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ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE *MÂGÊN DÂWÎD*

A Comparative Study in the Ancient Religions of Jerusalem and Mecca.

By *Hildegard Lewy*, Cincinnati.

Much as innumerable mosques throughout the Near East are characterized by the surmounting lunar crescent, most modern synagogues are identified as such by the six-pointed star which is usually referred to as the *Mâgên Dâwid*, "the shield of David." The original signification of this symbol, which has been the subject of a great deal of speculation,¹⁾ is somewhat elucidated by its occurrence on two Old Assyrian seal impressions found on the cuneiform tablets AO.8758²⁾ and AO.8781, etc.³⁾ in the possession of the Louvre Museum. On the seal impression of the former case tablet, the *Mâgên Dâwid* appears in front of a divine personage who carries in his two hands a ceremonial object bearing a close resemblance to a *Menôrâ*. The conjoint occurrence on an Old Assyrian seal of these two emblems which are usually considered so characteristic of the Jewish faith makes it clear that neither of them had its origin in the religion of Jahweh; for, as is well known, there is no evidence that this religion was ever practiced in Assyria in the Old Assyrian period.

The seal picture found on the tablet AO.8781, etc., provides some positive information about the *Mâgên Dâwid*. For there it is closely associated with two emblems the signification of which is well known, namely the lunar crescent and the solar disc. The connection of our six-pointed star with these two symbols of planetary deities, the Moon-god *Sîn* and the Sun-god *Šamaš*, suggests at first sight that it was itself the representation of a planetary god, a conclusion which is all the more plausible since five, six, seven, and

¹⁾ On some such speculations about the possible meaning of the *Mâgên Dâwid* see *Jahrbuch für Jüdische Volkskunde* I, Berlin-Wien 1923, pp. 391 f. and p. 392, note 1.

²⁾ A reproduction of the seal impression in question is found in J. Lewy, *Tablettes Cappadociennes*, 3^{me} série, 3^{me} partie (Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités Orientales, Textes Cunéiformes, vol. XXI), Paris 1937, pl. CCXXXV, no. 74.

³⁾ For a reproduction of the seal impression occurring on this case fragment see J. Lewy, op. cit., pl. CCXXXIII, no. 48. — Professor Herbert G. May kindly called my attention to the fact that the *Mâgên Dâwid* is incised on the wall of a sanctuary at Megiddo; see his work *Material Remains of the Megiddo Cult*, Chicago 1935, p. 6 and fig. 1 on p. 7. The wall in question dates, according to the excavators, to the ninth or eighth century B. C.

eight-pointed stars were used elsewhere in the ancient Near East to represent the planetary gods. As examples we mention the eight-pointed star which the stone tablet B. M. 91000⁴⁾ ascribes, on the relief on its obverse, to the goddess Ištar, the divine impersonator of the planet Venus, and another eight-pointed star representing, according to an explanatory legend on the reverse of the tablet AO. 6448,⁵⁾ the god Nabû-Mercury. Since thus the emblems of four of the seven planetary gods⁶⁾ are well determined by cuneiform sources, the *Mâgên Dâwîd* can represent only one of the three planets whose symbols remain to be identified, namely the so-called superior planets Jupiter, Mars, and Saturn.

I. Šalim's Relation to the Davidic Dynasty.

As tradition connects the six-pointed star with David as well as with Solomon,⁷⁾ the decision as to which of these three planets it symbolizes depends to a large extent upon the question as to which, if any, of the three superior planets played a rôle in the religion of these two kings. An indication to the effect that Jahweh was not the only divine being revered by David and Solomon is contained in the statement I Kings 3. 2 that the practice of offering sacrifices on high places (a practice which, according to I Kings 3. 4, was adhered to by Solomon) was not in agreement with the religion of Jahweh. It is easy to realize that the non-Jahwistic cult here alluded to was one of the planetary religions; for, as we pointed out elsewhere in greater detail,⁸⁾ the worshippers of the heavenly bodies believed that the summits of hills or mountains — or, in the absence of any natural elevations, the uppermost platform of the temple towers — were the appropriate place for approaching a stellar deity, these places being nearer to the heavenly habitation of the astral gods than is the inhabited plain. The inference that it was a planetary deity whom Solomon worshipped on Gibeon and other high places is well in line with the story which, immediately following the afore-cited passage of the Book of Kings, relates how his famous wisdom was bestowed upon him in his sleep on the top of Mt. Gibeon. For, as was likewise shown in our afore-cited paper, the conception of a king being, in a dream revelation, endowed by his god with knowledge and understanding far superior to that of the ordinary mortal is traceable elsewhere only in

⁴⁾ See L. W. King, *Babylonian Boundary-Stones and Memorial-Tablets in the British Museum*, London 1912, pl. XCVIII, and cf. Thureau-Dangin, *Rev. d'Ass.* XVI, 1919, p. 139.

⁵⁾ See Thureau-Dangin, *loc. cit.*, p. 135 and cf. *Orientalia* 18, 1949, p. 168, note 1.

⁶⁾ Namely those of Šîn, Šamaš, Ištar, and Nabû.

⁷⁾ Whereas Jewish tradition refers to our symbol as "David's shield," Islamic sources usually designate it as "Solomon's seal."

⁸⁾ See *Archiv Orientální XVII (Symbolae Hrozný, vol. II)*, Prague 1949, pp. 87 f.

connection with princes who were avowed worshippers of the heavenly bodies.⁹⁾

An indication as to the identity of the planet which thus appears to have played an important rôle in Solomon's religion comes from the name of his eldest brother, ²*Amnôn*. For, as was pointed out by J. Lewy, this name is derived from the root ² — *m* — *n* by the addition of the suffix *-ô/ân*; whence we are entitled to render it by "He who belongs to the Stable One."¹⁰⁾ As Saturn was the planet whom the peoples of the ancient Near East designated as "The Stable One" (Akkadian *Kaimânu*, Sumerian *SAG.US*),¹¹⁾ we come to the conclusion that it was this stellar deity to whom David dedicated his first-born son. We can even surmise the reason why he did so: In the belief of the ancient Semites, a ruler who set out to conquer a certain city or country had to win the favour of that region's tutelary deity in order that he might be chosen to rule over it by its divine patron's grace.¹²⁾ This concept was a logical consequence of the ideas about divine power current in the ancient Near East. For the protective deity of a famous city (or country) being supposed to be far more powerful than even the mightiest king on earth, it was unthinkable that a human being should be in a position to conquer a city or region against its patron-god's will.¹³⁾ It is, therefore,

⁹⁾ See loc. cit., p. 87, where, with reference to the tablet B. M. 38299 (the so-called Verse Account), it is pointed out that Nabû-na'id was assumed to have been granted divine wisdom by the Moon-god. With regard to the letter K. 2701a, it was further shown that *Sîn-ahhê-eriba* was thought to have received this same gift from the Assyrian national god, *Aššûr*. That, at least in the view of the Neo-Assyrians, *Aššûr* was an astral deity follows from passages such as B. M. 81, 7 — 1,4 (for this text see below, note 111), l. 1, where the divine patron of Assyria is identified with *kakkab Apin*, "the plough-star." On this constellation which covers approximately what is called today Triangulum see Schaumberger, *Sternkunde und Sterndienst in Babel*, 3. Ergänzungsheft, Münster 1935, pp. 328 f.

¹⁰⁾ See The Old West Semitic Sun-God *Hammu*, Hebrew Union College Annual XVIII, 1944, p. 456, notes 146 and 147; cf. *ibidem*, pp. 469 f. On the ending *ân/ôn* as expressing the idea of appurtenance see Nöldeke, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenl. Ges.* XV, 1861, p. 806, and H. and J. Lewy, Hebrew Union College Annual XVII, 1943, pp. 136 f. with note 500. Cf. now also the observations of Thureau-Dangin, *Rev. d'Ass.* XXXVII, 1940, p. 100; as for the identity of terminations expressing appurtenance, on the one hand, and diminutives, on the other, see Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*, Berlin 1908, vol. I, pp. 400 f., § 221.

¹¹⁾ As was stated by Schaumberger, *op. cit.*, p. 318, names such as these allude to the steadiness of the course of the planet Saturn.

¹²⁾ For some passages from both biblical and cuneiform sources attesting this belief see J. Lewy, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* CX, 1934, pp. 59 f.

¹³⁾ It would take us too far from our subject to analyze here the extent to which this belief was abandoned when the conception of a universal god was generally accepted. Suffice it to mention that it can be traced as late as the sixth pre-Christian century. In the text B. M. 90920, the so-called Cyrus-Proclamation to the Babylonians, the Persian conqueror of Babylon is represented as a devout worshipper of *Marduk*. The Babylonian national god himself, so it is related, guided Cyrus to his holy city after

reasonable to assume that David, planning to conquer Jerusalem, had to pay homage to that city's tutelary deity. Now some information about the god assumed to have owned the city of Jerusalem prior to Jahweh can be inferred from the name ירושלים (Neo-Assyrian ^{ai}*Ur-sa-li-im-mu*)¹⁴ itself. As was first pointed out by J. Lewy,¹⁵ this name, being composed of an element יר (belonging to ירה, "to create," "to found") and a divine name *šalim* (also occurring in the variants *š/Salim* and *šâlôm*), has the meaning "Creation of *šalim*," a meaning which makes it clear that a deity named *šalim* was considered the divine creator and protector of Jerusalem. In fact, from a passage — likewise elucidated by J. Lewy¹⁶ — of the Amarna-letter VAT 1646 it follows that ^{ai}*Bît ašulmâni*, "city of the temple of the god *šulmânu*," was one of the names under which the capital city of the ^{mat}*Ū-ru-sa-lim^{ka}*, "the country of Jerusalem," was known in the period reflected in the letters from Tell el-Amarna, which means in the early 14th century before our era. As the Assyrianized name *šulmânu* is derived from *šalim* or *šâlôm* by the addition of the afore-cited suffix *-ân/ôn* plus the Assyrian nominative ending *-u*,¹⁷ the designation of the town as ^{ai}*Bît ašulmâni* confirms our previous conclusion that the god *šalim* or *šulmânu* was the principal deity of pre-Israelite Jerusalem. As regards the nature of this divine patron of the famous city, J. Lewy¹⁸ concluded from the Assyrian vocabulary K. 4339 that the Assyrians identified him with their god *Ninurta*. That this identification, far from being merely a construction of the learned author of that vocabulary, expressed the general belief of the Assyrians is shown by the fact that an Assyrian king who, by naming himself *šulmânu-ašarid* ("*šulmânu* is the Foremost [scil. among the deities]"), placed himself under the special protection of the patron-god of Jerusalem, founded the city of *Kalḫu*, the Assyrian residence of the god *Ninurta*.¹⁹ As this

having chosen him to rule over his country. A similar belief is noticeable in the Book of Jeremiah where the prophet quotes Jahweh as speaking of the conqueror of Jerusalem as "Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant" (Jer. 43.10) into whose hand He intended to give the city of Jerusalem (Jer. 32. 3). Here, too, it is taken for granted that the conqueror who was called upon by the protective deity to rule over his city was "a servant," which means a devout worshipper of this god.

¹⁴) See, e. g., col. III, l. 8 of Sennacherib's Taylor Prism.

¹⁵) See *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* CX, 1934, p. 61.

¹⁶) See *Journal of Biblical Literature* LIX, 1940, pp. 519 f.

¹⁷) On the relation of the form *šulmânu* to the form *šalim* see in particular J. Lewy, *Nāḫ et Rušpān, Mélanges Syriens offerts à M. René Dussaud*, vol. I, Paris 1939, pp. 274 f., and p. 454 of the paper quoted above, p. 332, note 10.

¹⁸) See the quotation above, note 16.

¹⁹) See col. III, l. 132 of the *Annals of Aššûr-našir-apli* (Budge and King, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, vol. I, London 1902, p. 386): ^{ai}*Kal-ḫu maḫ-ra šá m ašulmânu ma-nu-ašarid šar matAš-šur rubû a-lik pa-ni-a êpušûš* "the former city of *Kalḫu*, which *šulmânu-ašarid*, the king of Assyria, a prince who preceded me, had built"; cf. the parallel passages *ibidem*, p. 184, ll. 6—7; p. 219, ll. 14 f.; p. 244, col. V, ll. 1 f.

latter deity was the divine impersonator of the planet Saturn,²⁰⁾ it thus becomes manifest that also the West Semitic Šulmânu embodied the planet which the Assyrian astronomers and astrologers used to call "the nocturnal Sun."

In view of this evidence there remains hardly any doubt that, by naming his eldest son ʾAmnôn, "He who belongs to Saturn,"²¹⁾ David paid tribute to the tutelary god of Jerusalem. Since, according to 2 Sam. 3. 2, ʾAmnôn was born at Hebron long before David undertook his campaign to conquer Jerusalem, it is obvious that he dedicated his first-born son to the planet Saturn in order that this deity might choose him and his descendants to rule over his holy city. This conclusion is all the more justified since ʾAmnôn was not the only one among David's sons whose name expressed their father's veneration of the planet Saturn. For once it is realized that in his quality as creator and protector of Jerusalem this deity was named Šalim or Šâlôm, it is manifest that also David's third son, Ab-Šâlôm, whose name has the meaning "The Father is Šalim," bore a name placing him under the protection of the divine lord of Jerusalem. The same is obviously true of Solomon whose name means "He who belongs to Šalim." We thus realize that David was fully aware of the condition attaching to the conquest and the possession of Jerusalem: Henceforth an important place in the pantheon of the royal family was due to Šalim, the divine patron of the capital city.

By observing, in the manner described above, the ritual practices customary among the worshippers of the heavenly bodies, David's son and successor Solomon proved that he accepted and appreciated the patronage of this planetary deity. Hence the question arises as to the extent to which he attempted to impose the worship of Šalim upon his subjects. This question is best answered by determining whether the Solomonic Temple as conceived by David and Solomon was primarily dedicated to Jahweh or to Šalim; for, in the opinion of the ancient Semites, a sanctuary built in honor of a certain deity was a powerful means of propagating this deity's cult.²²⁾

II. The Principal Sources of Information about the Cult of the Planet Saturn.

Before attempting to determine whether the Solomonic Temple and the traditions surrounding it betray any relation to the cult of the planet Saturn, we must briefly discuss the principal sources from which information about this god and the forms of his worship can be derived. We mention in the first place that Saturn was the protective deity of the south-Babylonian city of

²⁰⁾ See p. 63, note 148 of the paper quoted above, note 8.

