jewish scribe comes as no surprise, when one discovers that the Watchers’ presentation is modeled on the Babylonian priest, enchanter, physician, diviner, astrologer, astronomer, and mathematician, that is on the *āšipu*. The denigration of Watchers’ didactic and revelatory activity seems to serve exactly that purpose: demoting the *āšipu* from his privileged position of a revered scholar who continues the tradition of the mythological *apkallu*, with whom he unequivocally identifies. Since in the Persian and Hellenistic periods most of Babylonian scholarly tradition converged in the professional activities of the *āšipu*,²¹ the manifesto against the Watchers in the Jewish myth denigrates and demotes from their privileged position the Babylonian scribal arts in general. Only after the dissociation of Babylonian knowledge from its mythical origin deeply rooted in Mesopotamian religion was the creation of a new didactic chain of transmission together with a new scholar possible. The rest of the *Book of the Watchers* unequivocally witnesses the process of the creation of a new ideal scribe. Enoch’s scribal competence is presented as superior to that of the Watchers: he not only writes a petition for them (13:4-6), but also a host of angels faithful to the God of Israel explains to him the knowledge about the structure of the universe (17-36; cf. 72-82), while Watchers’ knowledge is proclaimed as abominable or worthless (16:3),²² or rather as revealed against

19 See *niširtu* in Hunger 1968, 303, 2; 328, 13; 191, 2; 221, 1; 98, 7; 519, 1-2; *pirištu* in Hunger 1968, 50, 1; 98, 6; 206, 1; 325, 3. For the overview of available evidence about scribal conception of secret knowledge in Babylonia, see Goodnick Westenholz 1998; for a detailed study of the subject, see Lenzi 2008a.

20 See Sjöberg 1972, 126, lines 7-8: “The scribal art is a house of riches, the secret (*ni-šir-ti*) of Enki. Work ceaselessly with the scribal art and it will reveal its secret (*ni-šir-ta-ša*) to you.”

21 See, e.g., the comment by Geller (2010, 124): “At the same time, by the Persian period, Uruk exorcists had become the most prominent scholars of their day. A contemporary library from Uruk’s Eanna temple contains some 250 tablets dealing with incantations, medicine prayers, omens, and astronomy, and the few surviving colophons on these tablets ascribe them to exorcists (*maš.maš*). This suggests that an exorcist, in order to perform his duties properly, had to be a good all-rounder.”

22 Eth. *manunna maštira*. Musing on the meaning of the Greek emended reading (ἐξουθενημένον) Nickelsburg (2001, 269) posits a confusion between the verbs אָרַב (“despise”) and זָבַח (“plunder”), and translates the expression with “a stolen mystery” (2001, 267). The assumption of such a confusion is hardly acceptable here, because it is based on the text already emended by Charles (ἐξουθενημένον “despised, scorned”), see note below. It appears that Nickelsburg hypothetically corrects Charles’s hypothetical emendation; such a move is hardly acceptable from the methodological point of view.

God's will.²³ Thus the Akkadian *tušarrūtu* and *āšiputu* taught by the Watchers/*āšipu* causes the desolation of the earth and misery of its inhabitants, the Aramaic ספר learnt by Enoch from the angels becomes source of peace and blessing, and wisdom that is beyond human thought (*1 En.* 82:2). Finally, the fallen Watchers are denied any access to Enoch's writing (14:7), and in this way any hope for divine mercy is forlorn, and the separation between Akkadian *tušarrūtu* and Aramaic ספר becomes definitive.

3. The Sexual Sin of the Watchers as a Metaphor of Idolatrous Apostasy

The denigration of Watchers' knowledge would not be so effective without the introduction of the motif of the Watchers' decision to descend on earth in order to marry women and undertake sexual relationships with them. In fact, the motif of instruction is ingrained into the text of the narrative, and thus set in the context of sexual transgression, in order to indicate the relationship between the two. The connection between Watchers' defilement and transmission of knowledge in 7:1 sets the stage for the rest of the narrative where this interrelationship exists. The project to marry women and to have intercourse with them appears first in the narrative (*1 En.* 6:2), while the knowledge transmission is introduced in 7:1 (G^C, Eth.) immediately after the description of sexual relations and defilement of the Watchers, after their descent on earth. Such a succession of events suggests that the transmission

