

Bartosz Adamczewski

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw / Stellenbosch University
ORCID: 0000-0001-7847-0203

Noah's Ark and the Ark of the Covenant

Abstract: The similarities between Noah's ark and the saving boat in Mesopotamian flood accounts are widely known. Likewise known are the links between Noah's ark and the chest of Moses (Exod 2:3). However, the connections between the "chest" of Noah and the "chest" of the testimony have not hitherto drawn adequate scholarly attention. The article explores these connections on both the linguistic and the conceptual level. Moreover, it investigates their function in hypertextual links of the Genesis flood account to earlier Israelite literary works, especially the book of Deuteronomy and the book of Joshua.

Keywords: Noah's ark, ark of the covenant, Genesis flood account (Genesis 6–9), book of Genesis, book of Deuteronomy, hypertextuality

1. Noah's Ark, the Mesopotamian Flood Boat, and the Chest of Moses

The discovery of Mesopotamian flood accounts and their similarities to the Genesis flood account paved the way to critical analyses of the biblical flood story against the background of Ancient Near Eastern literature. Numerous scholars have explored the connections between the Genesis flood story and the Mesopotamian flood accounts.¹ Therefore, there is no need to reiterate their conclusions here. What has not hitherto been sufficiently explained is the reason for the significant differences which can be observed between the biblical description of the saving boat and its Mesopotamian parallels. If the biblical author knew and used some versions of the

¹ See, e.g., H.S. Kvanvig, *Primeval History*, 209–233; J. Day, "Genesis Flood Narrative," 104–112; A. Norsker, "Genesis 6,5–9,17."

Mesopotamian flood story, which seems undeniable, then why did he change so many details in it?

Another, this time biblical parallel to the Genesis flood story can be found in the Exodus story of saving the little Moses in a chest on the water of the Nile (Exod 2:3–5), which on its part reflects the Birth Legend of Sargon of Akkad.² The conceptual connections between these texts, which describe saving the main hero from impending death in a pitched container on the water, are fairly evident. Even more evident is the linguistic connection between the Genesis account and the Exodus account, provided by the common and, moreover, distinctive in the Bible use of the key term תבה, in both texts referring to the saving chest (Gen 6:14–9:18; Exod 2:3.5).³ However, also in this case the differences between the Genesis and Exodus stories, on both conceptual and linguistic levels, are numerous and significant. If these stories are somehow related to each other, which seems undeniable at least on the linguistic level,⁴ why did the author of the Genesis flood account not make it more similar to the Exodus story?

These intriguing questions can be answered if another biblical story, namely, that of the construction of the ark of the covenant is also taken into consideration in the analysis of the Genesis flood account.

2. Striking Similarities Between Noah's Chest and the Chest of the Testimony

The saving boat in the Epic of Gilgamesh was a perfect cube, with equal width, length, and height (cf. Epic of Gilgamesh XI 29–30, 58–59).⁵ This surprising shape of the Mesopotamian flood vessel can be explained as reflecting its perfection. It is true that the version

² Cf. M. Gerhards, *Aussetzungsgeschichte*, 234–249; D. Mathews, *Royal Motifs*, 87–90; C. Dohmen, *Exodus 1–18*, 114–116.

³ Cf. P.N. Tarazi, *Genesis*, 97–98.

⁴ Cf. W.H. Schmidt, *Exodus*, vol. 1, 68–69; J. Lemański, *Księga Wyjścia*, 118; C. Dohmen, *Exodus 1–18*, 113.

⁵ Cf. A.R. George, *Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, vol. 1, 510, 512; J. Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju*, vol. 1, 363, 365. Cf. also A.J. Obidowicz, “Arka Noego,” 229–235.

of Berossus refers to a prolonged raft.⁶ However, the relationship between this version and the Genesis story is unclear: it is possible that it is dependent on the Genesis account.⁷ Accordingly, the difference between the Genesis prolonged “chest” and the Mesopotamian perfect cube is striking.

On the other hand, the Genesis image of a rectangular, prolonged chest (Gen 6:14–15)⁸ closely corresponds to the Exodus image of the rectangular, prolonged chest⁹ (traditionally: “ark”) of the covenant (Exod 25:10). In addition to this basic conceptual correspondence, there are numerous linguistic connections between the two accounts.