²¹⁾ See above, p. 332.

²²⁾ For some passages attesting this belief in cuneiform sources see p. 85 with note 243 of the paper quoted above, note 8.

Lagaš where he was revered under the name Ningirsu, "Lord of Girsu" (Girsu being the name of a part of Lagaš).²³⁾ Hence the inscriptions dealing with the successive reconstructions of Ningirsu's temple *É-ninnû* and particularly the detailed accounts left by Gudea may be presumed to provide a number of data useful for our investigation. From these texts we learn especially that Ningirsu was revered together with "his beloved consort,"²⁴⁾ the goddess Bau, who, being considered the daughter of Anu, the god of heaven, is frequently referred to as "the queen, the daughter of the pure sky."²⁵⁾ We further gather that Ningirsu was conceived as a mighty warrior armed with terrible weapons, and that he was frequently designated as "He who restrains the raging water."²⁶⁾

The legend in which this latter epithet has its origin is preserved in a composition designated by the ancients as *Lugal-e ud me-lâm-bi nir-gâl*, "King, Storm, whose Splendor is Heroic."²⁷⁾ The poem, which probably was recited or enacted at an annual festival celebrated in the south-Babylonian city of Nippur²⁸⁾ in commemoration of its presumed foundation by the god Ninurta, reports that there was a time when a terrible flood threatened all living beings with death and destruction.²⁹⁾ Ninurta then decided to come

²³⁾ That Ningirsu, the divine patron of Lagaš, was identical with the planet Saturn was first pointed out by Morris Jastrow, Jr., *Rev. d'Ass.* VII, 1910, p. 173.

²⁴⁾ So in Gudea's so-called Statue G (col. II, l. 6). For a transliteration and translation see Thureau-Dangin, *Die Sumerischen und Akkadischen Königsinschriften*, *Vorderasiatische Bibliothek*, vol. I, Leipzig 1907, pp. 84 f.

²⁵⁾ See, e. g., Gudea's Cylinder B (Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, pp. 122 ff.), col. V, l. 15.

²⁶⁾ *A-ḫuš-gi₄-a*; see, e. g., Cylinder A (Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, pp. 88 ff.), col. VIII, l. 15; col. IX, l. 20.

²⁷⁾ As usually, the name of the work is taken from the first line of the first tablet. The first to call attention to its importance was Hrozný, *MVAG* VIII, 5, 1903.

²⁸⁾ As we know from the ritual for the New Year's Festival as celebrated in the city of Babylon in honor of its patron-god, Marduk (see Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels Accadiens*, Paris 1921, p. 136, ll. 280—283), that in the course of this festal season the *urigallu*-priest recited *Enûma Eliš*, the story of Marduk's victory over Tiâmat and the subsequent creation of the world, we shall not fail in assuming that at Nippur, where Ninurta ranked high among the local deities, the epic recounting his heroic deeds and the subsequent creation of the first post-diluvial city was recited during a festival celebrated in honor of that deity. This conclusion is all the more justified since the *Ninurta Epic* itself refers, in tablet I, ll. 35—36, to Ninurta gaily celebrating a festival established in his honor. (We count the lines in accordance with the numeration chosen by S. Geller, *Die Sumerisch-Assyrische Serie LUGAL-E UD ME-LAM-BI NIR-GAL*, *Altorientalische Texte und Untersuchungen* I, 4, Leiden 1917, where the relevant passage is found on p. 279. In Kemal Balkan's more recent discussion and translation of tablets I, X, XI, and XII [*Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi, Sumeroloji Enstitüsü Neşriyatı* no. 1, Istanbul 1941, pp. 881—912] the pertinent line, found on p. 907, has the number 18.)

²⁹⁾ See in particular the fragment K. 5983 (Geller, *loc. cit.*, p. 316) and tablets II and III where it is said that Ninurta's worshippers did not know where to go when the walls collapsed(?) under the pressure of the onrushing flood; the birds were cast

to the assistance of his creatures, and he proceeded by boat to meet the enemy.³⁰⁾ The flood was not the only foe he encountered on the field of battle; for the stones had sided with the rising waters, the underlying idea obviously being that in the wake of the flood a number of larger and smaller rocks were swept into the towns and cities where they wrought damage and destruction.³¹⁾ Some of the stones, however, changed sides in the course of the fight and supported Ninurta against the flood. This feature of the legend probably is to be accounted for by the assumption that some rocks had piled up so as to form a dam against the rising waters. However this may be, the battle ended with a complete victory for Ninurta, who "dammed in in the enemy country"³²⁾ the hostile waters of the flood. We thus come to understand that, by hailing the planet Saturn as "He who restrains the raging water," the people of Lagaš credited their god with having put an end to the destructive flood.

The portions of the poem recounting the events after the flood (tablets IV through VII) are very fragmentary; the only positive piece of evidence is contained in tablet V, where it is said (rev., l. 6, Geller, loc. cit., p. 287) that Ninurta "built a wall," probably by using the stones which had been swept up by the flood. On tablet VIII, on the other hand, we have again a continuous relation.³³⁾ Here it is told that, probably as a consequence of Ninurta's confining the flood-waters to "the enemy country," a lack of sweet water made itself felt throughout the land, bringing agricultural operations to a stand-still. But once again Ninurta came to the help of his people. In the mountains he gathered mighty stones from which he built a city (ll. 15—19 of Langdon's text). Then he gathered the waters that had flooded the fields and drained them into the Tigris-river.³⁴⁾ Thus the Tigris rose and again

down to earth, probably by a heavy rain-storm (cf. the mention of Adad, the weather-god, in tablet III, ll. 7—8), and also the other animals were threatened with extermination. Ninurta himself was compelled to use a barge in order to reach the battle-field (tablet III, l. 1).

³⁰⁾ See the preceding footnote.

³¹⁾ That this is the idea underlying the intervention of the stones in the battle becomes particularly clear in view of ll. 7—14 of tablet X (so according to the numeration chosen by Geller, loc. cit., p. 295; ll. 4—7 (p. 908) in Balkan's translation), where Ninurta is reported to have cursed the Šammu-stone because it rose against him in the mountains and scared him in his sublime abode. A rock, washed down from a near-by mountain, apparently had crushed into Ninurta's sanctuary.

³²⁾ See tablet III, ll. 13—14 (Geller, loc. cit., p. 284). We read the damaged word at the end of l. 14 *i[k]-si-ir-šu*, because the verb *kasāru* is used elsewhere with reference to the damming of streams and watercourses.

³³⁾ Tablet VIII was reconstructed from various fragments by Langdon, *Babylonian Liturgies*, Paris 1913, No. II, pp. 7—11. Though not identified by the usual colophon, the catch-line at the end of the piece ascertains its place within the whole series.

³⁴⁾ See ll. 23—24 of the text as reconstructed by Langdon, and cf. Landsberger, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* VIII, 1949, p. 276, note 91.

filled with water the network of canals on which the success of all agricultural operations depended. After having finished this task, Ninurta appointed his mother, the goddess of the earth, ruler of the city which he had built,³⁵⁾ because she had valiantly supported him in his fight against the flood (tablet IX).

At least some of the legends and traditions contained in this ancient Sumerian Ninurta Epic recur in the extant fragments of Sanchuniathon's History of Phoenicia.³⁶⁾ This source of comparatively late origin names a deity Ὁλος or Κρόνος as one of the major gods worshipped by the Phoenicians.³⁷⁾ That this was an astral deity follows from the statement of our text that Kronos-Elos was revered as the "star of Kronos."³⁸⁾ As in the

³⁵⁾ Landsberger (Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi, vol. III, no. 2, 1945, pp. 152 f.) assumes that "er (i. e., Ninurta) häuft die besiegten Steine zu einem Berge auf, schenkt diesen seiner Mutter Ninlil und verleiht ihr den Namen « Herrin des Gebirges »." There is, however, no evidence in the extant portions of the poem to support this assertion. On the contrary, various passages of our text make it clear that, when speaking of the *gu-ru-ni ša ag-ru-nu* or the like (see, e. g., tablet IX, ll. 38—39 [Geller, loc. cit., p. 292]), the author of the composition referred to the walls and buildings of the new city and not to a mountain, the existence of mountains and plains obviously being supposed to have ante-dated the construction of the first post-diluvial settlement. We refer not only to the afore-cited lines of tablet VIII (Langdon, op. cit., pp. 8—9), which clearly speak of Ninurta's gathering stones for the construction of a city, but also to tablet XIII, ll. 24—25 (Geller, loc. cit., p. 312) where the poet speaks of the "(newly) built city" as the realm of Ninurta's mother Ninḫursag, the goddess of the earth. — It is not without interest to recall in this connection that also in Gen. 10.8—12, Ninurta (Nimrod) is remembered as the builder of cities, among which Kalḫu, Saturn's holy city in Assyrian territory (cf. above, p. 333 with note 19).

³⁶⁾ In the following pages we quote Sanchuniathon-Philo Byblios according to the edition by Carl Clemen, *Die Phönikische Religion nach Philo von Byblos, Mitteilungen der Vorderas.-Ägyptischen Ges.*, vol. 42, 3, Leipzig 1939, pp. 16 ff.

³⁷⁾ Even though the name *Elos* makes it perfectly clear that the being so qualified was a high deity, the extant text represents *Elos-Kronos* as a human king who was deified after his death. We meet here with the well-known tendency of Greek writers to depict the ancient gods as human beings to whom divine honors were accorded after their death. A similar tendency is traceable in the Bible. As was suggested by J. Lewy (*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* CX, 1934, p. 45), the *Laban hâ-arammî* of Gen. 24 ff., the brother-in-law of Isaac and father-in-law of Jacob was none other than the Moon-god, the divine lord of Harrân, who, in the region of Mt. Lebanon, was revered under the name *Laban* (on this deity's relation to Mt. Lebanon see especially J. Lewy, *The Old West Semitic Sun-God Hammu*, Hebrew Union College Annual XVIII, 1944, passim). Mohammedan writers, in turn, frequently represent the pre-Islamic Arabian gods as deified human beings. As an example we refer to al-Mas'ûdî's stories (*Les prairies d'or*, vol. III, Paris 1917, pp. 100 f.) about Isâf and Nâila, the deities worshipped together with Hubal (see below, note 54, sub 1) in the Ka'ba at Mecca. In all these cases men who, while not, or no longer, believing in the existence of these ancient gods, had to reckon with the persistence of the mythological legends in the popular memory, transformed the former deities into human beings and thus retained the old stories and legends as part of the national folklore.

³⁸⁾ See Clemen, op. cit., p. 31, sub 44.

terminology of the Greeks the "star of Kronos" is the planet Saturn, there remains little doubt that for the Phoenicians dealt with by Sanchuniathon this planet was El, the god par excellence.

The Phoenician deity Saturn, much as his Babylonian counterpart, was believed to be the son of the earth referred to by Philo as Gê.³⁹⁾ He, too, was involved in a terrible fight,⁴⁰⁾ after the victorious outcome of which he "surrounded his abode by a wall and founded as the first city Byblos in Phoenicia."⁴¹⁾ Thus it is learned that in Byblos, much as in Nippur, Saturn's worshippers believed that their city had been founded by their god as the world's first city and that this settlement was built around a Saturn-sanctuary surrounded by a wall. In further agreement with the Babylonian legend the Greek version relates⁴²⁾ that the city newly founded was given by Saturn to a goddess whose name Baaltis has, no doubt, the meaning "Lady

³⁹⁾ See Clemen, op. cit., pp. 25 f., sub 16—18. However, whereas in the Babylonian legend his father is the wind and weather-god Enlil, Saturn is, in the Phoenician story, the son of Uranos, the god of heaven.

⁴⁰⁾ In the Phoenician legend, it is Saturn's own father, Uranos, against whom he battles and whose throne he eventually usurps. The authenticity of this feature is proved by the fact that an Arabic version of the Nimrud-story also reports that Nimrud (i. e., Ninurta; cf. above, note 35 in fine) defeated and dethroned his father (see Moritz Weiss, *Kiṣṣat Ibrāhīm*, Dissertation Strassburg 1913, pp. 1—8). According to this relation in which, as usual in Arabic literature, the ancient gods are represented as human beings (cf. above, note 37), Ninurta's father is forewarned by a dream that the son who would be born to him would kill him and inherit his throne. He thereupon gives orders to slay the child immediately after his birth, but his mother saves him. Ninurta grows up without knowing his parents and eventually defeats and kills his father, seizes the throne and brings the whole earth under his domination.

In Nippur where, as we mentioned before, the Sumerian Ninurta Epic had its origin, a story like this could not be told, because in this city Ninurta and his cult never supplanted the older cult of his father Enlil, who remained Nippur's chief deity so long as we can trace the religious history of that city, which means down to the Seleucid period. It is, therefore, manifest that the Nippurian epic could not name Ninurta's father Enlil as the god defeated and removed from the throne by its hero. Yet the possibility cannot be precluded that the Sumerian version, too, was adapted to local conditions from a legend in which Ninurta's enemy was his own father. For we know from the Babylonian Deluge Story that it was Enlil whom the Babylonians assumed to have conceived and carried out the idea of sending a flood in order to annihilate all life on earth. Hence also the flood against which Ninurta fought in the Nippurian epic may, in the original version, have been caused by the moody storm and weather-god Enlil, even though, for the reasons outlined, no mention is made in the extant poem of the deity who sent the deluge. In fact, when the Ninurta Epic, although repeatedly calling its hero "the son of Enlil," speaks of Ninurta as "He who did not sit with a nurse" and "the scion of (the type) «My father I do not know»" (see tablet I, rev., ll. 7—10, Geller, loc. cit., p. 280; p. 907, ll. 28—29 of Balkan's translation), one is reminded of the afore-cited Arabic Nimrud Legend in which Ninurta-Nimrud, after having been nursed by a tigress, grew up without knowing his father and his mother.

⁴¹⁾ See Clemen, op. cit., p. 26, sub 19.

⁴²⁾ Clemen, op. cit., p. 30, sub 35.