23 Instead of the Ethiopic *mānunna māšīra* the Cairo Greek manuscript reads in 16:3 μυστήριον τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγεννημένον "a mystery that comes from God". Following the Ethiopic version Charles (1906, 47, n. 5) emends τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγεννημένον to ἐξουθενημένον, and omits the relative pronoun ὃ from the preceding clause. Nickelsburg (2001, 269, n. b to 16:3) repeats Charles' emendation and passes a severe judgment on the Greek sentence proclaiming it to be "nonsense in the present context." Yet, the Greek sentence is not corrupt and corresponds to the rules of Semitic syntax: ὑμεῖς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἦτε, καὶ πᾶν μυστήριον ὃ οὐκ ἀπεκαλύφθη ὑμῖν, καὶ μυστήριον τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγεννημένον ἔγνωτε (G^C) "You were in heaven, and you came to know a mystery coming from God and all the mysteries that were not revealed to you." The clause καὶ πᾶν μυστήριον ὃ οὐκ ἀπεκαλύφθη ὑμῖν stands in apposition to the first object (μυστήριον) of the following sentence, and thus constitutes the second preposed object of the verb ἔγνωτε. The sentence explains that Watchers' knowledge of God's mysteries does not come from God's initiative (οὐκ ἀπεκαλύφθη) that would involve His revelatory activity, but from Watchers' own initiative to learn it. Thus although the mystery learned by the Watchers is of divine origin (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ), their revelations (cf. 8:3 [G^S] ἀνακαλύπτω; 9:6 [G^S] ἀποκαλύπτω) of these mysteries to humanity are not rooted in God's initiative. The sinful character of that knowledge results first of all from Watchers' σκληροκαρδία to take women as wives, which leads to their defilement, see 7:1; 9:8; 12:4; 15:3. The statement in 16:3 seems to add yet another reason to consider Watchers' teachings as harmful. The proposed explanation of the Greek version makes any emendation unnecessary.

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of knowledge is presented as being strictly related with the fornication with women and occurs even before the birth of the giants takes place. In the Syncellus' account the revelation of the mysteries begins after the description of the giants' birth (7:2), but the list of sciences taught by the Watchers (8:3) is much longer, more elaborate, and also better corresponding to the professional interests of the *āšipu*. In the Greek Cairo manuscript and in the Ethiopic version the giants show their voracious appetite after the revelation of the mysteries to women (7:2-5); in a similar vein in the Syncellus' account the giants begin to devour human beings after the revelation of the mysteries (8:3). The motif of instruction is thus set in an immediate relationship with the fornication with women on the one hand and with the voracious appetite of the giants on the other. It can hardly be separated from these two elements of the narration. Thus in order to understand and explain properly the functioning of the motif of instruction in the myth one has to search for a meaningful explanation of the main cause of the spread of evil on earth, that is the marriage and sexual defilement with women. The text as it stands today does not suggest that Asael was somehow exempt from sexual intercourse with women, to the contrary, the narration explicitly mentions him by name (*I En.* 6:7; Eth. *'asā'ēl*; G^C ἀσεάλ; G^S ἄζαλζήλ) as one of those who descended on Mt. Hermon. His responsibility therefore for the transmission of knowledge in *I En.* 9:6 cannot be understood and explained without the reference to the sexual sin.

Apart from the term “great sin” (6:3, ἀμαρτία μεγάλη), the Greek text in 10:9 (G^{C+S}), describes Watchers' sexual sin as πορνεία when referring to the giants doomed for destruction as “sons of fornication” (τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς πορνείας).²⁴ The *Book of Giants* in 4Q203 8 9 uses the term וני “fornication”, where it unequivocally refers to the Watchers' sexual sin on the earth. The Aramaic term most probably underlies the Greek πορνεία in 10:9 (cf. LXX Num 14:33; Jer 3:2; 13:27; Ezek 23:27; 43:7; Hos 4:11; 6:10). Additionally, Watchers are said to have mingled with women ([συμ]μίγνυμι, 10:11 [G^{C+S}]) and

²⁴ In 8:2 (G^C) the context suggests that because of the Watchers' teachings humanity committed fornication (ἐπόρνευσαν) and corrupted all its ways. The verb, however, is not present in the Syncellus' version. The Aramaic fragment of the Book of Watchers (4Q202 1 iii 1 [*I En.* 8:2]) contains a fragmentary participle [ןי]ן. The noun פחז in Sir 41:17 (MS B) interchanges with נרה “fornication”, yet the term פחז usually means “to be reckless, boisterous” in JPA (Sokoloff 1990, 427), JBA (פחז “impetuous”, Sokoloff 2002, 895), and in Syriac (Sokoloff 2009, 1177-8). It appears as a loan word in Akkadian (NA and NB) *paḥāzu* “to act insolently, arrogantly” (*AHW* 811b; Soden 1968: 262); see also Judg 9:4, Zeph 3:4 “worthless, reckless”, cf. Gen 49:4. Since the Ben Sira occurrence of the term is certainly late, one should follow the meaning found in NA and NB dialects of Akkadian, Jewish Aramaic, Syriac, and also in the biblical texts, where the association with sexual transgressions is not present. Thus Milik's (1976, 171) translation “men were acting wickedly” properly reflects the meaning of the Aramaic term.

אתחברו, 4Q202 frg. 1 iv 9; cf. 19:1 [G^C] in a sexual union, and therefore their offspring, the giants, are called bastards (κίβδηλος, 9:9 [G^S]; 10:9 [G^{C+S}], 15 [G^C]; μα<μ>ζηρηοι, 10:9 [G^C], transcription of the Aramaic ממיזריי, cf. Milik 1976, 176). The result of the Watchers' decision to commit fornication with women is their defilement (μιαίνω, 7:1 [G^{C+S}]; 9:8 [G^{C+S}]; 10:11 [G^{C+S}]; cf. 12:4; 15:3), which appears as the immediate result of the great sin.