In the Genesis account, God commands Noah to make (עשה) a chest (Gen 6:14). Likewise in the Exodus account, Yahweh commands the Israelites to make (עשה) a chest (Exod 25:10). The noun referring to the chest is in both accounts syntagmatically followed by the same noun in *status constructus*, pointing to the material of which it should be made, namely, wood (עצי), and then by a noun referring to a particular kind of wood.¹⁰ In Genesis, it is “gopher” wood (Gen 6:14); in Exodus, it is acacia wood (Exod 25:10). This particular chain of four words and concepts (עשה + chest + עצי + kind of wood) is common to both Gen 6:14 and Exod 25:10, but it is absent in the Epic of Gilgamesh, which quite naturally refers to building a boat (Epic of Gilgamesh XI 24, 28).

In both stories, the command to make a chest is supplemented with a description of its prescribed dimensions. In Genesis, God's command concerning the chest states that a certain number of cubits (אמה) should be its length (ארך), a certain number of cubits (אמה) should be its width (רחב), and a certain number of cubits (אמה) should be its height (קומה: Gen 6:15). Likewise in Exodus, Yahweh's

⁶ Cf. J. Day, “The Flood and the Ten Antediluvian,” 67; J. Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju*, vol. 1, 363.

⁷ Pace R.E. Gmirkin, *Berossus and Genesis*, 89–139, 240–249, who argues that Genesis was dependent on Berossus' *Babyloniaca*, which forces him to date Genesis very late, to c. 273–272 BC.

⁸ Cf. J. Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju*, vol. 1, 365, 379; M. Majewski, *Pięcioksiąg*, 189.

⁹ Cf. J. Lemański, *Księga Wyjścia*, 534.

¹⁰ Cf. M. Majewski, *Pięcioksiąg*, 192.

command concerning the chest states that a certain number of cubits (אמה) should be its length (ארך), a certain number of cubits (אמה) should be its width (רוחב), and a certain number of cubits (אמה) should be its height (קמה: Exod 25:10).¹¹ Again, this motif of counting the dimensions of the chest in cubits, common to both Gen 6:15 and Exod 25:10, is absent in Epic of Gilgamesh XI 58–59.

Moreover, both accounts contain similar commands concerning overlaying the wooden chest with a certain impermeable material “on the inside and on the outside” (מבית ומחוץ).¹² In Genesis, it is pitch (Gen 6:14); in Exodus, it is pure gold (Exod 25:11). This particular linguistic motif is again absent in Epic of Gilgamesh XI 66–76. Moreover, in this Mesopotamian account, unlike the Genesis story, the material used for waterproofing the boat outside (bitumen) is quite naturally different from that used inside (oil). In fact, it is rather strange that Noah’s chest is covered with pitch also on the inside, so that humans and animals which live in it must have constant direct contact with pitch. Accordingly, the Genesis account is here strikingly similar to the Exodus account, and it notably differs from its Mesopotamian background.

Likewise, both accounts contain similar commands to make (עשה) a covering for the chest, which should have a certain number of cubits (אמה) of dimension, and which should be placed above the chest (מלמעלה). In Genesis, it is probably a roof (Gen 6:16); in Exodus, it is the atonement (Exod 25:17.21).¹³

At this point, there is a striking linguistic and possibly also conceptual similarity between the two accounts. In the Genesis story, Noah is told to cover the chest with pitch (Gen 6:14). However, in contrast to the conceptually similar account of making a chest for Moses, this impermeable covering material is not called חמר (“bitumen”) or זפת (“pitch”: Exod 2:3) but כפר (“pitch”: Gen 6:14), similarly to Epic of Gilgamesh XI 55, 66 (*kupru*). Moreover, apparently in order to make this linguistic feature more striking to the audience, the same root כפר is also used in the same sentence in the

¹¹ Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 173; M. Majewski, *Pięcioksiąg*, 192.

¹² Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 173.

¹³ Cf. J. Lemański, *Księga Wyjścia*, 535–536.

gal form of the denominative verb כָּפַר (“to pitch”: Gen 6:14), which is a *hapax legomenon* in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁴ The resulting phrase is striking: “pitch it with pitch” (כָּפַר + כָּפַר: Gen 6:14). Moreover, it clearly differs from the quite natural expression in Epic of Gilgamesh XI 66 (“I poured pitch”). In this striking way, the Genesis command linguistically corresponds to the Exodus command concerning making the atonement (כַּפֶּרֶת), made of the material covering the chest on the inside and on the outside (cf. Exod 25:11), that is, pure gold (Exod 25:17), and placing it above the chest (Exod 21:21).