(of Byblos).” On the other hand, Sanchuniathon’s account contains one important piece of information about the god Saturn of which there is no trace in any Babylonian source: If, in consequence of a war, pestilence, or other public calamity, Saturn’s congregation was threatened with catastrophe, it was customary that the ruler of the respective community sacrificed his most beloved child to that planet.⁴³⁾ This custom, in turn, is explained by the legend that Saturn himself sacrificed his son on an altar when pestilence threatened his congregation.⁴⁴⁾ In fact, child-sacrifices appear to have been so typical a trait of the cult of the planet Saturn that still in the Middle Ages this star was known as the “children-devouring planet.”⁴⁵⁾

In the last place, our investigation into the cult of the planet Saturn must make use of mediaeval Arabic sources, not only because they contain legendary reminiscences of the pre-Islamic Arabian religions but also because they describe the worship of the planetary deities as practiced in the Near East until the Turks, more intolerant than their predecessors, extinguished the last remnants of the ancient Semitic religions. Ad-Dimišqî, who devotes a full chapter of his *Cosmography* to the religious practices of the star-worshippers, relates that a temple of Saturn “was built in the form of a hexagon, black (being the color) of the stone work and the curtains.”⁴⁶⁾ Whereas, to judge by the ancient Saturn-temples at Lagaš as well as elsewhere, the reference to the hexagon form must be due to a confusion,⁴⁷⁾ the predominance of the color black is well in line with the information provided by cuneiform sources; for there, no less than in mediaeval works on astrology, Saturn is frequently called the “black” or “dark” planet.⁴⁸⁾ Yet a remark of al-Mas‘ûdî⁴⁹⁾ suggests that not necessarily the whole temple was built of black stone; for when this author relates that, in the opinion of the worshippers of the stars, the Ka‘ba at Mecca used to be a shrine of Saturn he implies that the presence of one sacred black stone such as the famous *Haġar al-aswad* characterized the sanctuary as a temple of Saturn. The correctness of al-Mas‘ûdî’s information is proved, at least indirectly, by the

⁴³⁾ See Clemen, op. cit., p. 16, and p. 31, sub 44.

⁴⁴⁾ See Clemen, op. cit., p. 29, sub 33, and p. 32, sub 44.

⁴⁵⁾ See Bezold and Boll, *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung*, Aus Natur und Geisteswelt, vol. 638, Leipzig 1919, pp. 60 f.

⁴⁶⁾ See his *Kitâb nuġba al-dahr fî ‘aġâ’ib al-barr w’al-baġr*, ed. Mehren, St.-Pétersbourg 1866, p. 40.

⁴⁷⁾ As will be mentioned in greater detail below, p. 343, the characteristic form of a temple of Saturn was that of a cube.

⁴⁸⁾ For references in cuneiform literature see Schaumberger, op. cit., p. 317. As Schaumberger points out, “Saturn heißt der schwarze oder dunkle Planet, weil er tatsächlich gewöhnlich lichtschwächer oder dunkler erscheint als die anderen Planeten.” As regards mediaeval sources, see, e. g., al-Bîrûnî’s *Kitâb at-tafġim*, ed. R. Ram-say Wright, London 1934, p. 240.

⁴⁹⁾ *Les prairies d’or*, vol. IV, Paris 1914, p. 44.

name of the idol which, according to the unanimous testimony of our Islamic sources, was worshipped in the Ka'ba in the pre-Mohammedan period. It was called Hubal (هُبَالٌ),⁵⁰ a name which, derived from the root هَبِلَ, has the meaning "He who violently deprives the mother of her children."⁵¹) The manner in which the divine lord of Mecca was assumed

⁵⁰) See, e. g., al-Mas'ûdî, *Les prairies d'or*, vol. IV, p. 46; aš-Šahrastâni (translated by Th. Haarbrücker, vol. II, Halle 1851, p. 340) relates that Hubal, the greatest of all Arabian idols, had its place on the roof of the Ka'ba. Tabarî (*Annals*, ed. Leiden, vol. I, 3, 1881—1882, p. 1075), on the other hand, reports that Hubal was standing inside the Ka'ba above the opening of a well.

To be sure, our sources are unanimous in qualifying Hubal as well as the other Arabian idols as un-Arabian, idol-worship being, in their view, an institution imported to the peninsula from Syria at a comparatively late date (see, e. g., al-Mas'ûdî, *Les prairies d'or*, vol. IV, pp. 46 f., and cf. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*², Berlin and Leipzig 1927, p. 102, who declares: "Die Bilder sind nichts echt Arabisches; *vathan* und *çanam* sind importirte Worte und importirte Dinge."). However, from cuneiform inscriptions such as, e. g., Aššûr-aḥ-iddina's prism Th. 1929—10—12, 1 (published by Thompson, *The Prisms of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal*, London 1931, pl. I—XIII and pp. 9—28), col. IV, ll. 1—14, it is learned that from his victorious campaign against Arabia, Aššûr-aḥ-iddina's father, Sîn-aḥḥê-eriba, brought as booty to Nineveh six Arabian gods (among whom *A-tar-sa-ma-a-in*, "Ištar of the Heavens"); upon the solicitation of Ḥazâ'il, the king of the Arabians, Aššûr-aḥ-iddina returned these deities to their worshippers. Hence it is clear that, as early as the eighth pre-Christian century, the Arabs represented their gods, and more particularly their astral deities, by symbols which could be taken back and forth to Nineveh by the Assyrian kings. That these symbols were, even as those set up in the Assyrian and Babylonian temples, anthropomorphic statues and not stones or rocks follows with particular clarity from Aššûr-bân-apli's text K. 3405 (transliterated and translated by Streck, *Assurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's*, vol. II, Leipzig 1916, pp. 222 ff.), according to which the Assyrian king, when returning for the second time the "Ištar of the Heavens" (there referred to under the names Dilbat and Ištar) to her Arabian worshippers, made her a gift of a golden comb studded with precious stones (for *mulṭu* < *mušṭu*, "comb", see Meissner, *Archiv für Orientforschung* V, 1928—29, pp. 183 f., and particularly VI, 1930—31, pp. 22 f., who duly mentions that, according to an Assyrian ritual text, also the Assyrian Ištar was wont to receive a golden comb as a gift). We are therefore entitled to regard Hubal and the other Arabian deities represented by idols as genuinely Arabian, all the more so since the legend about the importation of these gods from Syria can easily be accounted for: When the Mohammedans adopted the theory that the Ka'ba had been built and dedicated by Abraham and his son Ishmael it became necessary to find an explanation for the fact that, prior to Mohammed, the cult of the idol Hubal and not the worship of the aniconic god of Abraham was practiced in the famous old sanctuary.

⁵¹) As is well known (cf. Brockelmann, *Grundriss* I, p. 336), *qatal*-formations are adjectives indicating that the action expressed by the relevant verb was carried out in a violent manner. — Manifestly under the influence of the afore-cited legend (see the preceding footnote) about the idol's Syrian origin, Hitti (*History of the Arabs*, London 1937, p. 100) proposes to derive the name Hubal from the Aramaic and to translate it by "vapour," "spirit." Yet he makes no attempt at accounting for the

to take children from their mothers is illustrated by the well-known legend told about Mohammed's grandfather, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. He is reported to have vowed to sacrifice one of his sons to Hubal if he would be blessed with ten sons.⁵²⁾ For thus it is clear that the god worshipped in the Ka'ba was wont to accept, or perhaps to demand, child-sacrifices from his worshippers. Since, as we have seen above,⁵³⁾ such sacrifices were considered a trait most characteristic of the planet Saturn, there remains no doubt that the tradition according to which the Ka'ba was a sanctuary of Saturn is more trustworthy than is generally assumed.⁵⁴⁾ In fact, when the Koran (III. 90) states that

qatal-form, nor does he explain how, in his view, an intelligent people should have come to apply this name to an image made from stone and metal.

⁵²⁾ See Ṭabarî's *Annals*, Leiden edition, vol. I, 3, 1881—1882, p. 1074.

⁵³⁾ See p. 339.

⁵⁴⁾ Wellhausen, in his discussion of the *Ḥaġġ* of 'Arafa (op. cit., pp. 79 ff.) does not even mention it. Nor did he make an attempt at interpreting the "Reste arabischen Heidentums" preserved in the ritual of that festival in the light of the information provided by cuneiform sources about the older Semitic religions. As it would take us too far from our subject to discuss here the details which make it clear that the pre-Islamic cult of Mecca was one of the astral religions practiced by the Semites throughout the ancient Near East, we mention only those correspondences which have some bearing upon the material dealt with in the present paper: (1) Hubal, the chief deity of Mecca, was not the only god worshipped in the Ka'ba. Besides several daughters of his, our sources mention in particular a divine couple, Nâila and Isâf, who, according to aš-šahraštânî (Haarbrücker, op. cit., II, p. 340) were worshipped on the hills Marwa and Šafa overlooking that sanctuary. As the Assyrian and Babylonian planetary deities were revered together with their divine families (as a pertinent example we mention Ningal, Nusku and Sadarnunna, the consort, son, and daughter-in-law of Sin, who, according to col. II, l. 18 of Nabû-na'id's cylinder inscription B. M. 82, 7—14, 1025 [transliterated and translated by Langdon, *Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, Vorderasiatische Bibliothek, vol. IV, Leipzig 1912, pp. 218 ff.] and col. II, l. 13 of his so-called Eski-Harrân Inscription [ibidem, pp. 288 ff.] were worshipped together with Sin in Eḫulḫul in Harrân), we shall not fail in concluding that Nâila and Isâf were assumed to be Hubal's next of kin. Since in Nippur the planet Saturn was revered conjointly with his parents, and since, as was mentioned before, in both the Sumerian *Ninurta Epic* and the Phoenician mythological legend handed down by Sanchuniathon Saturn's mother, the goddess of the earth, played an important part, we can further infer that the divine couple Nâila and Isâf were thought to be the parents of the chief deity of Mecca. We may even venture to draw a conclusion with regard to Hubal's consort: In cuneiform literature, *Ninurta's spouse*, Gula or Bau, is frequently referred to as "the great physician" (for references see Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta*, *Helsingforsiae* 1938, p. 5); as the Muslims ascribe to the bitter-tasting water of the well Zemzem located in the court-yard of the Ka'ba the power to heal all sorts of diseases, we may well conclude that this well represented the healing goddess, the consort of Saturn.

(2) The reports of Mohammedan writers indicate that the Ka'ba housed not only the statue of its tutelary god, Hubal, but altogether some three-hundred-and-sixty images all of which were destroyed when the prophet conquered Mecca (for some references see Wellhausen, op. cit., p. 72). There is no reason to doubt (with Wellhausen) the correctness of this information; for it recalls a statement by ad-Dimišqî (op. cit.,

p. 42) according to whom the temples dedicated to the cult of the Sun contained numerous statues made of wood, stone, or metal which, placed around the image of the Sun-god, are said to have represented former rulers of the respective town or region. That such effigies were, however, not a characteristic of the Sun-temples is proved by the fact that in the archaic Ištar-temple at Mâri the statue of the goddess representing the planet Venus was found by the excavators surrounded by the images of kings and high personages shown in the attitude of adoration (see A. Parrot, *Mari, une ville perdue*, Paris 1936, pp. 89—92). The purpose of these statues is well illustrated by the inscription on an archaic statuette from Lagaš in which the mother of one of the rulers of this city declares that she placed her image next to the ear of her divine lady in order that it might speak her prayer to the goddess (see Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, pp. 64 f., sub f.). Equally illuminating is the statement contained in col. II, ll. 9 f. and 22 f. of Nabû-na'id's cylinder inscription from Sippar B. M. 81—4—28, 3 and 4 (transliterated and translated by Langdon, *op. cit.*, pp. 252 ff.), where the Babylonian king relates that, as a visible token of his unceasing devotion to the Sun-god he placed a likeness of his (*šalam šarrûtiia*) in Šamaš's sanctuary at Sippar; manifestly this statue was meant to represent him before his god when his official duties prevented him from personally rendering homage to the divine lord of Sippar. If thus kings, queens, and other high personages continued for centuries to place their effigies in the sanctuary next to the image of their divine lord or lady, it is not surprising that, as reported from Mecca, some three-hundred-and-sixty statuettes eventually surrounded that of the deity. As Mohammed rejected the idea of representing by an image a living being, no matter whether divine or human, his followers destroyed, along with Hubal's statue, the effigies by which their former kings had expressed their devotion to the patron god of Mecca.

(3) The famous pilgrimage to 'Arafa (cf. Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, pp. 79 ff.) bears all the features characteristic of an Assyro-Babylonian *akitu*-festival. As is well known, these festal seasons centered around a processional exodus of the god's statue from its usual abode to an out-of-town sanctuary, the transfer being made partly by chariot, partly by barge. As is known particularly from the ritual of the Harrânian *akitu*-festival as preserved by an-Nadîm in his *Kitâb al-fihrist* (ed. Flügel, vol. I, Leipzig 1871, p. 325, ll. 23 ff.), the festival reached its culmination when the townspeople, both

men and women, turned out in mass to await (توقِع) the return of their god amongst them (a detailed analysis of the Harrânian *akitu*-festival will be published by the present writer in a forthcoming study on the religion of Harrân). A popular procession

of this sort, interrupted by repeated "waiting"-stops (وقُوف), plays even today a preponderant rôle in the *Hağğ* at Minâ and 'Arafa. Moreover, much as in Harrân the procession followed the course of the Balîh to the *akitu*-temple in the town of Dahbâna, the Mecca pilgrims proceed along the bed of the stream connecting Minâ and 'Arafa with the valley of Mecca; whence it is reasonable to conclude that in the pre-Islamic period the barge carrying the statue of Hubal had travelled on this stream up to 'Arafa (that, at least at certain times of the year, this water-course contained sufficient water to keep a barge afloat follows from the account of its overflow as given by T. F. Keane, *Six Months in Meccah*, London 1881, p. 177).

