OLD TESTAMENT
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FOREWORD BY
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Papias, bishop of Hierapolis (after 69 C.E.–middle of the second cent. C.E.), in his lost work *Interpretations of the Sayings of the Lord* (written about 100 C.E. according to the scholarly consensus) quoted many ancient Christian and Jewish pre-Christian traditions which are now partially accessible through the preserved fragments. One such tradition goes back to a Jewish source standing at odds with almost the whole corpus of pseudepigraphic testimonies on the Watchers and relying on the authority of the prophet Daniel.

According to this peculiar tradition, the Watchers are the warriors of Michael who were helpful to humanity and, in particular, transmitted to it the Law and the prophetic knowledge.

Papias gives us no information about his literary source. It is easy to see, however, that this source had nothing to do with either the canonical Book of Daniel or any other known Danielic pseudepigraphon.

**Manuscripts and Versions**

The testimony of Papias subsists within the series of the fragments of his *Interpretations of the Sayings of the Lord* in the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* [of John] by Andrew, bishop of Caesarea (563–637), written in the seventh century. Both Papias and Andrew were writing in Greek.

Andrew of Caesarea's text is the most popular commentary on the Apocalypse in the Eastern Church, and so it is preserved in many Greek manuscripts and in Armenian, Georgian, and Church Slavonic versions. Among these versions, the Armenian one is of special interest (the Slavonic one being an exact rendering of the known Greek text and the Georgian one being so far unpublished and unstudied). It contains, in the part dedicated to Rev 12:9, two paragraphs (according to its *editio princeps* of Jerusalem, 1855), almost completely lost in the known Greek recension and its Slavonic version. This part

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3. This commentary on the Apocalypse is preceded in the Byzantine tradition by that of Oecumenius (ca. 600 C.E.) to whom Andrew of Caesarea owes very much. Critical edition and study: M. de Groote, *Oecumenii Commentarius in Apocalypsin* (Traditio exegetica graeca 8; Louvain: Peeters, 1999).
5. The Georgian version is dated to 978 and belongs to a great Georgian scholar and translator Euthymius of Athos. The quotes from Papias in this version must be studied in the future.
was republished in 1981 by Fölker Siegert who added two Vienna manuscripts to the three of Jerusalem already used by the Armenian editors. Among the earliest manuscripts, one is dated to 1306, another one is datable to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. All five manuscripts are identical in the part relevant to our Papias quote.

The quality of the Armenian version is excellent. It was prepared in about 1179 during the short period when the Armenian Church was on the edge of the union with that of Byzantium. The translator is Constantine, bishop of Hierapolis, who was acting on demand of the Catholicos (the head of the Armenian Church) Nerses of Lambron. Therefore, this translation itself was an act of the high Church politics. This is important to know because this is an argument for evaluating the quality of the manuscript of the Greek original. The quality of such a manuscript must be high.

In a paper dedicated to the differences between the Greek and the Armenian texts of Andrew of Caesarea, I reached the conclusion that the known Greek recension is secondary in comparison with the lost Greek original of the Armenian one. Two paragraphs of the original text of Andrew representing an archaic and hardly understandable tradition for late Byzantium exegesis were excluded from the Greek but preserved in Armenian. Among these two paragraphs only the first contains a quote from Papias, while the second one is an original text of Andrew himself. Therefore, it is only the first paragraph that will be dealt with below.

There is one phrase within the Papias quote which is preserved also in Greek, while in the known Greek recension of Andrew of Caesarea it would be impossible to determine that its source is Papias rather than Andrew himself. However, this phrase, attested in both Greek and Armenian, does not belong to the Danielic pseudepigraphon we are interested in.

Contents
We shall limit ourselves to an analysis of the Danielic tradition only, without its framework in Papias.

Although the intercession of the angels in the revelation of the Law to Moses at Sinai is a well-known early Christian tradition going back to a pre-Christian Jewish milieu, any specific role of Michael in this process is almost unknown (we shall survey exceptions). As to the Watchers, their intercession at Sinai is not only at odds with the mainstream Jewish and Christian traditions, but goes against the well-established and prevailing tradition in both Jewish and Christian worlds identifying them as the begetters of the Giants by mortal women and revealers of forbidden arts to humanity. This tradition starting from 1 Enoch (the Book of the Watchers [cf. the Book of Giants], both perhaps as early as the third cent. B.C.E.) and going through the Qumranic texts, ends with the Middle Age Byzantine historiographers, thus becoming a part of the trivial medieval knowledge. By the
way, this is, in my opinion, the reason why our fragment was cut off from the Greek text of Andrew's Commentary.