This connection is probably not merely linguistic but also conceptual. In contrast to the natural expectations of the reader (cf. Epic of Gilgamesh XI 66), the pitch (כָּפַר: Gen 6:14) makes Noah's chest impermeable not merely to water, which is referred to only later in the story (Gen 6:17; 7:4.10). The immediately preceding context suggests that it rather makes the chest impermeable to the corruption/destruction of the earth, which is described immediately before the command to make the chest (Gen 6:11–13). In the same way, pure gold (Exod 25:11) and the atonement (Exod 25:17.21) make the chest of the testimony impermeable to moral-ritual impurity and sin.

Another striking, this time purely conceptual connection between the two accounts is provided in the description of the contents of the chest. The Genesis account is very enigmatic at this point. The initial command refers to making “nests,”¹⁵ so presumably compartments in the chest (Gen 6:14). They are later described as the lowest ones, the second ones, and the third ones (Gen 6:16).

The number of the levels of compartments is surprising. In the saving boat from the Epic of Gilgamesh, there were seven storeys (Epic of Gilgamesh XI 62). Seven is a perfect number, which corresponds to the perfect cuboid form of the boat and to the number of the storeys of a Mesopotamian zikkurat.¹⁶ In the Genesis account, there are only three storeys (Gen 6:16),¹⁷ although the number seven

¹⁴ Cf. J. Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju*, vol. 1, 379.

¹⁵ Cf. Ł. Laskowski, *Motyw potopu*, 27, 98.

¹⁶ Cf. A.R. George, *Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, vol. 1, 513; J. Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju*, vol. 1, 379.

¹⁷ Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 174; E. Zajac, *Potop*, 42; Ł. Laskowski, *Motyw potopu*, 98.

is evidently important in the following parts of the story: seven pairs of all clean animals (Gen 7:2), seven pairs of birds (Gen 7:3), seven days of waiting for the flood (Gen 7:4.10), and seven days between the instances of sending the dove (Gen 8:10.12).¹⁸ The Genesis account suggests that the three storeys in the chest are separated from each other by two horizontally laid decks, and not by six decks, as was the case in Epic of Gilgamesh XI 61.

Moreover, the way of counting the three storeys in the Genesis account is also striking. First of all, in Epic of Gilgamesh XI 62, quite naturally, only the total number of storeys was given, whereas in Gen 6:16 the storeys are individually counted one after another. Besides, the decks on a ship, presumably partly located under the waterline (cf. Epic of Gilgamesh XI 80), are normally counted downwards from the main deck, which is above the waterline: the main deck, the middle deck, and the lower deck. In Gen 6:16 the compartments are not explicitly named, but only referred to as “the lowest ones, the second ones, and the third ones.”¹⁹ Accordingly, they are surprisingly counted as storeys upwards, although the description of the chest in the immediately preceding context runs from above downwards (Gen 6:16).

This enigmatic and striking way of counting the storeys, which are separated from each other by two horizontally laid decks, from the lowest one upwards (Gen 6:16), corresponds to the Exodus account of making the chest of the testimony (Exod 25:10–22), with the testimony placed in it (Exod 25:16.21). In particular, the two horizontally laid decks within the chest, described from the lower one upwards (Gen 6:16), correspond to the two tablets of the testimony (Exod 31:18), which were presumably put within the portable chest (Exod 25:14) in a horizontal way, one above the other (like shirts in a suitcase),²⁰ so from the lower one upwards. In this way, they divided the interior

¹⁸ Cf. J. Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju*, vol. 1, 366.

¹⁹ Cf. V.P. Hamilton, *Genesis*, vol. 1, 282.

²⁰ It should be noted that the texts Deut 4:13; 10:4 do not imply that the ten words were somehow divided between the two tablets. They rather suggest that the ten words were written twice, on each of the two tablets. Therefore, the tablets should be imagined as placed not one beside the other (□□) but rather one above the other (⇒). Cf. B. Adamczewski, *Deuteronomy–Judges*, 77 n. 88.

of the chest into three spaces, naturally counted from the lowest one upwards.

