

KINGS BEFORE THE FLOOD

AMONG the valuable texts published by Dr. Poebel in Volume V of the Publications of the Babylonian Section of the Museum there is a list of long-lived kings. Their names and the lengths of their reigns are as follows.

Galumum: reigned 900 years.

Zugagib: reigned 840 years.

Arip^{*} (or Ademe), son of Mashgag: 720 years.

Etana, the shepherd, who went to heaven, who subdued all lands: reigned 635 years.

Pilikam: reigned 350 years.

Enmenunna: reigned 611 years.

Melamkish: reigned 900 years.

Barsalnunna: reigned 1200 years.

Meskingashir: reigned 325 years.

Enmeirgan[†]: reigned 420 years.

Lugalbanda: reigned 1200 years.

Dumuzi: reigned 100 years.

Gilgamesh: reigned 126 years.

In addition to these the name Mes(?)zamu appears, but the number of his years is lost.

The lengths of the reigns of these kings at once suggest the lengths of the lives of the antediluvian patriarchs in the Fifth Chapter of Genesis. Dr. Poebel in his important volume of Historical Texts treats these kings as kings who lived after the flood, regarding them as distinct from the patriarchs of Genesis and the antediluvian kings of Berossos. While this view may be right, another view is possible, and seems to me more probable. The summary at the end of the longer king-list published by Dr. Poebel betrays no consciousness that life upon the earth had been interrupted by a flood. The writer appears to have thought that he was tracing Babylonian kings from the beginning of time. More-

^{*} Dr. Poebel reads the first sign *Ar*, but in one tablet both the photograph and his copy suggest the reading given above, though the tablet itself is so crumbled that the original writing cannot in any way be determined from it. In a second copy in the Museum published by Dr. Poebel as Number 3, the beginning of the name has also been erased from the tablet.

[†] Dr. Poebel reads Enmeirkar, but the last sign has both the values *kar* and *gan*.

over, the names of a number of these kings when translated from Sumerian into Semitic have the same meanings as names which occur in the Fifth Chapter of Genesis. Thus Enmenunna means "exalted man," in Semitic, Mutu-elu, or translated in one word, Amelu. Enosh in the Fifth Chapter of Genesis means also *man*. Again Pilikam translated into Semitic becomes Ina-uzni-erešu meaning, *with intelligence to build* or in one word, *artificer*. Kenan of the Hebrew list means also "artificer." Dumuzi of the Sumerian, when translated into Semitic, becomes Apal-*napisti* or *son of life*. Jared of the Fifth Chapter of Genesis means *descendant*. In these names the book of Genesis gives in Hebrew the same meaning that the Sumerian bears. Three other names of the Fifth Chapter of Genesis appear to be Hebrew corruptions of translations of these Sumerian names into Semitic Babylonian: thus Barsalnunna becomes in Semitic Babylonian, *Šihu-elu* of which *Seth* is the Hebrew form of the first syllable. Enmeirgan becomes in Semitic Babylonian *Mutu-šalal-gan* of which Mahalalel might well be a corruption. Meskingashir becomes *Mutu-ša-etu* or *elu* with which Methusalah is almost identical. Naturally one looks for Enoch in the person of Etana, the shepherd who went to heaven, and there are two possible ways in which the name Enoch might become attached to Etana. In Sumerian the words *to heaven* are *an-shu*. This *shu* is also sometimes pronounced *ku*. If pronounced by a Semite Anku, Enoch becomes a natural Hebrew corruption of it. Dr. Poebel has, however, supposed that the equivalent of Enoch in the list of Berossos is a corruption of the name Enmeduranki, a king of Sippar, who is said in a ritual text to have first learned the method of taking omens from oil poured on water. Enmeduranki means in Sumerian, *the hero who binds together heaven and earth*. In the early dynastic tablets, the kings of Kish and of Sippar, or Agade, are the same. Etana is in our tablet said to be a king of Kish. As he went to heaven, it is probable that he may have been called the hero who binds together heaven and earth. If thus we derive the name Enoch from Anki, the last two syllables of the Sumerian name Enmeduranki, we are probably deriving it from an epithet of Etana. Both the name and the character of Etana therefore, correspond to those of Enoch.