Attention must further be called to the fact that in Harrân as well as in other Assyrian and Babylonian communities one of the principal themes of the *akitu*-festival was mortification and self-affliction of the worshippers followed by a reconciliation with the deity, a theme which, in so far as Harrân is concerned, is expressed with particular clarity by the name سلمسين attributed by our mediaeval sources to the *akitu*-temple outside Harrân. For this name, derived from the Akkadian verb *salâmu*,

the temple in Bekka (i. e., the Ka'ba in Mecca) was the first sanctuary built for men, it alludes to a tradition which, as we have seen above (p. 338), is characteristic of the places of Saturn-cult: In each of these cities, the worshippers believed that their sanctuary and their town were the first to have been founded.⁵⁵⁾

III. Šalim's Relation to the Temple on Mt. Moriîâ.

In applying to the pre-Israelite cult of Jerusalem and the Solomonic Temple the information thus gathered about the worship of the planet Saturn, we begin by calling attention to two significant external features of the sanctuary on Mt. Moriîâ. In I Ki. 6. 20 it is related that the Holy of Holies measured 20 cubits in length, in width, and in height. Hence it had the same characteristic form of a cube which, to judge by its name "Cube", the Ka'ba at Mecca must originally have had.⁵⁶⁾ A further detail is revealed by the verse Cant. I. 5, where a young country belle is said to have exclaimed: "I am black, but comely, oh ye daughters of Jerusalem; as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon." In the passage quoted above, p. 339, from ad-Dimišqi's *Cosmography*, black curtains are, in fact, listed as one of the traits typical of the temples of Saturn. It is perhaps not a mere coincidence that the Ka'ba, today much as in the early centuries of Islam, is covered by a carpet of black cloth.⁵⁷⁾

Turning now to the doctrine of the early Jerusalemite religion, we note in the first place that Šulmânu, the city's patron god, was worshipped, much as the Assyro-Babylonian Ninurta, together with his divine consort; for when cuneiform lists of gods mention a goddess Šulmânîtum who is defined as "Ištar of Jerusalem," there is, as was first pointed out by J. Lewy,⁵⁸⁾ no

"to reconcile," has the meaning "Reconciliation of Sin," "Reconciliation with Sin." That the same theme played a part in the Meccan festival is evidenced by the name "Day of Forgiving" proper to the ninth day of the month of *Du'l Hiğġa*, the first day of the Pilgrimage (see al-Birûnî, *Kitâb al-âtâr al-bâqiya*, ed. Sachau, Leipzig 1878, p. 334), and by the custom of present-day Muslims to confess and forgive all past sins after their arrival at Minâ (see Keane, *op. cit.*, pp. 143 f., according to whom the second day of the Pilgrimage was the day on which the pilgrims "were to be absolved from all past sins").

⁵⁵⁾ D'Herbelot (*Bibliothèque Orientale, ou Dictionnaire Universel*, vol. I, La Haye 1777, p. 433) reports a tradition according to which "les docteurs mystiques" among the Muslim savants define the Ka'ba as the "premier Temple que Dieu a bâti." It will be noted that this version comes even closer to the afore-cited legends from Nippur and Byblos in Syria than the usual Arabian story which names Adam and Abraham as the two consecutive builders of the Ka'ba.

⁵⁶⁾ Nowadays, the Ka'ba measures 12 by 10 by 15 meters, which means it is no longer a cube in the strict stereometrical sense; cf. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, Haag 1888, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁾ Cf. Keane, *op. cit.*, pp. 26 and 158.

⁵⁸⁾ See *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* CX, 1934, p. 63, note 86, where also references to the pertinent lists of gods are found.

doubt that Šulmānu's spouse is referred to. In the absence of any positive information about the nature of this goddess⁵⁹⁾ it is perhaps pertinent to recall that immediately below the western boundary of the temple area, there is a well, today known as *Hammām aš-šifâ*, "The Healing Bath," the water of which, much as that of the Meccan Zemzem, is bitter-tasting and almost undrinkable but is said by the Muslims to have the power of healing diseases.⁶⁰⁾ If it is admitted that, as was proposed above,⁶¹⁾ the health-restoring action of the waters of Zemzem represents the healing power of the goddess Gula, the "great physician" and spouse of the planet Saturn, the curing effect attributed to the Jerusalemite well would indicate that, in the cult of Jerusalem, the healing goddess played the same rôle as in Mecca and the older places holy to the planet Saturn.

Far more important from the point of view of the present discussion are the traditions dealing with the wells and water courses within the temple area proper. In the Jerusalem Talmud we read the following legend:⁶²⁾ When David was digging the canals for the sanctuary, he dug fifteen-hundred cubits deep but did not reach the nether waters (*tehôm*). Finally he hit a rock which he wanted to remove, even though the rock warned him not to do so because it was covering up the abyss. When, in spite of this warning, David lifted the rock, the *tehôm* rose and threatened to flood the earth. Thereupon it was decided to inscribe the Name of the Lord upon the stone and to throw it into the flood waters. Immediately the flood subsided, but the waters sank to so great a depth that the earth was now menaced by a drought.

The beginning of this legend vividly recalls a passage in Aššûr-nâšir-apli's Annals, where, describing the preparations for the construction of the Ninurta-temple at Kalḫu, the Assyrian king expresses himself as follows: "I dug down to the level of the water, to a depth of one hundred and twenty layers of brick⁶³⁾ I penetrated. The temple of Ninurta, my Lord, I founded

⁵⁹⁾ It would be hazardous to identify Šulmānītu with the "Queen of Heaven" mentioned in Jer. 44. 17 ff. as one of the native deities worshipped in Palestine. For the latter is said to have been revered "in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem," whence it is logical to assume that, in contradistinction to Šalim's divine spouse, she was not a deity peculiar to the cult of Jerusalem.

⁶⁰⁾ See I. Benzinger in Baedeker's *Palästina und Syrien*⁵, Leipzig 1900, pp. 56 f.; E. Pierotti, *Jerusalem Explored*, London 1864, pp. 63, 74, and passim; cf. C. Schick, *Die Stiftshütte, der Tempel in Jerusalem und der Tempelplatz der Jetztzeit*, Berlin 1896, pp. 326 f.

⁶¹⁾ See above, note 54, sub (1).

⁶²⁾ Sanhedrin X. 29a; for further references see Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, vol. VI, Philadelphia 1928, p. 258, note 70; cf. the same author's paraphrase of the legend *ibidem*, vol. IV, Philadelphia 1913, p. 96.

⁶³⁾ According to Unger (*Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte*, vol. XIV, Berlin 1929, p. 533b), the bricks used by the Assyrians in the ninth century had a thickness of about 12 to 13 centimeters.

in its midst."⁶⁴) The reason why both David and Aššûr-nâšir-apli dug down to the level of the nether water is somewhat illuminated by the fact that in the interior of the Ka'ba at Mecca, there is a well across the opening of which was placed, in the pre-Islamic period, the statue of the god Hubal.⁶⁵) That still in the Islamic period this well, though usually dry, was in communication with the subsoil water follows from al-Bîrûnî's remark⁶⁶) that at the time of the 'Arafa-pilgrimage, it used to be full of water so that the pilgrims could quench their thirst.⁶⁷) It is significant that in Mecca and, to all appearances, also in the Ninurta-temple at Kalḫu, the well communicating with the subsoil water was within the shrine itself and not, as was usual in ancient Oriental sanctuaries, in the court yard.⁶⁸) For this peculiarity suggests that a special relation was assumed to have existed between the deity inhabiting the shrine and the subsoil waters called by the Hebrews *tehôm*. The nature of this relation is elucidated by the aforementioned fact that the statue of Hubal was placed upon the opening of the well; for this indicates that the deity's own body was thought to prevent the nether waters from rising and flooding the earth. Now there is evidence to show that this same belief had once been current in Jerusalem.

In the afore-cited Talmudic legend, it was a stone, usually referred to in Jewish literature as *Eben Šetîjâ*, which retained the *tehôm* within its bounds.⁶⁹) Now according to other passages found in the post-biblical sources, the Solomonic Temple was built in such a way that the *Eben Šetîjâ* was in the center of the Holy of Holiest,⁷⁰) and upon it stood the Ark of the

⁶⁴) See col. II, l. 132 of Aššûr-nâšir-apli's Annals (E. A. W. Budge and L. W. King, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, vol. I, London 1902, p. 345). For parallel passages in other inscriptions of the same ruler see *ibidem*, pp. 209 f., ll. 16—17, and cf. p. 176, ll. 8—13; p. 186, ll. 15—18; and p. 220, ll. 17—18.

⁶⁵) See Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 75; cf. the passage from Ṭabarî's Annals quoted above, note 50, first paragraph.

⁶⁶) *Kitâb al-âṭâr al-bâqîya*, p. 334.

⁶⁷) In al-Bîrûnî's view, this was true at the time of heathendom as well as in the Islamic period. Since, however, after the Islamic reform of the calendar, the pilgrimage rotated from season to season throughout the year, his statement actually seems to apply only to the pre-Islamic age when it always took place in early spring, i. e., at a time when even in Mecca water is more abundant than during the remainder of the year.

⁶⁸) Such was, e. g., the case in Esagila, the famous Marduk-temple at Babylon; see Aššûr-aḫ-iddina's report on the reconstruction of this sanctuary (Meissner-Rost, *Die Bauinschriften Asarhaddons*, Beiträge zur Assyriologie III, 1898, p. 248, ll. 21—25) where it is said that, when laying out the terrace around the temple, the king dug down to the level of the subsoil water.

⁶⁹) See, e. g., Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Ex. 28. 30: ". the *Eben Šetîjâ*, with which the Lord of Eternity, at the beginning, sealed the mouth of the great *tehôm*."

⁷⁰) See Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 12, and vol. V, p. 14, note 39. If the *Eben Šetîjâ*, which sealed off the well through which the *tehôm* was assumed to have risen, was in the center of the Holy of Holiest, it is clear that the waters of the *tehôm* were

Covenant, Jahweh's earthly throne.⁷¹⁾ Thus it is evident that, much as in the Ka'ba Hubal stood over the well connecting his sanctuary with the nether waters, so in the Jerusalemite Temple Jahweh throned above the opening by way of which the waters of the *tehôm* were assumed to have flooded the earth. However, before Jahweh assumed the task of holding in check the destructive nether waters, another deity appears to have played this rôle in Jerusalem: the god embodied by the *Eben Šetîiâ*.

That divine honors were actually rendered to this stone even by the Jews becomes particularly clear from the well-known remark in the *Itinerarium Hierosolymit.* of the Pilgrim of Bordeaux regarding the "*lapis pertusus, ad quem veniunt Judaei singulis annis et unguent eum et lamentant se cum gemitu*"⁷²⁾ Further evidence to the same effect is supplied by the fact that, even as to the sacred stones of the pagan Arabs,⁷³⁾ sacrificial blood was applied to the *Eben Šetîiâ*,⁷⁴⁾ and incense was burnt on it.⁷⁵⁾ It is equally significant that, in spite of the important part which, to judge by the post-biblical traditions, the stone appears to have played in the ritual of the Solomonic Temple, no mention of it is made in the biblical books recounting the construction of this sanctuary. Manifestly, the biblical writers considered the *Eben Šetîiâ* so grossly a piece of heathendom that they refused to take notice of it.⁷⁶⁾

Now it is a well-known fact that among the Semites, and particularly among the ancient inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula, stones frequently received divine honors.⁷⁷⁾ The real character of this stone-cult is easily explained if it is remembered that it was practiced by the same populations among which the worship of the heavenly bodies, and particularly of the seven planets, had its origin.⁷⁸⁾ The connection between the religion of the

immediately underneath this central part of the Temple. That this was actually thought by the Jews to be the case follows from the passage in the Babylonian Talmud (*Yoma*, chapter VIII, fol. 77^b—78^a) speaking of a stream of water which sprang forth from the Holy of Holiest.

⁷¹⁾ See the Mishna treatise *Yoma*, chapter V. 2, and cf. *Tosifta* III. 6.

⁷²⁾ Cf. Kittel, *Studien zur hebräischen Archäologie und Religionsgeschichte*, Leipzig 1908, p. 34, note 3.

⁷³⁾ See Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁷⁴⁾ See chapter V. 3 of the afore-cited Mishna treatise *Yoma*, where it is described how, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest sprinkled the sacred stone with the blood of a bull which he himself presented to the Lord as a sin-offering.

⁷⁵⁾ See the afore-cited passage from *Tosifta* III. 6.

⁷⁶⁾ On the development by which the institutions of the pre-Israelite cult of Jerusalem were gradually assimilated to the religion of Jahweh see below, pp. 354 ff.

⁷⁷⁾ Wellhausen, without venturing an explanation of this cult, emphasized (*op. cit.*, pp. 101 f.) that among the pagan Arabs the stone "ist aber mehr als Altar, er repräsentirt die Gottheit, und zwar jede beliebige männliche oder weibliche Gottheit."

⁷⁸⁾ As was shown in pp. 65 f. of the article quoted above, note 8, the cult of the stars originated among the nomads of the Arabian desert who eventually spread it all over the Fertile Crescent.

stars and the veneration of stones is elucidated by a passage in Sanchuniathon-Philo-Byblios' work, where it is said that meteorites, being considered "stars fallen from the air," played a prominent rôle in the cult of the Phoenicians. It is of particular importance to note that the meteorite referred to by the Phoenician author was set up and worshipped at "Tyre, the sacred island."⁷⁹) For the name of this sacred meteorite of Tyre can be inferred from the treaty concluded by Aššûr-aḥ-iddina with Ba'al, king of Tyre.⁸⁰) As usual in documents of this character, the treaty ends with an enumeration of the deities whom each of the two contracting parties entreated to punish the violator of the terms agreed upon. Now the first among the deities invoked by the king of Tyre is called *aBa-a-a-ti-ilânimeš*, a name in which Langdon⁸¹) recognized the West Semitic *Bêt-êl*⁸²) well known from the Bible

⁷⁹) See Clemen, op. cit., p. 29, sub 31.

⁸⁰) The text was published by Langdon, Rev. d'Ass. XXVI, 1929, pp. 190 f.; for the latest transliteration, translation, and discussion see Weidner, Archiv für Orientforschung VIII, 1932—3, pp. 29 ff., where also the earlier editions, transliterations, and translations are listed.

⁸¹) Loc. cit., p. 193, sub 6.