All these linguistic and conceptual correspondences between the Genesis description of Noah's chest (Gen 6:14–16) and the Exodus description of the chest of the testimony (Exod 25:10–22; cf. 31:18), together with the significant differences between the Genesis account and its parallels in Mesopotamian flood accounts as well as the birth story of Moses, strongly suggest that Noah's chest should be regarded as reflecting important features of the chest of the testimony.

3. The Function of the Allusions to the Ark of the Covenant in the Genesis Flood Account

The book of Genesis is a result of continuous, sequentially arranged, hypertextual, that is, highly creative reworking of the book of Deuteronomy. In fact, there are around 1000 conceptual and times also linguistic correspondences between both works, which follow the same sequential pattern.

These sequentially arranged correspondences begin with the opening account of dividing the world into two realms of unequal cultic value, the land being wilderness, counting one and more days, being in a sanctuary, the humans being numerous, commanding the humans, bringing a bipartite army to an end, enacting the (Sabbath) law, the land being dry, making the humans move, making the humans enter the paradisiacal land which reached the River Euphrates, finding a helper to the man, the humans being tempted to know themselves the good and the bad features of the land, taking the fruit of the land and giving it to others, hiding themselves before Yahweh, being weak and afraid of Yahweh, Yahweh being angry with the sinful humans and cursing them, turning back to the wilderness, being expelled from the paradisiacal land, remaining in a sanctuary, dealing with a weaker brother, etc.

They culminate in the final blessings for the twelve tribes/sons of Israel (with the repeated, most elaborate blessing for Joseph), longing for the land of Canaan, the land belonging to Abraham and his descendants, the main hero dying in the exile, preserving the main hero's body as alive, weeping for the main hero, the main hero

(now Joseph) resembling the merciful and comforting Yahweh, being active in Egypt, God doing wonders in Egypt, the main hero having a bony hand, and the terrifying might of the main hero being visible.²¹

Accordingly, the modern scholarly division of the contents of the book of Genesis into Priestly and non-Priestly documents, traditions, materials, or layers is misleading.²² For example, the set of evidently mutually correlated yet different genealogies contained in Gen 4:17–5:32 does not reflect the use of any sources, but sequentially illustrates the set of ideas of Deut 2:9–18, especially the idea of a new, obedient generation of the Israelites replacing the old generation of the sinful “men of war,” who lived for a limited number of years.²³

Likewise, after the subsequent sections concerning forbidden unions (Gen 6:1–3; Deut 2:19) and prehistoric giants (Gen 6:4; Deut 2:20–23), the flood account (Gen 6:5–8:19) sequentially illustrates the Deuteronomic account of the Israelite invasion and conquest of Transjordan (Deut 2:24–3:12b). In fact, the metaphor of the flood is an old military metaphor. It was repeatedly used in the Hebrew Bible to present an army invading a certain territory as a destroying flood (Isa 8:7–8; Jer 46:7–8; 47:2–3; Dan 9:26; 11:10.40; etc.). In Gen 6:5–8:19 this military metaphor was conflated with the widely known Mesopotamian motif of a destructive flood of waters and with the Deutero-Isaianic motif of the water of Noah, related to Yahweh swearing that the water of Noah will never again pass over the earth (עוד + על־הארץ + נה + מים: Gen 6:17; 7:6; 8:21–22; etc.; cf. Isa 54:9).²⁴

The reworking of the Deuteronomic account of the Israelite invasion and conquest of Transjordan (Deut 2:24–3:12b) in the Genesis flood account (Gen 6:5–8:19) caused several important changes that the author of Genesis introduced to the Mesopotamian flood account, which was evidently used in Gen 6:5–8:19. For example, in contrast to the quite natural Mesopotamian description of the six days and seven nights of the wind, the downpour, the gale, and the deluge

²¹ See B. Adamczewski, *Genesis*, 37–229.

²² Cf. B. Adamczewski, *Genesis*, 229. Cf. also G. Fischer, “Time for a Change,” 15: “It [“P”] is a *chimera* leading scholars in a false direction.”

²³ Cf. B. Adamczewski, *Genesis*, 61–67. Cf. earlier, somewhat differently, B. Adamczewski, “End of Source Theories,” 34–52.