The author of the narrative does not explain how the sexual union between the sons of heaven and the daughters of men (6:1) is possible. He not only assumes such a possibility, but expressly states that it did occur (7:1), and the language used indicates that it was preceded by Watchers' marriage with women. The account successive to chapters 6-11 that introduces Enoch as a messenger of God's judgment (chs. 12-16) seems to interpret the sexual union on the literal level, stressing the impropriety of Watchers' misdeed on the basis of their spiritual nature in contrast with human flesh and blood that die and perish (15:3-7). In *I En.* 15:4 an additional element of defilement by women's blood, not present in chapters 6-11, has been introduced into the narrative. In this way the literal understanding of the Watchers' sexual sin in chapters 12-16 is further developed. There are, however, some later developments that try to explain how sexual intercourse of heavenly beings with daughters of men was at all possible. The *Testament of Reuben* (5:6-7) states that the Watchers changed themselves into the shape of men (v. 6 μετεσχηματίζοντο εις ανθρώπους), appeared to women when these were with their husbands, and the women, lusting in their mind after Watchers' appearances, bore giants.²⁵ This account effectively eliminates the intercourse of the Watchers with women and ascribes the conception of the giants to women's lust after the Watchers during the sexual relations with their human husbands. A different interpretation of the Watchers' sin was proposed by a Christian author living in the third century AD. Cited in the Syncellus' *Chronography* (Mosshammer 1984, 19, no. 34), Julius Africanus (160-240 AD) proposes to identify the Watchers, "sons of God" with the descendants of Seth, and women with the descendants of Cain.²⁶ God grew angry because of the mingling (ἐπιμιχθέντων αὐτῶν) of these two groups. Such an interpretation effectively denies the angelic origin of the Watchers and links them with the pre-diluvian genealogy of the sons of Seth (Gen 5).

25 See also the comment about the Watchers in the *Clementine Homilies* 8,13,1: εις τὴν ἀνθρώπων φύσιν ἑαυτοὺς μετέβαλον. Such an interpretation might have been suggested by *I En.* 17:1 where those who were like a flaming fire are presented as being able to appear as human beings. The Enochic text, however, does not unequivocally refer to the Watchers.

26 Such an interpretation is also present in the rabbinic targums, see Adler 1989, 117-122.

These interpretations indicate some difficulty the ancient writers had with ascribing to the heavenly beings sexual conduct proper to humanity only. Modern interpretations try to explain Watchers' conduct with references to the prohibition of mixing different species, that is heavenly and earthly. Nickelsburg (2001, 223 and n. 30) follows Fitzmyer's interpretation of the term זני in Qumran literature²⁷, where it denotes intercourse in forbidden degrees within one's family relationship.²⁸ His principal argument in favor of such an interpretation is the presentation of the Giants as bastards and half-breeds (9:9 [G^S]; 10:9 [G^{C+S}], 15 [G^C]). He notes that in Lev 19:19 and Deut 22:11 the Greek κίβδηλος translates זניעש, a term that describes a cloth woven from two different kinds of thread; additionally in Wis 15:9 the Greek term connotes something alloyed or counterfeit (cf. Wis 2:16).²⁹ Consequently, he translates the Greek expression in 10:9 τὸς υἱὸς τῆς πορνείας with "sons of miscegenation". The evidence adduced by Nickelsburg, however, does not stand to critical scrutiny simply because behind the Greek κίβδηλος one cannot read the Hebrew term זניעש. As already noted by Milik (1976, 176), the Cairo manuscript in 10:9 preserves an Aramaic term ממוזיא transcribed into Greek τὸς μα<μ>ζηρέους "bastards". In such a context the following τὸς κίβδηλος is an explanatory Greek gloss from the adjective κίβδηλος, "adulterated, base", or metaphorically, "fraudulent, dishonest" as opposed to ἀληθής "true" (LSJ, s.v.). The Aramaic term ממוזיא indicates that the union of the Watchers with women is illegitimate,³⁰ but the mixing of two different species does not belong to the semantic field of that noun, at least in its first millennium BC occurrences.³¹

²⁷ Especially on the basis of CD iv 12b - v 14a, cf. Fitzmyer 1981, 94-99.

²⁸ The literal interpretation of the sexual sin of the Watchers has led some scholars to the identification of the Watchers with Jewish priests who commit the sin of fornication by espousing women not from priestly families, see Suter 1979, 122-123: "By entering into marriage with a family beyond the circle of the priesthood and certain families of the laity, the priest ran the danger of profaning his seed or family line." Both in the cited article and in his later reflections on the same subject (Suter 2002), Suter interprets chapters 6-11 together with chapters 12-16. It is evident that he cannot prove his point on the basis of chapters 6-11 only, where any argument for the exogamic relations of Jewish priests is simply absent. Additionally, *1 En.* 6-11 cannot be interpreted in reference to the profanation of the priesthood only – the consequences are felt by the whole earth and its inhabitants. Finally, such an interpretation must be discarded for the simple reason that the kind of knowledge taught by the Watchers in *1 En.* 8:3 is ascribed by Akkadian sources to the Babylonian *āšipu*.

²⁹ See Nickelsburg 2001, 213.