No doubt there were in Second Temple Judaism some movements where the Watchers were not painted only in black. For instance, in Jub. 4:15 they came down to earth in order "to do justice," in contrast to 1 Enoch where they taught humanity to do bad things. Nevertheless, in Jub. 7:21 the standard story of their fall with the women took place, and this "place" is before the Flood, that is, long before Moses. Moreover, in 2 Enoch 18, some unfallen Watchers are depicted as inhabitants of the fifth heaven; however, they are quite passive and are instructed themselves by Enoch.9

In our Papias fragment the image of the Watchers is not only absolutely positive, with no connection to Giants, but even crucial for the Old Testament as a whole—because the Watchers, together with Michael, become the intercessors in the revelation of the Law to Moses. This is an independent tradition that should be traced.

Literary Context

There are two early Christian texts, both in Greek, that certainly represent the same tradition. Beside this, there is a third Greek Christian text, not so early (fifth cent.), that has to be read in the light of two previous sources and could in turn shed some light on them both.

The first testimonium belongs to Origen (ca. 185–ca. 254), fragment 109 of his Commentary on Lamentations preserved in the catenae. The author explains the only place in the Christian Greek Bible (that is, not in Aquila or Symmachus) where the term "Watchers" (agrégoroi) occurs, Lam 4:14 LXX: "Her watchers were shaken in the exits, they were defiled with blood. Since they could not help it, they touch their garments."10 The relevant part of the commentary runs as follows: "Watchers the Scripture calls angels, as (it is) in Daniel. And they were those by whom probably the Law has been given to Moses, according to for if the Law spoken by angels... (Heb 2:2)."11

Origen mentions the Watchers in the situation of the reception of the Law by Moses and refers to Daniel. He refers here to the Epistle to the Hebrews, namely, to the theology of angelic intercession that the author of Hebrews was trying to complete by his own concept of the priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek.

Our second source is the Greek title of a pseudepigraphic work called Apocalypse of Moses or Life of Adam and Eve. This title, lacking from all the Oriental and Latin versions of the work, has no internal relation to the text and is considered as a later addition peculiar to the Greek recension.12 However, for us it is an independent source representing some ancient tradition, regardless of its own date. The title in question is: "Story and

9. I am grateful to Richard Bauckham for drawing my attention to this parallel.
11. Origen, Fragmenta in Lamentationes (in catenae), fr. 109, I. 3–5, in Origenes Werke (ed. E. Klostermann; GCS 6; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901), 3:235–78 (quoted according to TLG 2042.011). In all the mss of Heb 2:2 there is "word" (logos) here instead of "law" (nomos); on this variant reading, which is not very Heb 2:2 there is "word" (logos) here instead of "law" (nomos); on this variant reading, which is not very
12. Critical edition: D. A. Bertrand, La vie grecque d'Adam et Ève. Introduction, texte, traduction et commentaire (Recherches intertestamentaires 1; Paris: A. Maisonneuve, 1987). The work is certainly a pre-

References:
- Andrew's Commentary
- 1 Enoch
- 2 Enoch
- Origen's Commentary on Lamentations
- Origen's work on Daniel
- Hebrews
- Apocalypse of Moses or Life of Adam and Eve
- Origen's Fragmenta in Lamentationes
- Hebrew Bible
- Septuagint
- New Testament
- Early Christian literature
- Pseudepigrapha
- Patristic literature
- Critical edition of Origen's work

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Life of Adam and Eve the first-created, revealed by God to Moses his servant, when he received from the hand of the Lord the tablets of the Law of the Covenant, 13 being taught by archangel Michael.

There is no mention of the Watchers or Daniel, but in this case Michael is mentioned as an intercessor between Moses and God at Sinai.

Finally, Michael, Daniel, and even the angels and the citation of Heb 2:2 are gathered together around the figure of Moses at Sinai in the commentary of Theodoret of Cyrrhus (ca. 393–466) on Gal 3:19 (where the Law is said to be "ordained by angels"). This text is especially informative if checked against its more archaic background which is clearly the same as that in the above-quoted commentary by Origen.