²⁴ Cf. B. Adamczewski, *Genesis*, 67–76.

(Epic of Gilgamesh XI 128–129), the Genesis account surprisingly first describes forty days and forty nights of rain and flood, and Noah and his relatives passively watching it and entering the chest (Gen 7:4–17a). Only thereafter, it describes Noah's chest rising high above the land and “riding” on the surface of the greatly increasing and apparently militarily triumphing (גבר: cf. Exod 17:11)²⁵ water (Gen 7:17b–18). In this surprising, narratively somewhat inconsistent way, it illustrates the Deuteronomic idea of the Israelites first passively watching the coming out of Sihon and all his people against them for battle at Jahaz (Deut 2:32–33a), and only thereafter militarily defeating him, his sons, and all his people (Deut 2:33b).

Likewise, in contrast to the Mesopotamian account which quite understandably describes some elevated parts of the land as not covered by the flood (Epic of Gilgamesh XI 140–146),²⁶ the subsequent fragment of the Genesis account describes the waters as apparently militarily exceedingly greatly triumphing (גבר: cf. Exod 17:11)²⁷ over all the high (גבה) mountains (Gen 7:19–20). In this surprising way, it illustrates the subsequent Deuteronomic idea of the Israelites capturing all Sihon's cities (Deut 2:34a), which were presumably fortified with high (גבה) walls (cf. Deut 3:5).

Similarly, in contrast to the Mesopotamian flood account, which quite naturally describes the main hero as sending three birds (a dove, a swallow, and a raven: Epic of Gilgamesh XI 148–156), the Genesis flood account describes the sending of only two birds and, moreover, in a surprisingly changed order. The Israelite hero first sent a raven, so an unclean carrion bird (cf. Deut 14:14; Lev 11:13.15; Prov 30:17),²⁸ which kept going to and fro, and then more and more successfully sent a dove, so a clean, peaceful bird (Gen 8:7–12).²⁹ In this way, the fragment Gen 8:7–12 illustrates the Deuteronomic idea of the Israelites militarily taking all the cities in the plain, all Gilead, and

²⁵ Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 182.

²⁶ Cf. A.R. George, *Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, vol. 2, 889.

²⁷ Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 183.

²⁸ Cf. A. Marczewski, “Interpretacja motywu kruka,” 60–61.

²⁹ Cf. G. Fischer, *Genesis 1–11*, 468–469; M. Majewski, “Zwierzęta czyste,” 29.

all Bashan, and then ending the war by subduing all the territory as far as Salcah and Edrei (Deut 3:10).³⁰

Accordingly, the sequentially organized reworking of the Deuteronomic account of the Israelite invasion and conquest of Transjordan (Deut 2:24–3:12b) caused several significant modifications of the Mesopotamian flood account in the Genesis story of the flood (Gen 6:5–8:19). The narrative tensions and inconsistencies in this story, together with the changes introduced to the traditional Mesopotamian flood account, should be explained not by recourse to purely hypothetical, otherwise unattested documents, sources, traditions, materials, or layers (P, non-P, etc.), but by tracing the narratively somewhat imperfect, but sequentially organized illustration of the flow of the Deuteronomic ideas which are contained in Deut 2:24–3:12b.

In this sequentially arranged reworking of the Deuteronomic account of the Israelite invasion and conquest of Transjordan (Deut 2:24–3:12b) in the Genesis flood account (Gen 6:5–8:19), the idea of God commanding Noah to make an ark like the ark of the covenant (Gen 6:14–16) illustrates the Deuteronomic idea of Yahweh commanding Moses to begin (החל: Deut 2:31e).

The subsequent idea of God predicting the future destruction of all flesh in the land and the establishment of a covenant with Noah, presumably in the land, and telling Noah to enter the ark with sons and wives, male and female animals, to let them multiply and live (Gen 6:17–22),³¹ illustrates the subsequent Deuteronomic idea of Yahweh commanding Moses to inherit, presumably the land (רש: Deut 2:31f).³²

³⁰ See B. Adamczewski, *Genesis*, 74–76.