³⁰ They are illegitimate because they are the product of זני/πορνεία (10:9); Nickelsburg (2001, 223) cites the mishnaic text (*m. Yeb.* 4:13) to prove the illegitimacy of the union. The late rabbinic text does not seem to have any incidence on the much earlier apocalyptic elaboration of the term זני.

³¹ The term ממוזיא is also present in Biblical Hebrew, where according to Hebrew dictionary definitions (HALOT, s.v.; Gesenius, 18 Aufl., s.v.) it connotes a Jewish child born from a prohibited

Nickelsburg's interpretation of זנו with his stress laid on the Greek term κίβδηλος is close to what the ancient composers underlined in *I En.* 15:3-7, namely a difference between the spiritual nature of the Watchers and human nature of women, where the defilement is caused by human blood and flesh (cf. 15:4). One should note, however, that in chs. 6-11 such an interpretation is not so evident. The text in 7:1 and 9:8 mentions the sexual relations of the Watchers with women but stresses Watchers' defilement and then goes on to Watchers' didactic activity. In 10:11 the context indicates that the expression "by their uncleanness" refers to Watchers' defilement caused by women, but not by their blood. Rather, the expression refers to uncleanness caused by sexual intercourse (cf. Lev 15:18; 2 Sam 11:4), and not to women's blood as stated in 15:4.³² In fact it is Watchers' intercourse with women that causes their defilement in 7:1 and 9:8. Additionally, the Aramaic text from Qumran shows that behind the Greek aorist passive participle from [συσμ]μίγνυμι in 10:11 there stands the Aramaic verb אַתְחַבֵּר (4Q202 frg. 1 iv 9),³³ "to associate with, to join together", which in this verse expresses the sexual relationship of the Watchers with women and the resulting defilement of the Watchers; any idea of the connection between different species is simply absent. It is also rather impossible to claim any parental relationship between women and the Watchers.

It seems that a different interpretation of Watchers' sexual sin is needed in order to explain the text of *I En.* 6-11 properly. Previous research into the

mixed union, a "half-breed." Since the term occurs only twice in the OT in an equivocal context, its dictionary meaning has been established mainly on the basis of later Mishnaic Hebrew, see Cazelles 1954, 121, n. 1 and the bibliography in HALOT (s.v.) and Gesenius (18 Aufl., s.v.). The versions of Deut 23:3 indicate the *mamzēr* as one born of an illicit sexual union, and the idea of his being of mixed origin is absent there: LXX ἐκ πόρνης "one (born) of a harlot". The Vulgate transcribes the Hebrew term and adds a gloss: *mamzer hoc est de scorto natus* "mamzer, that is, one born of a harlot." In Zech 9:6 the LXX translates the term with ἀλλογενεῖς "foreigners, strangers", while the Vulgate has the singular "separator". Here as well the idea of a mixed origin is not attested by the versions. Additionally, the biblical Hebrew dictionaries (HALOT, s.v. II * מַזְרֵר; Gesenius, 18 Aufl., s.v. מַזְרֵר) explain the etymology of *mamzēr* by making a recourse to the root *m-z-r* "to decay, rot" attested in Middle Hebrew; the same root *m-d-r* "to decay, rot" with a characteristic consonant exchange appears in Syriac, Mandaic and Arabic (*madira*). Here again the idea of any kind of mixing species is absent. Finally, Qumran Aramaic knows a different term for the "half-breeds", כִּילְאִין (4Q542 frg. 1 i 6; cf. *VLev.* 91 line 10) probably a calque from Hebrew כִּלְאִים "improper mixture" (Lev 19:19; Deut 22:9; cf. 4Q396 frg. 1-2 iv 6; 4Q296 frg. 9 2; cf. Puech 2001, 273-4).

³² Against Nickelsburg (2001, 225) who claims that the term ἀκαθαρσία in 10:11 denotes Watchers' contact with women's blood, citing 2 Sam 11:4 and parallel pattern in *I En.* 12:4, 15:3 parallel to 15:4. It is not difficult to notice that while *I En.* 15:4 explicitly mentions women's blood, the text in 10:11 does not; additionally, the biblical verse cited by Nickelsburg mentions Bathsheba's impurity after sexual intercourse, and any reference to blood is lacking.

³³ The *'itpa'al* form of חָבַר, see Beyler 1984, 571.

