

The Old Testament in the light of the Literature of Assyria and Babylonia.

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GENESIS i. 1-2.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The sacred writer here gives his account of what took place "in the beginning"; and in his short, terse sentences he tells us that the earth was at that time practically a chaotic mass, that darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved or brooded upon the face of the waters, apparently of that deep.

The Babylonian account is parallel, but has noteworthy differences. It is told in poetical form, and at much greater length:—

TRANSCRIPTION.

1. *Ēnuma ēliš lā nabū šamamu,*
2. *Šapliš ammatu^m šuma¹ lā zakrat,*
3. *Apsū-ma² rēštū zaru-šun,*
4. *Mummu Tiāmat muallidat³ gimri-šun.*
5. *Mē-šunu⁴ išteniš ihîkū-ma*
6. *Gipara⁵ lā kiššura⁶ šuša⁷ lā š'e'a—*
7. *Ēnuma ilāni lā šûpû manama,*
8. *Šuma⁸ la zukkura,⁹ šimata^m lā [šāma?],*
9. *Ibbanu-ma¹¹ ilāni [rabûte?]*
10. *Laḥmu u Laḥamu uštāpû. . . .*
11. *Adî irbû [ilāni?].*
12. *Anšar Kišar ibbanû. . . .*
13. *Urriku¹² imê. . . .*
14. *Anu^m abu (?). . . .*
15. *Ana Ani^m. . . .*
16. *. . . . Anu^m. . . .*

TRANSLATION.

1. When on high the heavens proclaimed not,
2. Beneath the earth announced not a name,
3. The primeval abyss was their progenitor,
4. The Lady Tiāmat was the bringer-forth of the whole of them.

¹ Variant: *sumu* (nom. for akk.). ² V. *apsū* (without *ma*). ³ V. *mutuwallidat*. ⁴ V. *šun*. ⁵ V. *giparra*. ⁶ V. *kururu*. ⁷ V. *šusa*. ⁸ V. *šum*. ⁹ V. *zukkuru*. ¹⁰ V. *šimat*. ¹¹ V. *ma* omitted. ¹² V. *urriki*.

5. Their waters at first were mingled¹³ and
6. The firmament was not bound together, the plain had not yet sprouted—
7. When none of the gods shone forth,
8. A name had not been recorded, a destiny had not [been fixed],
9. The [great] gods were made,
10. Laḥmu and Laḥamu shone forth [alone?]
11. Until [the gods?] grew up.
12. Anšar and Kišar were made.
13. The days grew long . . .
14. Anu, the father (?) . . .
15. To Anu . . .
16. . . . Anu.

(The continuation lost.)

In this interesting fragment it is clear that the text is divisible into three sections. The first extends from the first to the sixth line, the second from the seventh to the twelfth line. The third division, beginning, "The days grew long," is imperfect. The arrangement of the first twelve lines in sections of six lines each is probably not unintentional, six¹⁴ being a kind of repetition number in Akkadian, and therefore a mark of completeness.

It is probable that the first two lines are connected, and should read, "When on high the heavens proclaimed not, and beneath the earth announced not a name." At that time "the primeval abyss was then progenitor" (*i.e.* the producer (apparently) of all things existing), and "the lady Tiāmat (ocean) was she who brought forth the whole of them." Then, also, "their waters" (apparently those of *apsū rēštū*, the primeval abyss, and *mummu Tiāmat*, "lady Ocean") were mingled, and (or but) the firmament (expansion) was not compacted together, and the earth had not yet brought forth anything.

Having dealt with the physical, the writer of the legend proceeds to speak of the supernatural. The arrangement is similar. When none of the gods

¹³ Or, "Their waters were mingled together as one" (*štenis* from *šten*, "one"). ¹⁴ *Aš*, "one"; *šš*, "six," the difference being the length of the vowel only.

shone forth, and (as we must, apparently, again read in) neither a name had been recorded nor a destiny fixed, then the great gods were made (how and by whom is not stated). The first mentioned are Laḥmu and Laḥamu, the male and female personifications of the heavens (generally mentioned under the names of Anu¹ and Anatu); Anšar and Kišar ("the host of heaven" and "the host of earth" respectively) followed, and then, as time lengthened ("the days grew long"), "Anu, the father," in all probability created the remainder of the gods.