³¹ The final statement concerning Noah doing all these things (Gen 6:22) in fact refers to Noah beginning to do them because almost exactly the same formula as in Gen 6:22 (וַיַּעַשׂ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ אֲתוֹ + כִּן עָשָׂה) cf. also Gen 7:5) is used in Exod 40:16 after the divine instructions (Exod 40:1–15) and before the statements concerning the actual realization of the work (Exod 40:17–33). In this way, the final statement Gen 6:22 again illustrates the Deuteronomic idea of Moses beginning (Deut 2:31e).

³² Cf., alas without the division of Gen 6:14–22 (cf. Deut 2:31ef) into two sequentially arranged sections: Gen 6:14–16 (cf. Deut 2:31e) and Gen 6:17–22 (cf. Deut 2:31f), B. Adamczewski, *Genesis*, 71–72.

The invasion and conquest of the land of Canaan was described in the book of Joshua as beginning with the Israelites following the ark of the covenant, which saved them from the waters of the Jordan (cf. Josh 3:3–4:18) and enabled them to conquer the first city in Canaan, namely, Jericho (Josh 6:4–13). The author of the book of Genesis used the earlier book of Joshua in his literary work.³³

Therefore, knowing the Deuteronomic idea that the invasion and conquest of Transjordan began with crossing over the Wadi Arnon (Deut 2:24), defeating Sihon (Deut 2:32–33), and capturing and utterly destroying all his cities (Deut 2:34) as well as the idea of the book of Joshua that the invasion and conquest of the land of Canaan began in a similar way, namely, by crossing over the Jordan (Josh 3–4) and capturing and utterly destroying the city of Jericho (Josh 6), the author of the book of Genesis supposed that both “beginnings” occurred by following the ark of the covenant and being accompanied by it (cf. Josh 3:3–4:18; 6:4–13). Accordingly, he combined both stories and deduced from them that if Yahweh commanded Moses to begin (Deut 2:31e), presumably to inherit Transjordan (cf. Deut 2:31fg), it must have meant that Moses and the Israelites followed the ark of the covenant, which saved them while crossing over the Wadi Arnon (cf. Deut 2:24) and enabled them to capture and utterly destroy the cities of Sihon (cf. Deut 2:34). For this reason, the author of the book of Genesis adapted the Mesopotamic motif of a boat saving humans and animals during the flood and modified it to make it correspond more closely to the image of the “chest” of the covenant, which enabled the Israelites to begin to inherit Transjordan.

4. Theological Implications

The theological implications of this analysis are very interesting. First of all, the reworking of the motif of the ark of the covenant into that

³³ Cf. G. Hepner, *Legal Friction*, 8; R.K. Gnuse, “Seven Gay Texts,” 72. It is quite natural in expansions of a given story (see, for example, the saga of the *Star Wars*) that the original story (in this case, Deuteronomy) is first supplemented with a sequel (in this case, Joshua and Judges), and only thereafter with a prequel (in this case, Genesis followed by Exodus–Leviticus–Numbers). Cf. B. Adamczewski, *Genesis*, 30 *et passim*.

of Noah's ark has a consciously irenic character. Whereas in Deut 2:31e–g the idea of inheriting / taking possession of the land of Sihon has a clearly military character, and in Josh 6:4–13 this military idea of conquering the land given to the Israelites by Yahweh is combined with the motif of the ark of the covenant, in Gen 6:14–16 Noah's ark has nothing in common with any military activity on the part of the Israelite ancestor.

It is true that some traces of the military connotations of the motifs of the conquest of Transjordan and of the ark of the covenant are left in the Genesis description of Noah's ark as being carried (אָנָה) by the water, rising high above the land, and “riding” on the surface of the greatly increasing and apparently militarily triumphing water (Gen 7:17b–18). In a similar way, the ark of the covenant was carried (אָנָה) by the priests during the Israelites' conquest of Jericho (Josh 6:12), so presumably also during the Israelites' defeat of Sihon's army (Deut 2:33b).

However, in the narrative logic of the Genesis flood account all that Noah was called to do, facing the evil of the world around him (Gen 6:11–13), was not destroying the evil or conquering its territory, but withdrawing into the ark, as though into a self-imposed “ghetto,” and surviving the catastrophe, saving just humans and the animals as well. The evil in the world was therefore destroyed not by an Israelite ancestor and his Israelite people (cf. Deut 2:30–3:10), possibly with the help of the ark of the covenant (cf. Josh 6:4–13), but by the flood, which was a God-ordered natural disaster (Gen 6:17), during which the ark served as the realm of salvation and peace (Gen 6:14–16).