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motif of instruction has showed that it is closely related with the teaching competence of the Babylonian priest, exorcist, medical practitioner, astrologer and astronomer, all at the same time. It has therefore become clear that the account of *1 En.* 6-11 has deep roots in the actual sociological situation of the Babylonian society in the Persian and Hellenistic period. The Jewish priestly composer of the myth precisely used Aramaic terminology denoting some elements of Akkadian scribal craft dealt with on a daily basis by the *āšīpu*,³⁴ then he transferred it into the pre-diluvian and mythological context. Such a move clearly seeks the origin of Babylonian knowledge in the mythic period and at the same time introduces a negative evaluation of that knowledge. The *āšīpus*, priestly bearers of Babylonian scribal art, have become rebel angels, and such a transformation produces a metaphorical change in the presented topic. The narration transposes the priestly scholars and their science practiced in Babylonia in the historical context of the Persian and Hellenistic periods from the earthly and immanent level, as perceived by the Jewish composer, on the transcendent and heavenly level. The metaphorical transformation of the *āšīpus* into sons of heaven (6:2) came so easily because of their priestly status and their professional interest in astrology and astronomy. In fact, one important element of Watchers' instruction is dedicated to astrology, according to the division found in the classical text of the Babylonian astrology, *Enūma Anu Enlil*. Additionally, neither medico-magical practices nor divination from the earthly signs mentioned in *1 En.* 8:3 were free from contacts with astrological knowledge according to what we know from the Babylonian sources. Finally, except for Shemihazah, Asael, and Hermoni, Watchers' names are easily connected with Babylonian astrological divination. The theophoric element (𐎗𐎍-) in their names makes part of the transformation of the polytheistic priests *āšīpus* into angelic beings acting under the exclusive authority of the God of Israel. Such a metaphorical translation of the *āšīpus* into the mythological realm had of course its purpose: not only the knowledge taught by the polytheistic priests deserves condemnation, but especially the priests themselves had to be demoted from their high social position of authority that they held in Babylonia. The denigration begins immediately at the beginning of the narrative with the introduction of the decision to unite with women (6:2) and with the presentation of this undertaking as a "great sin" (6:3 ἀμαρτία μεγάλη). The actual union between the Watchers and women in 7:1 leads to the defilement of the Watchers, and this appears to be the most important statement that is directed against the priestly status and position of the *āšīpus*.

³⁴ See Drawnel 2010a, 382-394.

The *āšipu* was a priest who functioned at the royal court, in the temple, and in private houses of the sick. As a priest he had access into temple precincts and as such could bear the title *ērib bīti*, which in Late Babylonian period becomes a common title for a priest. Cuneiform archives attest that he was entitled to temple prebends³⁵ and took active part in the temple cult at Hellenistic Uruk. The professional enchanter had to maintain his personal purity as a priest, which was linked to his main religious function as the one who assures, or restores, (cultic) purity, that is the perfect religious order. His exorcist functions consisted in the recitation of the incantations and prayers (*legomena*) and in the manipulations of different material (*dromena*) in order to overcome the illness of his patient or to avoid the impending evil. He therefore fought against evil in its different forms (human illnesses were considered to have supernatural reasons) by making recourse to specialized techniques the efficacy of which depended on gods and on the relationship of the *āšipu* with the divine realm.

Beginning in the earliest period of the Mesopotamian religious system the god Enki/Ea patron god of humanity and of wisdom, was considered the main master of exorcism, and frequently bore the title *bēl išippūti* “lord of exorcism,” or *bēl šipti* “lord of incantation”. From him also depended the whole corporation of the exorcists with their science (*ša āši[pi]*).³⁶ Since the Cassite period the second god of exorcism, Asalluḫi, was gradually identified with Marduk who was also called *āšip ilī* “exorcist of gods” (e.g., *Šurpu* II 134),³⁷ that is the one who among gods acts as an exorcist. Some texts state that the incantation pronounced by the exorcist does not belong to him but proceeds from Marduk himself, and eventually from Marduk’s father, the god Enki/Ea. Thus the efficacy of exorcism was based on the divine authority, and the exorcist, as stated in some texts, acted as Marduk’s “image” (*šalam Marduk*).³⁸ This was the reason why the Akkadian texts that describe different kind of exorcisms indicate that at the beginning of the exorcism the *āšipu* had to purify himself in order to be acceptable by

35 For a general overview of the prebend system in the Mesopotamian temple that also served as a support for the priests, see Sallaberger and Vulliet 2003–2005, 625; for the prebends assigned to the *āšipu* in Hellenistic Uruk, see McEvan 1981, 71-73, 114, 177; for the prebends assigned to the *āšipu* in Achaemenian Sippar, see Bongenaar 1997, 288.

36 For the presentation of the cuneiform sources and the functioning of Ea and Marduk in the exorcism system, see Bottéro 1987-90, 229-231.

37 “[r]elease it, exorcist among the gods (*maš-maš* DINGIR.MEŠ), merciful lord, Marduk”, see Reiner 1958, 17. For the Sumerian and Akkadian terminology concerning the *āšipu/mašmaššu*, see Geller 2010, 47-50.

38 “The incantation is the incantation of Marduk, the *āšipu* is the image of Marduk” (*šiptu šipat Marduk āšipu šalam Marduk* in Meier 1941/44, 150); for the presentation of the exorcist as the representative of Marduk in the ritual, see Maul 1994, 41.

gods who invest him with the capacity to perform the ritual in a proper and efficacious way.³⁹

The consequence therefore of fornication with women in *1 En.* 7:1 is termed as defilement (μαίνεσθαι), which demotes the priestly *āšipus* from their priestly state of purity, and which makes all the successive actions of the Watchers/*āšipus* harmful to themselves, their descendants, humanity and the whole earth. Since the main reason of this impurity is the illicit union with women, the meaning of this undertaking must be elicited in order to properly interpret the structure of the myth. Except for the use of the term *ἡ/πορνεία* as a negative qualification of the intercourse with women, the decision to enter such a union is termed as a “great sin” (6:2), which is the first negative evaluation of the intended action in the narrative. Similarly to the identity of the *āšipu*, the meaning of this expression, together with other related concepts, has to be decoded in order to be understood. In other words, their figurative, or metaphorical meaning has to be scrutinized.