After having quoted Heb 2:2, Theodoret continues: "Because the God of all established Michael for them, and this is what blessed Daniel taught us. And to great Moses He [scil., God] promised to send together [with him] to the people an angel (Exodus 32:34)." 14

Let us compare this quote with our first testimoniun from Origen. An angelic intercession at Sinai is explained with the same double reference to Heb 2:2 (quoted explicitly in both cases) and to a "Daniel" (not quoted verbatim, in both cases as well). This is a distinctive mark of a common exegetical tradition. So, if we are still in the same exegetical vein, we have to identify "Michael" and the "angel" of Theodoret with the "Watchers" of Origen — taking into account that, according to our Papias, these "Watchers" are the guard of the same Michael! "Watcher" is replaced by "angel." Such a replacement is an example of the so-called concealment (of one notion by another), a phenomenon which affected very much the whole tradition under study.

It is most probably that Theodoret in the fifth century was the last Father (Andrew of Caesarea taken aside) who referred to an obscure Danielic source attributing to Michael and his angels—Watchers an intercessory role in the revelation of the Law at Sinai.

Now we can reconstruct the skeleton of our source as the following scheme:

1. claiming the authority of Daniel, it
2. describes the revelation of the Law to Moses at Sinai, when
3. Michael and
4. his angelic warriors—Watchers—
5. are the intercessors, and where
6. the Watchers are the helpers of humanity, with no connection to the fallen giants.

**Biblical Connection: Dan 4:14 MT**

Despite the fact that our Danielic source could not be identified with any part of any recension of the canonical Book of Daniel, it has some connection with this book, and especially with one verse, Dan 4:14 MT (Evv 4:17), the relevant part of which is lacking from the Septuagint (cf. its corresponding verse Dan 4:17 LXX), although translated into Greek by Aquila and Symmachus, as well as by Pseudo-Theodotion.

13. On the very peculiar phrase "the Law of the Covenant" known so far only from the Latin and Georgian versions of the Epistles attributed to St. Anthony the Great and also recovered with a great certitude in one place of a Tura papyrus of Didymus the Blind (this is the only case, besides the above, where it is available directly in its Greek original), cf. Lourié, "Papias," 521, note, and Lourié, "An Unknown Danielic Pseudepigraphon"; cf. also G. Couilleau, "L' alliance aux origines du monachisme égyptien," Collectanea Cisterciensia 39 (1977): 170–93.

In its Aramaic original, Dan 4:14 MT runs as follows: “The sentence is rendered by decree of the Watchers, the decision is given by order of the holy ones, in order that all who live may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of mortals; he gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of human beings” (NRSV). Aramaic ‘ir “watchers” is rendered as ἐγρήγοροι by Aquila and Symmachus, transliterated as ir by Pseudo-Theodotion and reinterpreted as ἄγγελος in the Septuagint in two neighbouring verses Dan 4:13, 23 LXX (= 4:10, 20 MT [Evv 4:13, 23]).

Although Dan 4:14 does not mention Moses or the Law revealed at Sinai, its topic is very close: “the sentence” of the Watchers and “the decision” of the holy ones, both on behalf of the Most High.

Indeed, the Book of Daniel is one of the most widely distributed books of the Bible, and so it is difficult to evaluate to what extent our pseudepigraphon was close to the Persian-era Jewish traditions crystallized here.

“Watchers” vs. “The Blind Ones”

We have already noticed that our source where the Watchers are good angelic beings contradicts the mainstream tradition where they fathered the fallen giants. But this is not all.

When comparing above a testimonia from Theodoret with another one from Origen we have seen an elimination of the term “Watcher” replaced by the neutral term “angel.” We have seen as well the same policy in the Septuagint translation of Dan 4. But the ultimate roots of this policy are most probably within the Hebrew Bible — at least, such a hypothesis was put forward by Robert Murray.15

There is a need to recollect some points from Murray’s article. He is working in a well-known field, although with new tools. As it is known, the mentions of (quasi-)divine beings were often excluded, by one means or another, from the Hebrew Bible: for example, Deut 32:43 where the “sons of God”—preserved in LXX and confirmed by Qumran—are deleted from MT. Sometimes, such names—as it was supposed by quite a few scholars—are not deleted, but simply distorted to obtain another meaning with a minimal alteration of the pronunciation. It is possible that the phenomenon of Aramaic-Hebrew bilingualism interfered here. The processes like these affected very much the history of the Aramaic term for “Watcher.”