Similar irenic reworking of the military ideas of Deuteronomy can also be found in other parts of Genesis (Gen 18:16–33 etc.),³⁴ so that this irenic programme can be attributed to the book of Genesis as a whole, and not just to some fragments of the primeval flood story (Gen 6:14–16 etc.). This fact additionally demonstrates the internal theological coherence of the book of Genesis, which should not be divided artificially into purely hypothetical, otherwise unattested sources, materials, traditions, or layers (P, non-P, etc.).

³⁴ Cf. B. Adamczewski, *Genesis*, 230.

Other, more contemporary implications of this issue should also be considered. Noah is often presented today in biblical theology as the first ecologist, who saved endangered species from destruction and extinction. This image of Noah and his ark is certainly relevant to humankind facing the ecological crisis.³⁵ However, it does not exhaust the semantic potential of the motif of Noah's ark.

When the sequentially arranged hypertextual connections between the books of Genesis and Deuteronomy are taken into due consideration, then the image of Noah's ark as resembling the ark of the covenant takes on further important levels of meaning. In line with these hypertextual connections, what is taken into Noah's ark, saving humankind during the time of danger, are not merely humans and animal species, but also, and maybe foremost, the two horizontally laid tablets of the covenant.

This idea has important consequences for our present situation. Especially now, when human lives are endangered by the destructive pandemic, we should take into the saving "ark" not simply ourselves and endangered animals, but also the fundamental points of reference for our spiritual lives, namely, the tablets of the Decalogue. Without them, even if a saving "ark" (vaccines, medicines, etc.) will enable us to survive the destructive flood, we will not be fully saved humans.

Moreover, if we take into consideration the close linguistic and conceptual link between the ark (תבה) of Noah (Gen 6:14–9:18), and indirectly the ark of the testimony (Exod 25:10–22), and the "ark" (תבה) of Moses (Exod 2:3.5), then their contents also correspond to each other. In place of the tablets of stone, which are contained in the ark, the chest of Moses contains the living person of Moses, who somehow embodies the law in himself.³⁶ From the point of view of Christian theology, if we go one step farther, the contents of the revealed law can be found not merely on the tablets of stone, but in the living and saving person of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 3:3–18; Rom 10:4; Gal 2:16–21).

³⁵ Cf. B. Adamczewski [et al.], "Land and soil," 231.

³⁶ For the idea of the "protruding" and covered face of Moses in Exod 34:29–35 as making him a personified ark of the covenant (cf. Deut 10:5d–f), see B. Adamczewski, *Exodus–Numbers*, 114.

Arka Noego i Arka Przymierza

Abstrakt: Podobieństwa pomiędzy arką Noego a ratującą łodzią w mezopotamskich opowiadaniach o potopie są szeroko znane. Podobnie znane są powiązania między arką Noego a szkatułą Mojżesza (Wj 2,3). Jednakże powiązania między „skrzynią” Noego a „skrzynią” Świadcstwa nie przyciągnęły dotąd adekwatnej uwagi badaczy. Artykuł analizuje te powiązania na poziomach lingwistycznym i konceptualnym. Stara się ponadto prześledzić ich funkcję w hipertekstualnych powiązaniach opowiadania o potopie z Księgi Rodzaju w wcześniejszymi izraelskimi dziełami literackimi, szczególnie z Księgą Powtórzonego Prawa i Księgą Jozuego.

Słowa kluczowe: arka Noego, Arka Przymierza, opowiadanie o potopie (Rdz 6–9), Księga Rodzaju, Księga Powtórzonego Prawa, hipertekstualizm