Many interpreters stressed the dependence of especially chapter 6 on the mythological pattern found in Gen 6:1-2, 4, which speaks about the marriage of the sons of heaven with the daughters of men.⁴⁰ Such a union has, however, no negative connotations in the biblical story, and is not qualified there as a “great sin”, nor are the descendants of the sons of heaven called “sons of fornication.” It is evident that it was the author of chapters 6-11 that introduced the negative evaluation of such a union by using these two expressions in his narration. In addition to its literal meaning, the term “fornication” is found in the biblical account with a different, metaphorical meaning. The expression “great sin” often denotes the same transgression implied by “fornication”.

In Gen 20:9 the “great sin” (חטאה גדלה / LXX ἁμαρτία μεγάλη) denotes Abimelech’s unconscious attempt to take Sarah as his wife; the context indicates that the expression refers to the transgression of marital law. The same expression is found in chapter 32 of the Exodus narrative where the story of the molten calf is narrated. After his descent from Mt. Sinai Moses asks Aaron (Exod 32:21) what was the reason to bring a “great sin” (חטאה גדלה / LXX ἁμαρτία μεγάλη) upon the people, referring to Aaron’s initiative to make the calf and to build an altar to it (Exod 32:2-5). A few verses later Moses addresses the people (32:30) stressing their great sin, which also refers to the cult of the molten calf. He then stands before God and confesses that

³⁹ See Falkenstein 1931, 20-22; for the questions concerning priestly purity in Mesopotamian religion, see Sallaberger 2006–2008, especially p. 297.

⁴⁰ For the literary analysis of the dependence of the myth on Gen 6:1-4, see Nickelsburg 2001, 166-168.

the people “sinned a great sin” (חטא ... חטאה גדלה) by making for themselves gods of gold (32:31). In the deuteronomistic review of Israel’s history 2 Kgs 17:21 states that Jeroboam made Israel commit great sin (חטאה גדלה) (החטיאם), an unmistakable reference to the cult of the golden calf established by that king in Bethel and Dan (1 Kgs 12:26-30).

Similarly to the expression “great sin”, the Hebrew counterpart of the Aramaic abstract term זני in the Old Testament refers to Israel’s unfaithfulness to her God. In Num 14:33 the Israelites’ children are destined to wander in the desert for forty years because of Israel’s faithlessness (זנות/πορνεία). The text refers to Israel’s refusal to enter Canaan after the return of the scouts (Num 14:1-10). In Jer 3:2 the prophet compares Israel to a harlot who pollutes the land through her harlotries (בזנותיך); the content of the preceding chapter indicates that the prophet alludes to the idolatrous relationship with other gods. Jer 3:9 makes it clear that also for Judah fornication (זנות) was so light that she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. In Jer 13:27 the prophet compares Jerusalem to an impure harlot, accuses her of committing fornication (זנות) and adultery on the hills in the field; the reference to idolatrous cult is also unmistakable. In chapter 23 Ezekiel depicts the allegorical story of Oholah and Oholiba, that is of Samaria and Jerusalem, as a long string of fornication and adultery with foreign nations. The whole chapter is imbued with sexual metaphors denoting political alliances and idolatrous relationship with Assyria and Egypt. In Ezek 23:27 God announces the end of Oholibah’s lewdness and harlotry (זנות) brought from Egypt. In the vision of God’s throne Ezekiel foretells an end to the defilement of God’s name by Israel’s harlotry (זנות); again the following context indicates that idolatry is meant (Ezek 43:9). In Hos 6:10 the prophet decries Ephraim’s harlotry (זנות) and Israel’s defilement, which probably denotes social injustice committed there. The same term is also used in Hos 4:11 with the same connotation.

Not only is the abstract noun זנות frequently applied to Israel’s idolatrous relationship with foreign gods or nations, especially in the prophetic literature, but also the whole set of concepts stemming from the Hebrew root *z-n-h* appears with that meaning.⁴¹ The question arises whether such an understanding of the term זנות/πορνεία exerts any influence on the interpretation of זני/πορνεία in *I En.* 6-11. At first sight there seems to be none, because the myth does not openly speak about idolatry, and the term זני certainly does not refer to Israel. However, the recognition of the fallen Watchers as Babylonian *āšipu* priests proves that the author of the myth wrote his