⁸²) That in the Akkadian transliteration *aBa-a-a-ti-ilânimeš* the plural *ilânimeš* must, with Langdon, loc. cit., be interpreted as a *pluralis maiestatis* to be compared with Hebrew *Elohim* follows from the fact that in several instances such as *Bit-ili-nûri* (for the references see Langdon, loc. cit.) or *Bit-ili-adir* (see below, note 83) the plural *ilâni* is replaced by the singular *ili*. The use of a *pluralis maiestatis* with reference to a great deity is traceable elsewhere in Akkadian sources. The title *إله الآلهة*, "god of the gods," which, according to our mediaeval sources (see, e. g., ad-Dimišqî, op. cit., p. 47) was given by the star-worshippers to their supreme god, appears in Nabû-na'id's foundation cylinder from the *ziqurrat* at Ur in the form *ilânimeš ša ilânimeš* (see col. I, l. 29 and col. II, l. 5 of the text no. 5 transliterated and translated by Langdon in pp. 250 ff. of his afore-cited Neubabylonische Königsinschriften). We further mention that, as was emphasized by Weissbach (Archiv für Orientforschung VII, 1931—2, p. 38, and Zeitschr. f. Ass. XLIV, 1938, pp. 165 f.), the Babylonian version of Darius' Naqš-i-Rustam Inscription *b* as well as several other inscriptions of the same ruler express the notion "a great god" in the phrase "a great god is Ahuramazda" by *ilânimeš rabû*.

The use of this plural is, in fact, well in line with the doctrine of the planetary religion that the supreme god was, to use the words of the mediaeval authorities, *واحد وكثير* (so ad-Dimišqî, op. cit., p. 44). What is meant by this description was pointed out by the writer on p. 62 of the paper quoted above, note 8; there it was shown that, when the Babylonians addressed their supreme god, Marduk (i. e., the planet Jupiter) with the names of Sîn, šamaš, and all the famous stars of the nocturnal sky or when Nabû-na'id invoked his supreme god, the Moon-god Sîn, as the lord of the Marduk-temple Esagila and the Nabû-temple Ezida, they conceived the minor deities as manifestations of the supreme god. Manifesting themselves in all the phenomena of the nocturnal sky, those planetary gods who were regarded by their worshippers as universal supreme gods (viz., Sîn, Marduk, and, as will be shown below, pp. 354 ff., Ninurta) were, in fact, "one as well as many."

In the light of this evidence the interpretation of the spelling *ilânimeš* proposed by Hilprecht (apud Clay, Business Documents of Murashû Sons of Nippur, The Baby-

and from West Semitic theophoric proper names. ⁸³⁾ That this Tyrian god *Bêt-êl* actually is the sacred meteorite mentioned by Sanchuniathon-Philo-Byblios is suggested by a further remark in these authors' work where *Βαϊτύλια* in general are defined as "inspired stones" (λίθοι ἐμψύχοι).⁸⁴⁾ In order to understand the full implication of this definition, we call attention to the belief held by the ancient star-worshippers about the nature of their deities. Since, as will be shown elsewhere, these ideas remained basically unchanged from the period attested by the cuneiform sources until the Middle Ages, we recapitulate, for the sake of convenience, the pertinent information provided by aš-šahrastânî (Haarbrücker, op. cit., II, pp. 66 f.) and ad-Dimišqî (op. cit., p. 47): The planetary gods were thought to be spiritual in character (روحانيون), but each of them had its particular abode (هيكل) or body (بدن). These *haiâkil* or *abdân* of the planetary deities are the seven moving stars visible in the sky, and the *rûh*, or spirit, of each of them is to its *haikal* in the relation of the human soul to the human body. As the Arabic term *haikal*, "temple", "sanctuary" conveys much the same idea as the Hebrew *bêt êl* or the Akkadian *bît ili*, we realize that the meteorites worshipped by the ancient Semites were conceived as divine beings of exactly the same nature as the planets: they, too, consisted of a visible abode, a *bît* or *haikal*, inspired and inhabited by a *rûh*, or soul.

These inferences are of particular interest for the subject here discussed because the most famous of the sacred stones of the Arabs, the *Hağar al-aswad* in the Ka'ba at Mecca, actually is a meteorite.⁸⁵⁾ As, on the other hand, this Black Stone was revered in a sanctuary dedicated to the cult of the "Black Planet" Saturn,⁸⁶⁾ we comprehend that a black meteorite, or a black stone resembling a meteorite, was thought to be a piece of the "Black Planet", which means a part of the body of a great god which, therefore, deserved the same veneration as the planet itself.⁸⁷⁾ Thus it is apparent

lonian Expedition of the Univ. of Pennsylvania, vol. X, Philadelphia 1904, pp. IX ff.) and, more recently, by Eissfeldt (Archiv für Religionswissenschaft XXVIII, 1930, p. 19, note 1) can be dismissed.

⁸³⁾ See the names listed by Cowley, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B. C., Oxford 1923, p. 279b; cf. the significant name *mBît-ili-a-di-i[r]*, "Bêt-êl is dark," occurring in an Accadian text from Nêrab (no. 16, rev., l. 1 of the Tablettes babyloniennes de Neirab, published by Dhorme, Rev. d'Ass. XXV, 1928, pp. 53 ff.).

⁸⁴⁾ See Clemen, op. cit., p. 27, sub 23.

⁸⁵⁾ This is the opinion of modern scientists; see F. A. Lucas, *Meteorites, Meteors and Shooting Stars*², New York 1931, p. 7.

⁸⁶⁾ Cf. above, p. 339 with note 48.

⁸⁷⁾ A red or reddish meteorite, on the other hand, is likely to have been considered a piece of the "Red Planet" Mars, and so on. As was intimated above, p. 339, the ancient star-worshippers assigned a color to each of the seven planets and considered these colors a trait most indicative of the nature of the respective astral deity.

that the well connecting the temple with the nether waters could be sealed off either by the statue of the deity or by the black meteorite; in each case it was the god's body that was assumed to prevent the subsoil water from flooding the earth. Still, the question might be raised why in some instances a black stone and in others an image of the god fulfilled this function. The answer to this question can be inferred from the afore-cited mediaeval treatises exposing the views of the star-worshippers with regard to their deities: In their belief, man can turn in prayer and supplication only to a being visible to his eyes. Since each planet has shorter or longer periods of invisibility, the worshippers found it necessary to create images and statues of their gods to which they could address their prayers at any given moment.⁸⁸⁾ However, if in the form of a black meteorite a piece of the deity's astral body was visible to the congregation at all times, the setting up in the temple of an anthropomorphic idol was obviously unnecessary. It would, therefore, appear that, when the image of Hubal was placed over the well inside the Ka'ba, the "Black Stone" was temporarily hidden from the congregation's eyes. Tradition actually confirms this inference. It is a well-known fact that in the years of Mohammed's early manhood the Ka'ba was rebuilt.⁸⁹⁾ Judging by the procedure followed in the reconstruction of the Saturn-temple at Kalḥu,⁹⁰⁾ one should expect that this reconstruction, too, was preceded by a search for the well connecting the shrine with the nether waters. Our sources actually know about such a search; for it is reported that 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Mohammed's grandfather in whose house the future prophet grew up, perceived a dream in which the long-forgotten location of the well Zemzem was revealed to him.⁹¹⁾ The story continues to relate that 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, digging at the spot he had seen

⁸⁸⁾ From the historical point of view, the explanation of the use of idols as symbols of the gods always visible to the congregation is much sounder than that propounded by the majority of the Islamic authors (cf. above, note 37) according to whom the idols were really the statues of human beings deified after their death. For, as was intimated above, note 78, the cult of the heavenly bodies originated among the nomads of the Arabian desert who, travelling at night, oriented themselves with the help of the stars. So long as they pursued this way of life, they naturally needed no earthly representation of their gods; because nomadic activities really beginning only after sunset, at least some of the heavenly bodies in the nocturnal sky were visible and approachable whenever the worshipper wanted to invoke them. However, as soon as the tribesmen became sedentary, they rested at night and worked during the daylight hours, which means at the time when their deities were invisible. Hence they may well have felt the urge to set up images as symbols of their gods in order to be able to approach them whenever they were in need of divine support and inspiration.

⁸⁹⁾ See, e. g., Mas'ûdî, *Les prairies d'or*, vol. IV, pp. 125 ff.; according to the same author (*ibidem*, IV, p. 154), Mohammed was 36 years of age when the reconstruction was completed.

⁹⁰⁾ See above, pp. 344 f.

⁹¹⁾ Cf. Huart, *Geschichte der Araber*, vol. I, Leipzig 1914, pp. 82 f.

in his dream, actually found the well and in it the sacred Black Stone,⁹²⁾ which was subsequently placed by Mohammed in its present position.

The resemblance of this story with the Talmudic legend of David's finding the *Eben Šetîiâ* when digging the well in preparation of the construction of the temple is too striking to be due to a mere coincidence. Since, furthermore, our source reports that the Black Stone "ferma si bien l'ouverture du puits de Zemzem,"⁹³⁾ it is manifest that there had been a time when the *Haġar al-aswad* sealed off the well Zemzem in the manner the *Eben Šetîiâ* closed the well underneath the Holy of Holies in the Solomonic Temple.

Eventually, however, possibly in consequence of one of the natural catastrophes so frequent in Mecca, the site of the well, and with it the Black Stone, was lost.⁹⁴⁾ It then became necessary to construct a statue to take the place of the stone as a visible symbol of the god. In turn, when the stone was recovered by 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the statue had served its purpose and could be removed. It was, therefore, no break with the ancient religion of

⁹²⁾ On this detail see Khwândamîr's biography of the prophet quoted by d'Herbelot, *op. cit.*, II, p. 176, s. v. *Hagiâr Alassovad*; cf. also vol. I, p. 432, s. v. *Caaba*.

⁹³⁾ So d'Herbelot, *loc. cit.*; as for the context see the next footnote.

⁹⁴⁾ Khwândamîr apud d'Herbelot, *loc. cit.*, relates the tradition as follows: "Les Giorhamides [i. e., the legendary clan reported to have inhabited Mecca prior to the Quraiš], qui avaient la garde de ce Temple, furent contraints d'en céder la possession aux Banou Beker, qui s'étaient rendus maîtres de la ville par la force de leurs armes. Amrou Ben Hareth, chef des Giorhamides, craignant la profanation de ce temple, détacha la pierre noire du lieu où elle était placée, et la jeta dans le puits de Zemzem, dont il ferma si bien l'ouverture, qu'elle ne fut connue par aucun de leurs ennemis." While making it clear that, when recovered by 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Black Stone was found lying across the opening of the well Zemzem, this legend is likely to have served as an explanation of this position which manifestly was no longer understood by the Meccans of the sixth century of our era. To judge by the analogy of the Solomonic Temple, one must, on the contrary, conclude that the well Zemzem with the Black Stone on its top had once been in the center of the cube-shaped sanctuary. This conclusion is well in line with the fact that the well Zemzem when unearthed by 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib contained votive gifts such as the two famous golden gazelles and the precious arms mentioned by our sources; for we know that in the historic period such gifts to the deity were deposited in the well inside the sanctuary (cf. Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 103). If this is so, the ancient sanctuary can be assumed to have been destroyed by one of the catastrophic inundations (referred to by the Arabs as *Sail*) which frequently visit the valley of Mecca. These violent torrents of water not only destroy and carry away whatever they meet on their way, but they leave in their wake a layer of mud which may well have hidden the sacred well with the Black Stone on its top. [On the nature of these floods see Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, Haag 1888, pp. 18 f., and cf. the description by Keane quoted above, p. 342, note 54, sub (3)]. Perhaps the memory of one of these inundations transpires in the Islamic tradition that the Ka'ba disappeared during the Deluge. According to some authors (see d'Herbelot, *op. cit.*, I, p. 432, s. v. *Caaba*) it was destroyed by the flood; according to others (see *Chronique d'Abou-Djafar Mohammed Tabari*, translated by Louis Dubeux, vol. I, Paris 1836, p. 180) it ascended to heaven. Cf. Mas'ûdî, *Les prairies d'or*, III, p. 296 who describes the site of the temple after the destruction as a heap of sand.

Mecca when Mohammed disposed of the statue after he himself had set up the *Haġar al-aswad* in a place where it was accessible to the eyes and the lips of the worshippers.

To return now to the *Eben Šetîiâ* in the Temple at Jerusalem, our sources leave no doubt that, rightly or wrongly, it was regarded as being of cosmic origin. For we repeatedly find references such as this one: "God threw a stone in the *t^ehôm*, and upon it the world was founded."⁹⁵) We have, therefore, no reason to doubt that the *Eben Šetîiâ* played in Jerusalem the rôle which the *Haġar al-aswad* played in Mecca.

On the basis of these inferences we are now in a position to supply at least an outline of that portion of the Ninurta Epic which is missing in the extant cuneiform version, namely that dealing with the manner in which Ninurta turned in his favor the battle against the flood:⁹⁶) He appears to have won his victory by throwing a piece of his own body into the raging waters which were thus forced to recede.

As was mentioned above (p. 336), Ninurta's victory forced the flood waters back to such a depth that a period of drought threatened mankind with another catastrophe. It will be noted that this detail of the Nippurian epic has an exact parallel in the afore-cited Talmudic legend (above, p. 344) where it is related that, when David threw into the rising flood the stone inscribed with the Holy Name, the waters subsided so rapidly that now the earth was menaced by a drought. It is further in harmony with the traditions from other towns holy to Saturn when the post-biblical Jewish sources relate that Jerusalem was the first city to be created and that it was built around the Holy of Holies in the center of which was placed the *Eben Šetîiâ*.⁹⁷) That in Jerusalem, much as in Nippur, Byblos,⁹⁸) and Mecca,⁹⁹) the city's patron god was thought to be the founder follows with particular clarity from the name Jerusalem which, as was mentioned above, has the meaning "Creation of Šalim."

As our previous discussion has shown that the legends surrounding the Solomonic Temple and its divine founder are basically identical with those told in other centers of Saturn-cult, the question arises as to whether we find in Jerusalemite tradition any trace of the child sacrifices which, while wanting in the material from Nippur, appear to have played a part in the cults of Byblos and Mecca. In this respect we recall, of course, the well-known story of Gen. 22 relating how Abraham was called upon to offer

⁹⁵) For the references see Ginzberg, op. cit., V, p. 14, note 39.

⁹⁶) To judge by the fragmentary tablet AO.4135 (published in facsimile, transliteration, and translation by Thureau-Dangin, Rev. d'Ass. XI, 1914, pp. 82 ff.; cf. Geller, op. cit., pp. 314 ff.), the only part of the epic dealing with the actual battle, the first encounter does not appear to have been a success for Ninurta.