According to Murray, there was, in ancient Hebrew, a word *‘yr [pronounced as ‘ār / ēr (pl. ‘ārim / ērim)] having the etymological meaning “protect” and designating some protecting deities. As it is especially important, “‘ār / ēr could denote benevolent beings, and so be applied to good angels, obedient to God” (p. 315) — not to the fallen giants, let us add. Then, “like malāk, ‘ār / ēr was adopted in Aramaic, where we find it vocalized ‘r and soon understood as ‘one who keeps awake’ [that is, etymologized as a genuine Aramaic word]” (ibid.). During the process of suppression of the names of the pagan deities, this word became a subject of different changes. Sometimes it was replaced by its (consonantal) homograph “city” (e.g., Mic 5:13 [Evv. 5:14]), other times it was replaced by somewhat similar words with similar meaning relating to angelic/divine beings, e.g., šîr (“messenger” or maybe “intercessor”—as in Isa 63:9, where it is rendered by LXX as presbys in a verse very remarkable for us: “It was no ambassador or angel but the Lord himself that saved them”).16

16. Tr. by Moisés Silva in A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations
Finally, and this is the most original part of Murray’s argument, sometimes the concealment was controlled by the purposes of the satire—“to help laugh them [polytheistic deities] out of people’s hearts.” So, a “mocking substitute” of ārim / ērim appears: it is īwrim “blind ones.” “This would be the origin of the satirical sequence ‘they have eyes and see not,’ etc. (Ps 115:5-7, 135:16-18). Perhaps it was ‘Second Isaiah’ who began the game” (cf. Isa 42:7, 16-19, 43:8, and 44:18) (pp. 312-13). The case of īwrim turned out to be analogous to that of other protecting divinities, psīh (another root with the meaning “protect”), as it is especially evident in 2 Sam 5:6: “...the īwrim and pishim which the Jebusites said would defend them... both refer to protecting deities” (p. 312).

But the textbook case is Lam 4:14, on which, as we have seen, Origen comments: “They have wandered as blind men in the streets” (NRSV), where the MT is “rendered” here as “Her watchers were shaken in the exits” by LXX (pp. 312-13). The only explanation of this fact is that the Hebrew original of LXX had “watchers” instead of “blind ones.”

Two important points emerge from this review of Murray’s study. First, our term īr turns out to be somewhat akin to the term šīr, “messenger,” “intercessor”; sometimes they are even used as synonyms, as in Isa 63:9. This corresponds to the intercessory role of the Watchers in our Danielic source. Even if suppressed and “concealed,” this role is familiar to the biblical literature.

Second, in satirical contexts blindness could be a fitting mocking term for the Watchers who are, by definition, never sleeping and must be always clairvoyant.

The idea that some deities must be punished by blindness is certainly older than its “satirical” applications. What is especially significant to us is that it is already connected to the name of Daniel in Ugarit. Thus, in a prayer of Daniel (Daniel) against ‘Anatu (CTA 19.167-168), we find ‘wr. yšk. b’l. lht. w’lmh: “let Ba’al make thee blind from now and forever.”

Bibliography


Traditionally Included under That Title (ed. A. Pietersma and B. G. Wright; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 872.
A Danielic Pseudepigraphon Paraphrased by Papias

And Papias in his sermon (said) as follows: "The heaven did not bear his (the Dragon's) earthly thoughts, because it is impossible for the light to have communion with darkness. He (the Dragon) was cast out into the earth to live here, and when humanity came where he was, he did not allow (them) to behave according to the natural needs," but led them astray into many evils. But Michael and his warriors who are the Watchers of the universe helped humanity, as Daniel taught, by giving the Law and by making the prophets wise.  

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a. The whole Armenian fragment republished by F. Siegert was translated into German by him and into Russian by me (Lourié, "Papias"). It was translated into English in J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer (editors and translators) and Michael W. Holmes (editor and reviser), The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations of Their Writings (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker, 1992), 763, but this translation is somewhat vague and contains some mistakes which make this translation unsuitable for any research purpose (e.g., in the part of the text quoted below he translates "treatises" [instead of "treatise/sermon"] and "laws" [instead of "Law"] despite the fact that the corresponding Armenian plural forms have normally the meaning of singular). In all the three previous translations, including my own Russian one, there was an important mistake corrected in Lourié, "An Unknown Danielic Pseudepigraphon."

b. Papias uses here a Stoic term "natural needs" unrecognised by the previous students of the fragment. See the full discussion in Lourié, "An Unknown Danielic Pseudepigraphon."