41 For a detailed analysis of the use in the Old Testament, see Erlandsson 1980.

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composition as a manifesto against a particular group within the Babylonian society in the Persian and Hellenistic period. Trying to achieve his goal the author incorporated the Babylonian priests disguised as Watchers into the structure of Jewish religion, and then applied the metaphor of sexual intercourse in order to express their apostasy from the God of Israel. Hence the principal topic discussed in chapter 6 until 7:1 is apostasy from God, while the figurative language serves here as a vehicle to express the message. Since the most probable recipients of the myth were Jewish priests/students living in Babylonia, the metaphorical meaning of the motif of illicit sexual union, frequently applied to idolatrous Israel in Jewish prophetic literature, was easily decoded and understood. The subsequent ravages of the earth by the giants and transmission of harmful knowledge are consequences of the fundamental sin which is apostasy from the God of Israel. Such an interpretation properly accounts for the presence of knowledge transmission in the immediate context of the intercourse with women. Once the Watchers/*āšipus* are defiled (7:1), their every action, transmission of knowledge included, is impure and as such causes only sinfulness and godlessness on earth. Additionally, the metaphorical interpretation of the “great sin” gives an answer to another important theological question that confronted the Jewish priests who lived in Babylonia. They must have known, even in an imperfect way, the broad learning of idolatrous Babylonian priesthood, which certainly led to the question about the polytheistic context of knowledge origin and knowledge transmission. The application of the metaphor of illicit sexual union to the Babylonian priests elevated to the mythical angelic status and subjected to the God of Israel gave an appropriate answer to such a bothering question. Knowledge cultivated by the Babylonian priests does not originate from the Babylonian gods but from the God of Israel. The Babylonian priests, that is the Watchers, continue to study and transmit the divine knowledge that comes from heaven, but since they are apostate priests, their broad learning is impure together with the priests themselves, and as such the Jewish priests, and all faithful to the God of Israel must avoid any contact with that learning, and with the idolatrous priests themselves.⁴²

The application of the terms “great sin” and “fornication” to the Watchers modified the internal structure of the metaphor, though. In the prophetic biblical literature the initiative to enter an illicit union lay on the side of a woman who allegorically represented the people of Israel, who defiled itself by committing fornication with foreign women, foreign nations, or

⁴² See *Jub.* 8:3, where Kainan finds an inscription with the teaching of the Watchers about celestial divination, copies it, and sins on the basis of what was in it.

foreign gods.⁴³ Here the initiative lies with the Watchers, their responsibility for the sin committed is stressed, while the women play no active role in the decision process that leads the Watchers to bind themselves with an oath. It is evident that the shift of the paradigm from feminine to masculine serves the ad hoc necessity of the author who was busy creating a pattern that suited his goal: denigration of the Watchers/*āšipu*, the most prominent Babylonian scholar and representative of Babylonian polytheistic culture par excellence.

Because of the concentration of cuneiform knowledge in one professional who enjoyed high social position, it seems that for the Jewish priests in Babylonia the *āšipu* epitomized the whole scribal polytheistic culture and religion. Thus the critique and denigration of his role was directed not so much against his scribal knowledge but rather against his exercise of that knowledge in the polytheistic context.⁴⁴ Considering therefore the social and religious context of the myth and the use of the metaphor of fornication in the Old Testament, the fornication with women in the myth arises to a metaphor of particular type of apostasy, that is idolatry. Since the existence of the God of Israel as the only God is assumed, the critique of the *āšipu* and of Babylonian scribal culture that he represented demanded a transfer of the drama within the confines of Jewish religion. The inspiration provided the text of Gen 6:1-2,4 where the sons of God are said to mate with women and father *gibbōrîm*, but the application of that text to the *āšipu* resulted from the interpretive approach of the Jewish priests. The defilement of the Watchers in *1 En.* 7:1 (μαίνεσθαι) does not proceed from Gen 6,1-2,4, and appears as the open critique of priestly status of the *āšipu*, and as the reason of successive appearance of all sorts of evil on the earth. In the Old Testament uncleanness טמא, often translated by the Greek verb

⁴³ Note, however, that in Num 25:1 the verb זנה has a masculine subject, that is the whole of Israel. This use stems most probably from the presentation of Israel in other texts as an unfaithful woman towards her husband, that is God.

⁴⁴ Note, however, the term כשפו “witchcraft, sorcery” in the list of scribal crafts in *1 En.* 8:3 (4Q201 frg. 1 iv 2), which clearly indicates an attempt at associating the *āšipu* with witchcraft and sorcery, against which the activity of the Babylonian exorcist was directed. Thus the addition of this term to the list constitutes a clear attempt at denigrating the Babylonian scholar who is accused of practicing black magic. Note that in *1 En.* 98:15-99:1 the language that describes those who err echoes a critique of idolatry, see Black 1985, 303; Nickelsburg 2001: 488; cf. also 104:9-10 and Black’s (1985, 317-18) comment. *1 En.* 99:6-9 describes idolatrous sinners who worship phantoms and demons not according to knowledge. The term “knowledge” (ἐπιστήμη) here denotes religious principles opposed to idolatry or which certainly does not cause idolatry. In this respect Watchers’ knowledge in *1 En.* 6-11 as being impure does not have this quality. The description of the sinners in 99:6-9 may be interpreted as a critique of the Babylonian *āšipu* who took an active part in the creation of cult images, cf. the Mesopotamian *Miṣ pî* ritual and the role of the *āšipu* as its main officiant (Walker and Dick 2001).