Again the name Aripī might be read Ademe, and possibly was so read by the Sumerians themselves. Ademe is almost identical in sound with the Hebrew Adam. Lamech may possibly be

a corruption of Melamkish. If the first and last letters of the Sumerian wore away Melamkish would become Lamech. Langdon has, however, suggested that Lamech is the Sumerian deity Lumga whose symbol in Sumerian is that of the carpenter. It is possible that the name of Lumga may have been combined with a corruption of *Melamkish*. This seems all the more probable since in the Fourth Chapter of Genesis Lamech is said to have been the ancestor of workers in metal, the inventors of music and of other arts of civilization.

When now we combine the evidence of the similarity of the names with the similarity of the ages of the antediluvian patriarchs to the lengths of the reigns of these old Babylonian kings, it seems highly probable that the list of kings was the source from which the names of the patriarchs were originally derived. To this it may naturally be objected that the number of the names of the Babylonian kings recorded in the tablet is greater than the number of antediluvian patriarchs, although the tablet is broken and the names which it originally contained were considerably larger than those which we can now read. This objection, however, is not as significant as it first appears, for there is evidence that the biblical writers employed a method of selection. For example, the names which fill the first nine chapters of the first book of Chronicles are derived from the earlier books of the Old Testament, but those chapters of Chronicles are formed by selecting names here and there from the earlier books without copying all which those books contained. Again, in the genealogy of Jesus in the First Chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, three of Israel's kings are omitted, namely Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah. It may well be, therefore, that the names in the Fifth Chapter of Genesis were selected from a Babylonian list without taking all that that list contained.

It has long been recognized by critical scholars that the names of the descendants of Cain in the Fourth Chapter of Genesis are identical with the names of the descendants of Seth in the Fifth Chapter. Naturally, therefore, it can be shown that the names of the descendants of Cain can also be derived from our list of Babylonian kings. It can also be shown that the majority of the names in the list of Berossos were taken from this same source.*

*The writer is publishing an exhaustive treatment of the subject in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*.

As we compare the three lists of names which seem to be dependent upon this Babylonian source, the following differences may be traced. In Genesis IV the only names added to those derived from the Babylonian list are the names of the three sons of Lamech: Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal and of his daughter, Naami. These four names are all allegorical names descriptive of the pleasure derived from civilizing inventions. They all originated in Hebrew so that it is clear that the author of the Fourth Chapter of Genesis employed no Babylonian name after Lamech. The author of this chapter made no use of the large numbers of years which the Babylonian kings are said to have reigned. Modern scholars attribute the Fourth Chapter of Genesis to a writer who, like the author of the Babylonian king list, betrays no consciousness that the life of the world had been interrupted by a flood.

The author of the Fifth Chapter of Genesis shows in other parts of his work that he was greatly interested in the length of time that different people lived. He, therefore, taking a suggestion from the large number of years attached to the reigns of the Babylonian kings, gives us the great ages of the antediluvian patriarchs. He also embodied in the document the account of the flood and he consequently adds to the list of patriarchal names derived from the Babylonian tablet, the name of the hero of the flood, Noah, who is identical with Ut-napishtim and Ziugiddu who in Babylonian sources was the hero of the flood. The name of this hero is not, however, found in the names of the Babylonian list of kings.

Berossos, who lived in the third century B.C., has gone in two respects a step further. He not only has the name of the hero of the deluge but he has substituted for the name Lamech Ubaratutu, the name of Ut-napishtim's father. He also increased the lengths of the reigns of the kings who ruled, he says, before the deluge from the mere hundreds of years assigned to them in the Babylonian king list to tens of thousands of years each, so that he makes the time covered by the reigns of ten monarchs 432,000 years.

It will thus be seen that if the views set forth in this note are tenable, this tablet from Nippur is a very interesting and important source both for the Old Testament and for the traditions embodied in Berossos.

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