Bibliography

- Adamczewski, B., *Deuteronomy–Judges: A Hypertextual Commentary* (EST 27), Berlin 2020.
- Adamczewski, B., “The End of Source Theories? The Genealogies in Gen 4:17–5:32 and Their Reworking in the New Testament,” *Collectanea Theologica* 90 (2010) no. 5, 33–64.
- Adamczewski, B., *Exodus–Numbers: A Hypertextual Commentary* (EST 26), Berlin 2020.
- Adamczewski, B., *Genesis: A Hypertextual Commentary* (EST 25), Berlin 2020.
- Adamczewski, B. [et al.], “Land and soil sustainable management in SDG15 and in Catholic social teaching,” in K. Cichos [et al.] (eds.), *Sustainable Development Goals and the Catholic Church: Catholic Social Teaching and the UN’s Agenda 2030*, London–New York 2021, 227–240.
- Day, J., “The Flood and the Ten Antediluvian Figures in Berossus and in the Priestly Source in Genesis,” in J. Day, *From Creation to Babel: Studies in Genesis 1–11* (LHBOTS 592), London–New York 2013, 61–76.
- Day, J., “The Genesis Flood Narrative in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Flood Accounts,” in J. Day, *From Creation to Babel: Studies in Genesis 1–11* (LHBOTS 592), London–New York 2013, 98–112.
- Dohmen, C., *Exodus 1–18* (HThKAT), Freiburg–Basel–Wien 2015.
- Fischer, G., *Genesis 1–11* (HThKAT), Freiburg–Basel–Wien 2018.
- Fischer, G., “Time for a Change! Why Pentateuchal Research is in Crisis,” in M. Armgardt, B. Kilchör, and M. Zehnder (eds.), *Paradigm Change in Pentateuchal Research* (BZABR 22), Wiesbaden 2019, 3–20.
- George, A.R., *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts*, vol. 1–2, Oxford 2003.
- Gerhards, M., *Die Aussetzungsgeschichte des Mose: Literar- und traditionsge- schichtliche Untersuchungen zu einem Schlüsseltext des nichtpriesterlichen Tetrateuch* (WMANT 109), Neukirchen-Vluyn 2006.

- Gmirkin, R.E., *Berosus and Genesis, Manetho and Exodus: Hellenistic Histories and the Date of the Pentateuch* (LHBOTS 433), New York–London 2006.
- Gnuse, R.K., “Seven Gay Texts: Biblical Passages Used to Condemn Homosexuality,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 45 (2015), 68–87.
- Hamilton, V.P., *The Book of Genesis*, vol. 1, *Chapters 1–17* (NICOT), Grand Rapids, MI 1990.
- Hepner, G., *Legal Friction: Law, Narrative, and Identity Politics in Biblical Israel* (StBibLit 78), New York [et al.] 2010.
- Kvanvig, H.S., *Primeval History: Babylonian, Biblical, and Enochic: An Intertextual Reading* (JSJSup 149), Leiden–Boston 2011.
- Laskowski, Ł., *Motyw potopu jako nowego stworzenia w Biblii* (StBibLub 7), Lublin 2010.
- Lemański, J., *Księga Rodzaju: Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz*, vol. 1, *Rozdziały 1 – 11* (NKB.ST 1/1), Częstochowa 2013.
- Lemański, J., *Księga Wyjścia: Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz* (NKB.ST 2), Częstochowa 2009.
- Majewski, M., *Pięcioksiąg odczytany na nowo: Przesłanie autora kapłańskiego (P) i jego wpływ na powstanie Pięcioksięgu*, Kraków 2018.
- Majewski, M., “Zwierzęta czyste i nieczyste w Starym Testamencie: Porządek stworzenia jako kryterium podziału,” *Collectanea Theologica* 89 (2019) no. 2, 5–50.
- Marczewski, A., “Interpretacja motywu kruka z opowiadania o potopie,” *Verbum Vitae* 32 (2017), 55–70.
- Mathews, D., *Royal Motifs in the Pentateuchal Portrayal of Moses* (LHBOTS 571), New York–London 2012.
- Norsker, A., “Genesis 6,5–9,17: A Rewritten Babylonian Flood Myth,” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 29 (2015), 55–62.
- Obidowicz, A.J., “Arka Noego a opisy potopu w tekstach sumeryjskich i akadyjskich,” *Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny* 72 (2019), 225–237.
- Schmidt, W.H., *Exodus*, vol. 1, *Exodus 1–6* (BKAT 2/1), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1988.
- Tarazi, P.N., *Genesis: A Commentary* (Chrysostom Bible), St Paul, MN 2009.
- Wenham, G.J., *Genesis 1–15* (WBC 1), Waco, TX 1987.
- Zajac, E., *Potop w tradycji biblijnej oraz literaturze judaizmu okresu Drugiej Świątyni* (StBibLub 1), Lublin 2007.