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μαίνω,⁴⁵ is frequently presented as a result of idolatry (Ezek 20:7, 18, 30-31; 22:3-4; 23:7, 30; 36:16-18; 37:23), and the Greek term ἀκαθαρσία that describes in the myth the desolate state of the earth (*I En.* 10:11, 20, 22; cf. 5:4) stands in close connection with idolatry in the Septuagint translation.⁴⁶

It is not difficult to see that Watchers' defilement causes the spread of evil on the earth. Such a development is not surprising, for the Old Testament states that idolatrous practices pollute not only its practitioners but the land as well. Lev 18:21-24 states that illicit cultic and sexual practices lead to the defilement of the earth and to the expulsion of its inhabitants (cf. Lev 20:5-6). In a similar way Jeremiah (3:1-3, 9) claims that the land has been polluted by harlotry of Israel and Judah, that is by their idolatrous practices (cf. Isa 24:5; Num 35:33-34; Ps 106:38, pollution of the earth by shedding of blood). The sexual intercourse with women is defined in the myth as fornication. As already stated earlier in this research, the metaphor of fornication in the Old Testament is often related with the defilement of Israel as a result of their idolatry (e.g. Ezek 23:7; Jer 2:23-25; 13:27), and Israel or Judah are presented as idolatrous harlots (e.g. Jer 3:3; Ezek 16:30, 31, 35, 41; 23:44; Jer 2:20; 5:7; Mic 1:7).

The detailed analysis of the whole set of relations between Old Testament sexual metaphors that express relation to idolatry and idolatry itself would take too much space to be presented here. However, in order to add a last argument in favor of the interpretation of sexual defilement as a metaphor of idolatry it seems fruitful to attract the attention to the final part of the myth. After the announcement of the flood and intervention of the four angels (*I En.* 10:1-15), humanity is restored to its pristine state of fruitfulness and blessedness (*I En.* 10:16-11:2). Concerning the relationship between humanity and God, the text in *I En.* 10:21 presents the vision of the conversion of all the nations to God.⁴⁷ This conversion will entail their worshipping (λατρεύοντες) God, blessing him (εὐλογοῦντες), and prostrating themselves

⁴⁵ E.g. Gen 34:5, 13, 27; Lev 5:3; 11:24, 43, 44; 13:3, 8, 11; etc. Of course, behind the infinitive μαίνεσθαι one should posit an Aramaic verb, most probably סאב, see 4Q201 frg. 1 iv 22 in Milik 1976: 158. The meaning, however, remains unchanged, see סאב (*itpa'el*) "to become ritually unclean", Sokoloff 1990, 364; Sokoloff 2002, 782.

⁴⁶ See Ezek 7:20 (גדף); 36:17 (טמא), 25 (טמא), 29 (טמא); Jer 19:13 (טמא); 39:34 (= 32:34 טמא); Ezra 6:21 (טמא); 9:11 (טמא). Since in the OT there exists the equation of sexual pollution with idolatry, some texts apply the metaphor of pollution by contact with a menstruating woman to idolatry as well, e.g. Ezek 7:20; 36:17; later interpretations of the Watchers' sin follow the same lead, and this is why in *I En.* 15:4 Watchers are said to be defiled by women's blood.

⁴⁷ Nickelsburg (2001, 228) notes the parallels with prophetic literature (Isa 66:18-23), but he wrongly assumes that the conversion of all the nations and their worship of God described in *I En.* 10:21 takes place in Jerusalem. The text does not mention Jerusalem at all, and the stress is laid on the universal character of the future cult of God of Israel.

(προσκυνοῦντες) before him by all the nations. These three participles indicate that the cult of the God of Israel is meant, with the exclusions of all other gods. Thus the vision of beatific future presents the opposing picture of idolatrous apostasy metaphorically expressed by the sexual defilement of the Watchers and subsequent degradation of the earth and humanity.

Such an interpretation of the conversions of all the nations to the God of Israel is additionally strengthened when one analyzes the joint use of the two verbs “to worship” (λατρεύω) and “to prostrate oneself” (προσκυνέω) in the Septuagint, where they are always found in relation to idolatry. In the biblical text these two verbs are used in negated sentences in order to prohibit the cult of idols (Exod 20:5; 23:24; Deut 4:19; 5:9; 8:19; 11:16; Josh 23:7; 2 Kgs 17:35), or in affirmative sentences to describe past, present, or future apostasy from the God of Israel, which will consist in worshipping and prostrating before idols (Deut 17:3; 29:25; 30:17; Josh 23:16; Judg 2:19; 2 Kgs 17:16; 21:21; 2 Chr 7:19). Of particular interest is the use of the two verbs in the book of Daniel where λατρεύω translates the Aramaic פלל, while προσκυνέω – סגד (Dan 3:12, 14, 18, 28 [LXX 3:95]);⁴⁸ it is highly probable that these two verbs were used in the Aramaic original of *I En.* 10:21. In Daniel 3 the subject of these two verbs are Daniel and his companions who refuse to worship Babylonian gods and the golden statue set up by Nebuchadnezzar, exposing themselves to the wrath of the king. Thus while in the biblical account the two verbs used together denote idolatrous practices, in *I En.* 10:21 they exclusively refer to the cult of the only God. This contrast indicates once more that the author of the myth was creatively transforming the biblical tradition and its vocabulary, adapting them to his beatific vision of a world without idolatry.

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⁴⁸ Except for Dan 6:27 where for λατρεύω we find פחד “to fear,” while for προσκυνέω there stands זעזע “to tremble” in the MT; a different *Vorlage*?

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