⁹⁷) For references see Ginzberg, op. cit., vol. V, p. 14, note 39.

⁹⁸) See above, p. 338.

⁹⁹) See above, p. 343 with note 55.

his favorite son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to God. If it could be shown that the location where this sacrifice was to take place was Mt. Morîjâ, the site holy to Šalim where the *Eben šetîjâ* blocked the passage of the flood waters, it would be clear that it was Šalim to whom the sacrifice was due. To be sure, the post-biblical Jewish writers took it for granted that the Solomonic Temple was erected on the spot where Isaac was to be slaughtered;¹⁰⁰) but some modern savants objected that in Gen. 22. 2 the scene of the sacrifice is laid in *הַכּוֹרְבָּה* אֶרֶץ, whereas the temple-mount is called *הַר הַכּוֹרְבָּה*. In appraising this seeming divergency it must be remembered that in ancient Syria and Palestine a region not infrequently bore the same name as the mountain which constitutes its most conspicuous topographic feature. A pertinent example of this nomenclature is furnished by the Bible. In I Ki. 16. 24 it is related that ‘Omri purchased Mt. Šomrôn and built a city on its slopes which he likewise called Šomrôn. That this name applied also to the surrounding country follows from passages such as 2 Ki. 17. 26 and 23. 19 which speak of “the towns (*‘ârê*) of Šomrôn,”¹⁰¹) thus implying that the name Šomrôn was used with reference not only to the mountain and the city bearing this name but also to the villages surrounding them. As cuneiform sources as well as mediaeval Arab authors likewise attest the habit of designating a city, the surrounding country, and the foremost mountain of the region by one and the same name,¹⁰²) it is clear that, at least in so far as Syria and Pa-

¹⁰⁰) See Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 285; for the references see *ibidem*, vol. V, p. 253, note 249.

¹⁰¹) The “towns of Šomrôn” are also mentioned in Ezra 4. 10 (so according to Torrey, *Ezra Studies*, Chicago 1910, p. 186, note s, and Bauer and Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*, Halle 1927, p. 313, sub g).

¹⁰²) From cuneiform literature we mention in particular the city-state of Iblâ to which Sargon of Akkad refers in the following well-known passage: “Sargon prostrated himself at Tuttul before Dagan; in consideration of his prayer, Dagan gave him the upper land: Mâri, Jarmûti, Iblâ, up to the cedar-forest and the silver-mountains” (the pertinent passage occurs in the inscription published by Poebel, *Historical and Grammatical Texts*, Philadelphia 1914, no. 34, cols. 5 and 6). As was repeatedly stated by modern authors (see, e. g., Landsberger, *Über den Wert künftiger Ausgrabungen in der Türkei*, *Belleten* 10, 1939, p. 223, sub 25), this city-state of Iblâ was located in the vicinity of the town of Ursu to which Gudea, in his so-called Statue B (col. V, ll. 53 f.) refers as “the city of Ursu in the mountain of Iblâ” (the controversial question as to the exact location of Ursu and Iblâ was recently discussed by J.-R. Kupper, *Rev. d’Ass.* XLIII, 1949, pp. 79 ff.).

Numerous pertinent examples are furnished by ad-Dimišqî: Mâridîn, according to him (*op. cit.*, p. 191), was not only the name of the well-known city in the district of Diyâr-Bekr, but also the designation of the country surrounding it as well as of the mountain on the slopes of which the city was built. The city of Šafad was, according to the same author (*op. cit.*, p. 210), located in the “country of Garmaq”, a district manifestly named after the Ġabal Garmaq which overlooks Šafad (cf. I. Benzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 286). Likewise in the region of Šafad, ad-Dimišqî mentions (*op. cit.*, p. 211) the mountain of Baqî‘at with the homonymous city and district.

lestine are concerned, this nomenclature was used throughout the ages. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that ארץ המריה was the designation of the city-state the most prominent geographic feature of which was הר המריה; in other words, ארץ המריה appears to be the kingdom to which the afore-cited letter VAT 1646 refers as *mât Ū-ru-sa-lim*¹⁰³, "the country of Jerusalem."

The conclusion that the "land of Morîjâ" was the region surrounding Mt. Morîjâ is confirmed by the name Morîjâ itself. As has long been recognized by Old Testament scholars,¹⁰³) this name is derived from the root ירה which, as was mentioned before, recurs in the first element of the name Jerusalem. However, the interpretation of Morîjâ as מורית + יה proposed by Grill in his afore-cited article is incompatible with the persistent tradition connecting Jerusalem with Šalim and not with Jahweh. A more sensible explanation of the name is arrived at if it is remembered that Hebrew words ending in a long *i*-vowel can form two kinds of feminines; the first by the addition of the ending *-t* and the second by affixing the ending *-at* and inserting the "Gleitlaut" *î* between the long *î* and the short *a*, thus obtaining a suffix *-îjat* which, after reduction of the final *-t*, appears in Hebrew as יה. As an example of the simultaneous occurrence of these two feminine forms we quote מואבית and מואביה, "the Moabite woman."¹⁰⁴) Hence it may well be concluded that there existed not only a word *môrît*,¹⁰⁵) "foundation," but also a form *môrîjâ* having the same sense. In other words, the name Morîjâ is, more or less, a synonym of *Šetîjâ*, and thus alludes to the afore-discussed traditions which define the temple-mount and the city of Jerusalem as the first places to be founded by the creator of the world.

If thus the scene of the story related in Gen. 22 was laid on the top of Mt. Morîjâ, which means, as we have seen, on a site holy to Šalim, the planet Saturn, it is clear that there, no less than in other centers of his cult, the Black Planet was assumed to demand child-sacrifices from his worshippers.¹⁰⁶)

As our previous discussion has revealed that the Solomonic Temple was built on a site where, in the form of the *Eben Šetîjâ*, a part of Saturn's astral

¹⁰³) See, e. g., Julius Grill, *Zeitschr. für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, IV, 1884, p. 145.

¹⁰⁴) Bauer und Leander, *Historische Grammatik der Hebräischen Sprache*, Halle 1922, p. 502, mention as a further example *tahtit* and *tahtîjâ*, "lower."

¹⁰⁵) On feminine *maqtil*-forms of stems *tertia*e see Brockelmann, *Grundriss I*, p. 381, § 200, sub f.

¹⁰⁶) If combined with the principle outlined above, pp. 332-334, that he who wanted to take possession of a certain country had to render homage to the tutelary god of that region, this evidence explains the meaning of the episode related in Gen. 22: Abraham, the immigrant from Harrân, wanted to take possession for himself and his descendants of a country the divine patron and ruler of which was the planet Saturn. Hence he had to prove his devotion to this deity by performing the ritual of this god which consisted in the sacrifice of a son.

body was present and visible, and where human sacrifices were offered to that deity, and that, furthermore, the sanctuary exhibited external features typical of the temples of Saturn, we are now in a position to answer the question asked in the beginning of this chapter: It was in honor of Šalim, the planet Saturn, that David and Solomon built the temple on Mt. Morîjâ, and it was, therefore, the worship of this god which these two princes attempted to propagare among their subjects. If this is so, it is further manifest that the six-pointed star-symbol usually named for either David or Solomon was the emblem of their favorite deity, the planet Saturn.¹⁰⁷⁾

IV. Šalim and Jahweh.

The results reached in the preceding chapter raise the question as to how the symbol of the planetary god Saturn eventually came to characterize the religion of Jahweh. In other words, we must try to analyze the ideas which made it possible for the Jews to assimilate the ancient astral religion of Jerusalem so completely to their own doctrine that every distinction between the two was obliterated. The answer to this question is suggested by a hymn to Ninurta¹⁰⁸⁾ which makes it clear that the religion of that deity belonged to those ancient Oriental cults which were capable of absorbing the worship of any given phenomenon in nature as well as in the sky

¹⁰⁷⁾ This conclusion explains at the same time the popular Arab legends about the "seal of Solomon." As is well known, the six-pointed star is believed by the Arabs to have given Solomon the command not only over the whole earth but also over the spirits, both good and evil. There is, for instance, the story, preserved in the Arabian Nights, which tells about a ghost who, having rebelled against king Solomon, his lord, was imprisoned by that ruler in a bottle. The container, which eventually was found by a fisherman in his net, was sealed by a leaden plug bearing "the seal of our lord, Solomon." It is easy to see that, much as Ninurta-Šulmânu himself confined the hostile spirits of the flood in the shaft of a well which was sealed by a stone, so Solomon, by means of Ninurta's six-pointed star emblem, was in a position to enclose a rebellious ghost in a bottle. The idea behind this parallelism is obvious: By entrusting to Solomon the ring bearing his emblem, the great god was assumed to have delegated at least part of his power to the king whom he had chosen to rule in his name over the inhabited earth. It is not impossible that it was this parallelism between the great god, Šulmânu or Šalmân, and the homonymous king which prompted the Arabs to transform the biblical name *Šelômô(n)* into what looks like a diminutive having the meaning "little Šalmân," it being implied that the "great Šalmân" was the god who had chosen king Solomon as ruler of the universe. (For an attempt at explaining the Arabic form of Solomon's name on a purely linguistic basis see Brockelmann, *Grundriss I*, p. 256.)

¹⁰⁸⁾ See the text VAT 9739 published by Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, vol. I, Leipzig 1919, no. 102; for a transliteration and translation by the same author see *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft* 23, 1, Leipzig 1918, pp. 47—49. Ebeling re-published his translation with some minor changes in Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte zum Alten Testament*, Berlin and Leipzig 1926, pp. 250 f.

without violating the strictly monotheistic principle. In this hymn we read the following verses:

¹⁰Oh Lord, Thy face is the sky; Thy head-ornament is the god [.....].

¹¹Thy two eyes, oh Lord, are the gods Enlil and [Ninlil].

¹²The lids¹⁰⁹) of Thy two eyes are Gula (and) Bêlit-il[î..].

¹³The white¹¹⁰) of Thy two eyes, oh Lord, are the twin(god)s¹¹¹) Sîn [and Nergal].

¹⁴The lashes of Thy two eyes are the radiance of the Sun-god, the ra[diance of].

¹⁵Thy chin, oh Lord, is the astral Ištar (i. e., the planet Venus).

¹⁶The gods Anum and Antum are Thy two lips; Thy command [they pronounce].

¹⁷Thy tongue is the god Pabilsag who, above [and below].

¹⁸Thy gum, oh Lord, is the circumference of heaven (and) earth, the habitation of the god [.....].

¹⁹Thy teeth are the Divine Seven, the overthrowers of the evi[l ones].

²⁰Thy temples, oh Lord, are the rising of the stars, the setting¹¹²) [of the stars].

²¹Thy ears are the gods Ea (and) Damkina, the princes¹¹³) of the depth.

²²Thy head is Adad, who [.....] heaven and earth like a.....

²³Thy forehead is Šala, the beloved [br]ide, who heals [.....].

¹⁰⁹) That *alamassâtât* must denote here a specific part of Ninurta's eyes, and not, as assumed by Ebeling, "die Schutzgöttin[nen]," follows from the fact that each part of the god's body is given the name of one of the well-known deities of the Assyro-Babylonian pantheon. Our term is most likely to denote the lids because they are the essential protectors of the eye-balls. Our interpretation is well in line with the etymology of *lamassu*, "protection," proposed by Poebel, *Studies in Akkadian Grammar*, Chicago 1939, p. 25, note 1.

¹¹⁰) *Araq ênê-ka* does not denote "die Iris deiner Augen," as translated by Ebeling in both of his versions. For *arqu* means "yellow," "pale-colored" (see Deimel, *Šumerisches Lexikon* II. 3, Rome 1932, no. 351, sub 5), whence our idiom manifestly refers to the pale-colored part of the eye, i. e., to what we call the white. If our poet would have thought of the iris which, in the case of an Oriental, is black or brown, he would certainly not have compared it with the silvery light of the Moon and the red brilliance of the planet Mars; cf. the next footnote.

¹¹¹) It is hard to see why Ebeling translates the well-known term *maššê*, "twins," by "Strahlen." On the twin-gods Sîn and Nergal see, for instance, the astronomical commentary 81,7—1,4 (published in *The Cun. Inscr. of Western Asia*, vol. V, London 1880, pl. 46, no. 1; for a transliteration see Weidner, *Handbuch der babylonischen Astronomie*, vol. I, Leipzig 1915, pp. 51 f.), where, in ll. 4 f., the constellation Gemini (*Maš-tab-ba-gal-gal-la*) is identified with Sîn and Nergal.

¹¹²) *Šalâm*; for *GI* = *šalâmu* see Deimel, *op. cit.*, no. 85, sub 73.

¹¹³) Even though *NUNME* usually denotes *apkallu*, "wise one," we prefer here the reading *rubême*, because *apkal nîmeqi*, while possible as an epithet of Ea, could not well be used with reference to that deity's consort, Damkina.

²⁴Thy neck is Marduk, the judge of heaven [and earth], the flood [.....].

²⁵Thy throat is Šarpanîtum¹¹⁴)

It will be noted that here the great deities of the Assyro-Babylonian pantheon — astral gods such as Sîn, Šamaš and Ištar no less than weather and fertility gods such as Adad and Dagan¹¹⁵) — are represented as parts of Ninurta's body. We thus learn that the worshippers of the planet Saturn conceived their god as the embodiment of the whole universe, the various deified astral as well as natural phenomena being imagined as members of this divine body and, therefore, as executors of a unique divine will.¹¹⁶)

¹¹⁴) ¹⁰*Be-lum pa-nu-ka šamû^u šu-uk-nat-ka d[.....]*

¹¹*ênâmeš-ka be-lum dEn-lil u d[Nin-lil]*

¹²*alamassâtât ênêmeš-ka dGu-la dBe-lit-î-[U]*

¹³*araq ênêmeš-ka be-lum maš-še-e dSîn [ù dNergal]*

¹⁴*a-gap-pi ênêmeš-ka ša-ru-ur dŠam-ši ša-[ru-ur d.....]*

¹⁵*ši-kîn pi-ka be-lum dIš-tar kakkabêmeš*

¹⁶*dA-nu-um u An-tum šaptê-ka qî-bit-ka*

¹⁷*mul-ta-bîl-ta-ka dPa-bîl-sag šá e-la-an [ù ša-ap-la-an*

¹⁸*šamêe pi-ka be-lum kip-pat šamêe iršitit^{ti} šu-bat d[.....]*

¹⁹*šinnêmeš-ka dVII^{bi} mu-šam-qî-tu lim-nu-[ti]*

²⁰*ti-ih létêmeš-ka be-lum ši-it kakkabêmeš šalâm [kakkabêmeš]*

²¹*uznâmeš-ka dÉ-a dDam-ki-na rubême ni-me-qî*

²²*qaqqadudu-ka dAdad šá šamê ú iršitim^{tim} kîma kiš-kât-te-[e.....]*

²³*pût-ka dŠa-la [hi]-ir-tu na-ra-am-tú mu-ṭib-[bat.....]*

²⁴*kišâdu-ka dMarduk daiiân šamêe [iršitim^{tim}] a-bu-ub [.....]*

²⁵*nap-šat-ka dŠar-pa-ni-tum*

¹¹⁵) The latter deity is mentioned in the fragmentary line 32.

¹¹⁶) We recognize in this doctrine an archaic, anthropomorphic version of an idea which, as was briefly mentioned above, note 82, is well known from later periods: The worshippers of the planetary gods Sîn and Marduk regarded every deified phenomenon in the sky as well as in nature as a manifestation of one single supreme deity. In invoking Marduk, the Babylonians could use the names of Sîn, of Šamaš, and of the various stars (see p. 62 with note 140 of the paper quoted above, note 8), each of these deities being considered a manifestation of the divine being that was their national god. The Moon-worshippers, in turn, could enter the sanctuaries of Marduk, Nabû or other great gods and render homage there to Sîn, because in their view the minor deities were merely the executors of Sîn's decisions and thus part of the one and only divine will that was thought by them to direct affairs in heaven and on earth (for the details see p. 62 of our afore-cited paper) The correspondences as well as the differences between the later notions of the single supreme god and the more archaic ideas expressed in the Ninurta Hymn VAT 9739 (to be sure, in its extant form this hymn is Middle Assyrian; but the frequent use of the mimation [e. g., *be-lum* in ll. 11, 13, 15, and 18; *dA-nu-um* in l. 16] makes it clear that it is based on an older version) become particularly clear from a comparison of the latter composition with an incantation to Marduk preserved in obv., col. II, ll. 3 ff. of the tablet VAT 9823 (published as no. 25 in the edition of Ebeling quoted above, note 108; for a transliteration and translation by the same author see *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft* 23, 1, Leipzig 1918, pp. 11 ff.). There we read the following lines:

³The god Sîn is Thy godhead; the god Anu is Thy princeliness;

Hence the Jews who, after the conquest of Jerusalem by David, established themselves in Saturn's holy city had no difficulty in incorporating their national god into the cult practiced in their new capital: Much as the author of our hymn VAT 9739 saw (according to l. 24) in Marduk, the Babylonian national god, Ninurta's neck, they could interpret Jahweh as a certain part of the body of Šulmânu, the Jerusalemite counterpart of Ninurta.¹¹⁷⁾

The idea that the minor deities were part of the supreme god's body and thus executors of his will carries with it the belief in a universal supreme god. For if, in our Ninurta Hymn VAT 9739, Marduk, the divine lord of Babylon, Enlil and Ninlil, the patrons of Nippur, Sîn, the tutelary god of Ur, Harrân in Mesopotamia, and Têmâ in Arabia, Šamaš, the protector of Sippar and Larsa in Babylonia and of Heliopolis-Ba^cala-bakka and other cities in Syria were thought to carry out Ninurta's decisions, it is clear that the latter was the supreme ruler of all these localities and thus the universal supreme god. That this was actually the idea current in ancient Jerusalem follows from Deut. 32. 8. f., where we read: "When the Most High (*êl 'eliôn*)¹¹⁸⁾ assigned the nations (lit. 'caused the nations to be hereditary possessions'), when He separated the children of man, establishing realms of the nations according to the number of deities (thus according to the Septuagint which, reading בני אל instead of בני ישראל, translates κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ 'according to the number of angels'), then verily his people came to be Jahweh's share". Here it is taken for granted that the supreme god, *êl 'eliôn*, assigned the various nations to "angels", or lower deities, one of whom was Jahweh, the national god of the Jews.

⁴The god Dagan is Thy lordliness; the god Bêl is Thy kingship;

⁵The god Adad is Thy majesty; the wise god Ea is Thy intelligence.

⁶The god Nabû, who handles the stylus, is Thy wisdom.

⁷Thy supremacy is Ninurta; Thy strength is Nergal

³*dSîn il-ut-ka dA-nu mal-ku-ut-ka*

⁴*dDa-gan bêl-ut-ka dBêl šâr-ut-ka*

⁵*dAdad giš-ru-ut-ka dÊ-a ir-šú ħa-si-sa-ka*

⁶*ša-bit qân tup-pi dNabû li-'i-ut-ka*

⁷*ašaridu-ut-ka dNin-urta dan-nu-[ut]-ka dNergal*

Even as in the Ninurta Hymn VAT 9739, the guiding idea of this invocation is the belief in the existence of only one great god. However, whereas in the former composition the minor deities are conceived as parts of the body of an anthropomorphic supreme god, the author of the incantation to Marduk sees in them abstract attributes of an abstract divine being.

¹¹⁷⁾ That in the ancient Palestinian songs, legends, and traditions preserved in the Bible the supreme god was conceived as an anthropomorphic being follows from the mention of his face (e. g., Gen. 32. 31; Ex. 33. 14; Nu. 6. 26), eyes and eye-lashes (e. g., Psalm 11. 4; 33. 18), mouth (e. g., Jer. 9. 19), hand (e. g., Is. 8. 11; Job 23. 2), and organs of generation (Ex. 4. 25).

¹¹⁸⁾ That *êl 'eliôn* was a designation of Šalim, the god of Jerusalem, was shown by J. Lewy, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* CX, 1934, p. 62; cf. Nyberg, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* XXXV, 1938, pp. 360 ff.

Whereas some modern commentators date this subordination of Jahweh to *él 'eliôn* to the early post-Exilic period,¹¹⁹⁾ Nyberg maintains that it reflects the Jews' way of reasoning at the time of their immigration into Palestine.¹²⁰⁾ Yet, the idea expressed in our passage must have been current in Israel until, under Saul, David, and Solomon, the Jewish state became, for the first time, a powerful political unit; for the small and politically unimportant nation of which Saul became the first king could not fail to conclude that the national deities of its more powerful neighbors were mightier than their own national god. This conclusion was all the more imperative because, throughout the ancient Near East, it was assumed that, when a nation gained the ascendancy over the civilized world, its national god had assumed the rule over the other deities.¹²¹⁾

By the same token it appears that, after Israel had become one of the leading nations in the western part of the Fertile Crescent, the subordination of Jahweh to another deity no longer satisfied the national pride of the Jews. That this was actually so is shown by the verses 1 Chr. 21. 16 ff. (cf. 2 Sam. 24. 16 ff.) where it is related how David beheld, on the mountain top which was to be the site of the Solomonic Temple, an angel, or messenger, of Jahweh standing between heaven and earth and menacing with his sword the city of Jerusalem. There can hardly be any doubt that the deity who, functioning here as the executor of Jahweh's will, revealed himself on the summit of Mt. Moriĵâ was Šalim, the divine owner and inhabitant of this mountain. For biblical no less than cuneiform passages make it clear that, in the belief of the ancients, a theophany took place only in a temenos sacred to and inhabited by the deity who deigned to appear to a mortal. As pertinent examples we quote the well-known legend of Jacob's dream at Bêt-êl, where the patriarch is said to have awoke with the words (Gen. 28. 16): "Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it!" An even closer parallel to our story is provided by Jos. 5. 13—15, where an angel, described as the "captain of the Lord's host," is said to have appeared to Joshua in the neighborhood of Jericho. The sacred character of the place in which this apparition was beheld is underlined by the command given to Joshua: "Take your sandals off your feet, for the ground on which you are standing is holy!"¹²²⁾ Even though the story breaks off

¹¹⁹⁾ See, e. g., Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, Tübingen 1934, p. 260.

¹²⁰⁾ *Loc. cit.*, pp. 365 f.

¹²¹⁾ See, for the time being, Jacobsen, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* II, 1943, pp. 170 ff.

¹²²⁾ See further Ex. 3. 1—5, and cf. the remarks of Eissfeldt, *op. cit.*, pp. 45 f., where, however, the designation of the summit of Mt. Moriĵâ as a "profaner, nämlich als Tenne dienender Platz," is misleading. The most one might admit is that the place had been desecrated by the Jebusites who are likely to have been the destroyers of the famous Jerusalemite Šalim-temple mentioned in the afore-cited letter from Tell el-Amarna (cf. above, p. 333).

abruptly, we can surmise that the warlike angel perceived by Joshua near Jericho was the patron god of this locality who promised to the approaching Israelites the rule over his holy city. From the point of view of our discussion it is of particular interest to note that the redactor of this story — who manifestly cut off its culminating point — transformed the local god of Jericho into a “captain of the Lord’s host,” which means into an executor of Jahweh’s decisions, in much the same manner as the compilers of 2 Sam. 14. 16 ff. and 1 Chr. 21. 16 ff. characterize the divine lord of Mt. Moriîâ as Jahweh’s messenger. Hence it is learned that in the view of these ancient theologians Jahweh had assumed the rôle which had previously been played by Šalim-êl *eliôn*: Jahweh was now conceived as the supreme deity while the other gods were merely his spokesmen who carried out his decisions.

An even later stage in the development of the ideas about Šalim and Jahweh is revealed by the verse 2 Chr. 3. 1 according to which Solomon built the Temple of Jahweh “at Jerusalem, on Mt. Moriîâ where Jahweh had appeared to David, his father.” For here the divine being beheld by David in his vision on Mt. Moriîâ is defined neither as Šalim nor as Jahweh’s messenger but simply as Jahweh. In other words, at the time when this passage was written Šalim was identified with Jahweh. Yet, strange as it may appear at first sight, this identification did not deprive the divine lord of Jerusalem of any of the traits characteristic of this planetary deity. Evidence to this effect is contained, in the first place, in the Bible itself. After a short eclipse during which it was replaced by the name “Jebusite City,” the conspicuous name Jerusalem, the meaning of which was bound to be understood by every one familiar with the divine name Šalim, remained in general use throughout the centuries. To judge by its occurrence in Gen. 22. 2 (cf. above, pp. 352 f.), the afore-cited passage of the Book of Chronicles, and the post-biblical Jewish sources, the same is true of the name Moriîâ which, as we have seen, likewise has its origin in the local traditions surrounding Šalim. Extra-biblical evidence points in the same direction. The *Eben Šetîîâ* with its cycle of legends would not have played so prominent a rôle in mediaeval Jewish tradition and legend if it had not figured in the ritual of the Temple at Jerusalem throughout its existence. It is, therefore, not surprising that, in spite of their aversion against representations of the deity, the worshippers of Jahweh used the six-pointed star, the symbol of the Black Planet, as an emblem of their faith.¹²³) In fact, throughout the Middle Ages, the Jews were known as

¹²³) Together with other symbols, the six-pointed star appears on an archaic Jewish seal (perhaps as old as the seventh century B. C.) belonging to Joshua, son of Asaiah; see S. A. Cook, *The Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archaeology*, London 1930, pp. 46 and 214. According to the *Jewish Encyclopaedia* (vol. VIII, 1904, pp. 251 f.), it subsequently occurs at Tarentum, Italy, on a Jewish tombstone of the third century of our era.

“the people of Saturn” to all those who believed in the influence of the planets on earthly life.¹²⁴) To what an extent the attribution of the Jews to the planet Saturn was taken for granted throughout the Near East is best shown by the earliest history of Islam.

V. Šalim and Allah.

It is a well-known fact that, in Sura 106. 3, Mohammed exhorts his kinsmen, the Quraiš, to worship رَبِّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ “the Lord of this house,” which means the god of the Ka^cba. That, contrary to the assumption of Wellhausen,¹²⁵) this exhortation was not an empty phrase meant to make the “new” religion acceptable to the people of Mecca follows not only from the afore-discussed fact that the essential features of the Meccan ritual, including the cult of the Black Stone, were perpetuated in Islam but also from the much-discussed verse Sura 24. 35 where Allah is characterized as a star and, with an epithet familiar from the Assyro-Babylonian Ninurta,¹²⁶) as “the light of heaven and earth.” How, then, modern historians have frequently asked,¹²⁷) could Mohammed at the same time identify his god with the god of the Jews, the god of Abraham and of Solomon who, as has often been stressed, are represented by the Mohammedans as perfect Muslims. Our previous analysis of the early religions of Jerusalem and Mecca provides the answer to this question.

It was pointed out above (pp. 349 f.) that, up to the time when the Black Stone was recovered by Mohammed’s grandfather, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, a statue of the planet Saturn had served in its place as the visible symbol of the planetary god to whom the Ka^cba was dedicated. The recovery of the Stone manifestly confronted the community with the problem of restoring the ritual of the Ka^cba as it had been practiced in times of old, prior to the disappearance of the Black Stone and the setting up of the statue. Now a faulty or incomplete ritual could not, in the belief of the ancient Semites, provide the congregation with the moral guidance it needed to live up to the requirements of its religion; its perusal was, therefore, bound to arouse the wrath of the deity which, in turn, meant punishment and ca-

¹²⁴) See, e. g., al-Birûnî’s *Kitâb at-Taḥfîm* (edited by R. Ramsay Wright, London 1934), p. 253, sub 433—434. It is not impossible that Tacitus, too, knew the designation of the Jews as “the people of Saturn.” For he appears to imply that they were driven from their earlier habitations and came to Palestine when Saturn, supplanted by Jupiter, ceased to rule the world; cf. Isidore Lévy in *Latomus* V, 1946, p. 331.

¹²⁵) *Op. cit.*, p. 69, note 1.

¹²⁶) *Nûr šamêe iršiti*; for references see Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta*, *Studia Orientalia* VII, Helsingforsiae 1938, p. 134.

¹²⁷) See, e. g., A. A. Bevan in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, II, New York 1926, pp. 307 f., and cf. Wellhausen, *loc. cit.*

tastrophe for the worshippers. Hence it is not surprising that the problem as to the proper ritual of the Ka'ba deeply concerned a family as profoundly religious and devoted to the god of Mecca as was that of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib.¹²⁸) Cuneiform literature offers an example vividly illustrating the predicament of the pious worshipper of a planetary deity who wished to reconstruct a sanctuary the ritual of which had been lost for centuries. In his inscription YBC. 2182,¹²⁹) Nabû-na'id, the king of Babylon, describes how, upon the Moon-god's command, he planned to restore the office of an *entu*-priestess at Ur and the sanctuary in which the ritual connected with this office used to be celebrated in days of old. Yet since centuries this ritual had become obsolete; hence the king ordered a search to be made for ancient documents containing at least an indication as to how the priestess and her sacred residence were to be equipped. After a quest extending over at least eight years,¹³⁰) the necessary information was secured from documents excavated at Ur. In the meantime, however, the king chose still another way of recovering the details of the forgotten ritual of the Moon-cult: he proceeded to Ḥarrân and Têmâ, which means to two other centers of Moon-worship where he could hope to obtain from the local priesthood pertinent traditions and materials not available in Babylonia.¹³¹)

That Nabû-na'id was not the only star-worshipper who attempted to recover the lost ritual of a holy city by consulting the priesthood of towns

¹²⁸) Muslim tradition knows many stories underlining 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib's devotion to the god of the Ka'ba; besides those referred to in the preceding pages (viz., his promise to sacrifice to the god of the Ka'ba one of his ten sons [cf. above, p. 341] and his dream-revelation in which he beheld the forgotten location of the well Zemzem [cf. above, p. 349]), we mention in particular the legend about his meeting with Abrahâ, the king of the Ethiopians (see Mas'ûdî, *Les prairies d'or* III, p. 260) and that about his donating a gilt door to the Ka'ba (ibidem, p. 259).

¹²⁹) The text was published by Clay, *Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts*, vol. I, New Haven 1915, pp. 66—75 and plates XXXIII—XXXV, no. 45; for the latest transliteration and translation see Böhl in *Symbolae ad iura orientis antiqui pertinentes, Paulo Koschaker dicatae*, Leiden 1939, pp. 162 ff. A barrel cylinder reporting on the same event as YBC.2182 but differing in some details from the latter text was examined by Scheil in the collection of a dealer at Bagdad; see *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 1912, pp. 680 f., séance du 20 Décembre 1912.

¹³⁰) As we have shown on p. 50, note 105, of the paper quoted above, note 8, the divine command was received by Nabû-na'id on Ulûlu 13 (September 26) of his second regnal year (554 B. C.). In his text B. M. 104738 (published by King, *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, part XXXIV, London 1914, plates 26—37; transliterated and translated by Langdon, *American Journal of Semitic Languages* XXXII, 1915/16, pp. 103 ff.) which summarizes his building activity up to his 10th regnal year, the restoration of the buildings at Ur is not yet mentioned.

¹³¹) That Nabû-na'id's lengthy sojourn at Têmâ in Arabia served religious purposes was first pointed out by J. Lewy, *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. XIX, 1946, pp. 434 ff.; cf. pp. 37 ff. of our afore-cited study.

where the same cult was practiced is evidenced by the colophon of the cuneiform text AO. 6451.¹³²⁾ After characterizing the text as a summary of the sacred rites to be performed in the Main Temple at Uruk and of the functions of the various classes of higher and lower priests, the colophon mentions that the original tablets containing these instructions were "carried off as booty from Uruk" by Nabû-aplu-uşur, the king of the Sealand. The text then continues: "Kidin-Ani, a man from Uruk, the *mašmaš*-priest of Anu and Antu [i. e., of the two principal deities revered at Uruk], the descendant of Ekur-zakir, the *urigallu*-priest of the Main Temple, has inspected these tablets in the country of Elam, and has copied them under the reign of the kings Seleucos and Antiochus, and has brought them to Uruk." We thus learn that the ritual of the chief sanctuary of Uruk had been lost when Nabû-aplu-uşur, the first king of the Neo-Babylonian Dynasty, ransacked the temple library.¹³³⁾ As it was well known that Susa, the capital of Elam, was the residence of an Iştar-goddess of much the same nature as the divine lady of Uruk,¹³⁴⁾ a priest from the latter town proceeded to Susa and there copied the tablets recording the ritual common to the two sanctuaries.

Whereas in the case of Mohammed and his Meccan contemporaries a search for ancient records and documents buried in the foundations of the temple was probably not as promising as it was in a Babylonian house of worship,¹³⁵⁾ the method of recovering the lost ritual by consulting the priesthood of a city revering a god identical in character with the divine patron of the Ka'ba was as accessible to them as it had been, in centuries past, to the people of Ur and Uruk. Such a city was, of course, Jerusalem, and the Jewish authorities for traditions were the appropriate persons to be consulted about the ritual of their holy city. That the close relationship existing between the cults of Mecca and Jerusalem was well known to the early Muslims follows from several indications contained in our sources. We mention in the first place the belief according to which, on the Day of Judgment, the Black Stone of Mecca will come in a bridal procession to join the *Şahra*, the rock of Jerusalem, on which the Most High will be

¹³²⁾ This colophon was transliterated and translated by Thureau-Dangin, Rev. d'Ass. XI, 1914, pp. 141 f.

¹³³⁾ On the possible circumstances of this action see p. 76 of our afore-cited study.

¹³⁴⁾ To judge by col. III, ll. 34-42 of Nabû-na'id's Stela from Hillah, the Iştar of Uruk resembled the Iştar of Elam to such an extent that eventually (possibly under the rule of Aşşûr-bân-apli) the statues of the two temples were confused, the Elamite Iştar being set up at Uruk and the divine lady of Eanna at Susa.

¹³⁵⁾ Some documents and pictorial records came to light in the Ka'ba when the old structure was demolished; see Mas'ûdî, Les prairies d'or, IV, p. 126, and cf. Dozy, Die Israeliten zu Mekka, Leipzig and Haarlem 1864, pp. 155 ff. Yet it is a question open to doubt whether these ancient monuments could be properly read and interpreted so as to yield any information about the original ritual of the Ka'ba.

seated.¹³⁶⁾ Even though, as is well known, the Mohammedans mistook the huge *Şahra* for the *Eben Şetîîâ*,¹³⁷⁾ this tradition makes it clear that they

¹³⁶⁾ See the passage from Ibn 'Abdrabihi translated by Le Strange, *Palestine Under the Moslems*, London 1890, pp. 164 f. and cf. I. Benzinger in *Baedeker's Palästina und Syrien*⁵, Leipzig 1900, p. 46.

¹³⁷⁾ M. de Vogüé, *Le Temple de Jérusalem*, Paris 1864, p. III, was the first who definitely disproved the identity of the *Şahra* with the *Eben Şetîîâ*. The mistake owing to which the Muslims believe that the *Şahra* is the sacred stone of Jerusalem is likely to have been made by the Jewish converts who accompanied Omar, the caliph, on his first visit to the temple area. As is well known, the whole site was, at that time, covered by rubbish, so that no architectural details and least of all the small stone slab that was the *Eben Şetîîâ* were recognizable; therefore these Jewish converts, unable to identify the sacred stone but anxious to satisfy their overlord's curiosity, may have pointed out to him the huge gray rock known today as the *Şahra* (on the trustworthiness of Ka'b al-Aḥbâr, one of Omar's Jewish advisers on traditions, see the remarks of Le Strange, *op. cit.*, p. 142, note †). In actual fact, the Jews must have known perfectly well that this rock was not the *Eben Şetîîâ*, because the afore-cited Mishnic passage describes the latter as a stone slab which rose to a height of three fingers (i. e., about 5 centimeters) above the floor-level of the Holy of Holies; its area must have been smaller than the bottom of the Ark of the Covenant (which measured 2½ by 1½ cubits, i. e., 1.25 by 0.75 meters), because, again according to the statement of the Mishna cited above, note 71, the slab became visible only after the Ark had been removed.

The question arises, of course, as to whether the genuine *Eben Şetîîâ* was still *in situ* when Omar decided to re-dedicate the site of the Solomonic Temple to the service of god. In our view, this question can be answered in the affirmative; for subsequently the Muslims recognized, in the immediate vicinity of the *Şahra*, a sacred stone-slab which is said to "rival the *Şahra* in glory." Hence it is reasonable to assume that eventually, after the rubbish had been removed from the area, the Jews found, and pointed out to the Muslims, the genuine *Eben Şetîîâ*. The stone in question is referred to as follows by Ibn 'Abdrabihi, an author who wrote about A. D. 913 (we quote from the translation by Le Strange, *op. cit.*, p. 164): "Now when thou enterest the *Şahra* (or Dome of the Rock), make thy prayer in the three corners thereof; and also pray on the slab which rivals the Rock itself in glory, for it lies over a gate of the Gates of Paradise." The stone so characterized is about 12 meters north of the northern end of the *Şahra* and is usually referred to by the Mohammedans as *Balâţat aġ-ġinne*, "Paradise Slab" (see I. Benzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 46, and cf. the floor-sketch of the Dome of the Rock *ibidem*, p. 43). According to C. Schick, *op. cit.*, p. 248, it is a "grüner Jaspisstein" measuring 0.5 by 0.5 meters; thus it would have been completely covered by the Ark of the Covenant as suggested by the afore-quoted Mishna passage. It also answers the description given of the *Eben Şetîîâ* by the Pilgrim of Bordeaux in his *Itinerarium Hierosolymit.* who expressed himself as follows: "*Est et non longe de statuis [Adriani] lapis pertusus, ad quem veniunt Judaei singulis annis et unguent eum et lamentant se cum gemitu* (cf. Kittel, *Studien zur hebräischen Archäologie*, Leipzig 1908, p. 34, note 3). For the stone slab here under discussion is said by the Muslims to have been provided by Mohammed with nineteen golden nails, which were to fall out one by one until, when the last had dropped out, the end of the world had come. Of these 19 nails, three and one half remain at the present time, the other holes being empty (see Benzinger, *op. cit.*, p. 46). Being thus pierced by 19 holes, the slab may well have appeared as a *lapis pertusus* to the Pilgrim of Bordeaux. The Muslim traditions according to which the stone covers either an entrance to Paradise or the

were fully aware of the identity of the functions of the sacred stones of Mecca and Jerusalem. It is equally pertinent to recall that, before designating, in the second year after the Flight, the Ka'ba as the *qibla* for all the Muslims, Mohammed ordered his followers to turn their faces in prayer toward the sacred rock of Jerusalem.¹³⁸) The significance of this command becomes apparent if it is kept in mind that the *qibla* is an outgrowth of the belief of the star-worshippers (cf. above, p. 349) that man can address his prayers only to a being visible to his eyes. For this belief makes it obvious that, when praying to an astral deity, the worshipper turned his eyes either to the heavenly body itself or, in its absence, to the stone or statue representing it on earth.¹³⁹) If, however, he was not present in the town where a sacred stone, assumed to be part of the deity's astral body, was visible to the congregation, he still turned his eyes in the direction of this sanctuary, it being supposed that, having visited and inspected the deity's body on the occasion of the annual pilgrimage, he could visualize it and thus address his prayer to it even from a distant point or locality. We therefore come to the conclusion that Mohammed urged his followers to turn in prayer to the sacred stone of Jerusalem because he knew full well that this stone represented his god. It is in the same sense that we must interpret the action of 'Abd al-Malik, Mohammed's ninth successor (A. D. 685—705; A. H. 65—86), who ordered his subjects to replace the pilgrimage to Mecca by a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.¹⁴⁰) For only the knowledge that the sacred stone of Jerusalem represented the same god as the Black Stone of Mecca could inspire him to say with regard to the *Ṣaḥra*: "And this Rock shall be unto you in the place of the Ka'ba."¹⁴¹)

tomb of Solomon (see Benzinger, loc. cit.) make it further clear that, as required of the *Eben Ṣeṭṭijâ*, the *Balâṭat aġ-ġinne* actually covers a cavern. (Gustaf Dalman, *Neue Petra-Forschungen und der Heilige Felsen von Jerusalem*, Leipzig 1912, pp. 120 f., who refers to our slab as "schwarze Platte," recalls that Johann of Würzburg saw in it the site of Ezechiel's temple spring.)

If our identification of the *Balâṭat aġ-ġinne* with the *Eben Ṣeṭṭijâ* is correct, it would appear that this slab was recovered at a time when the original erroneous identification of the *Eben Ṣeṭṭijâ* with the *Ṣaḥra* had already been sanctioned to such an extent that it was impossible to correct the error. Hence the genuine *Eben Ṣeṭṭijâ* was incorporated into the sacred inventory of the *Ḥarâm*-area as another sacred stone the significance of which was explained by the Paradise legend or by the assumption that the pious Suleiman was buried under it.

¹³⁸) See Le Strange, op. cit., p. 114.

¹³⁹) As late as the fourth century after the Flight, the Muslims were well acquainted with these beliefs and practices of their forefathers. Al-Mas'ûdî (*Les prairies d'or*, I, p. 298), when speaking of the earlier Qurais̄ who, "prior to Islam, revered the idols and addressed prayers to them," makes the following observation: "But among them there were some who intended their prayers for the Creator (himself), mighty and great; and they set up the statues and images only as *qibla*-point."

¹⁴⁰) See Le Strange, op. cit., pp. 115 f.

¹⁴¹) See the passage from Ya'qûbî translated by Le Strange, op. cit., p. 116.

We thus recognize the manner in which Mohammed intended to restore the cult of Mecca in its original form: He took over from Jewish tradition, both biblical and extra-biblical, whatever, in his view, pertained to the old, genuine religion of Jerusalem which he knew to be identical with that of Mecca. We further realize why the Mohammedans attach such particular importance to biblical personages such as Abraham, David and Solomon whom, as we mentioned before, they like to represent as perfect Muslims. As in their opinion a Muslim is a person who professes his unlimited submission to the god of Mecca and of Jerusalem — no matter whether this deity be called Šalim, *él 'eliôn*, or Allah — they were fully justified in regarding as their own coreligionists those famous characters whom Jewish sources link most intimately with the cult of Jerusalem.