"Just as the *terrestrial* cosmos was preceded by a time when no such cosmos existed, so also the *super-terrestrial* cosmos was preceded by a time when no such cosmos (*i.e.* gods) existed."²

One remarkable difference between the Babylonian and the Biblical accounts will probably be noticed, and that is, that there is, in the former, no mention of the creation of the world by the Deity, for the heavens and earth are spoken of as if previously existing, though a form of chaos is implied, neither the heavens nor the earth being at this time perfect. In Genesis, on the other hand, the creation of the heavens and the earth by God is expressly stated. Both accounts, however, agree in representing the earth as waste and void, this being implied, in the Babylonian account, by the statement that "the primeval abyss was their progenitor, the lady Ocean was the bringer-forth of the whole of them," and that "the plain had not yet sprouted."

What parallelism there may be, however, ceases with the sixth line, for in the seventh and following Babylonian polytheism comes in, the creation of the gods, with the host of heaven and the host of earth (which Haupt, in Schrader's *Cuneiform Inscr. and the O.T.*, p. 10, compares with "the heavens and the earth and all the host of them" of chap. ii. 1) being next spoken of. The phrase "a destiny (or, the destinies) had not been fixed" (if my restoration of line 8 be correct) apparently means "nothing had been as yet decided." It illustrates well the fatalism of the Babylonians, with whom "to die" was "to go to (one's) destiny" or "fate" (*ana šimtu* "ālakū), an idea which remained with them to the last.

¹ See lines 14-16.

² Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*. (Translated by the Rev. Owen C. Whitehouse, M.A.), 1885, p. 5.

REMARKS UPON THE MORE NOTEWORTHY WORDS.

1. *Ēnuma*, which introduces this section and the next (line 7) is a temporal particle meaning when, and may refer to the future as well as to the past. It is composed of *ēnu* and *ma*.—*Ēliš* is an adverb in *-iš* from *ēlu*, "high," opp. to *šapliš* in line 2.—*Nabū* is the permansive pl., 3rd per. (kal), the subject being *šamamu* ("the heavens were not proclaiming").—*Šamamu* is the poetic plural of *šamū* (ordinary pl. *šamē*), "heaven" (Heb. שָׁמַיִם).

2. *Ammatu* (here undoubtedly meaning "earth," see the *Babylonian and Oriental Record* for February 1890, pp. 69-71) is apparently the subject of *zakrat*, 3rd pers. sing. fem. permansive kal of *zakāru*, "to call out."

3. *Apsū*, from the Akkadian *abzu*, means "abyss" or "ocean." It is generally explained as being composed of 𒀭, *ab*, "house," and 𒍪, *zu*, "to know"—"house of knowledge;" and this must also have been the Babylonian etymology, for, although the word is *abzu*³ in Akkadian, it is always written 𒀭 𒍪 (*zu-ab*)—in other words, it was generally pronounced "house of knowledge," and written "knowledge-house." Notwithstanding the plausibility of this explanation—the god 𒀭 𒍪 𒍪 𒍪 𒍪, *Ēa* or *Aê*⁴ (= *Aos), from 𒀭 𒍪 𒍪, *Ē*, "house," and 𒍪, *a*, "water," being the god of the ocean and lord of deep wisdom (*bēl nēmiḫi*⁵)—it is open to a certain amount of doubt,⁶ for the pronunciation of 𒀭 𒍪, when it means "house," is not *ab*,⁷ but *ēš*.—*Rēšū*, "first," "eldest," is from the same root as 𒍪 𒍪 𒍪 in Gen. i. 1, namely, 𒍪 𒍪, Assy. *rēšu*, "head," "beginning." I conjecture, from the long terminal *u*, that *rēšū* was borrowed, at an early date, by the Akkadians, from Assyrian, and afterwards taken back into the latter language as if it had been a word of Akkadian origin.

4. *Mummu Tīamat* means, literally, "Lady Ocean," *mummu* being rendered, in W.A.I. v., pl. 28, line 63 *gh*, by *bēltu*, "lady," and explaining, in Syllabary *b*, line 90, the Akkadian *umun*, "lord," "lady." The supposition that *mummu* may be equivalent in meaning to "irrigation"

³ Rarely *zuab* (*zuabbu*). See Jensen's *Kosmologie*, p. 243.

⁴ This is a transposition similar to that of *abzu* and *zuab*.

⁵ Compare the EXPOSITORY TIMES for November, p. 66, col. 2, lines 22 and 47.

⁶ See Jensen's *Kosmologie*, p. 246, footnote.

⁷ One of the meanings of *ab*, however, seems to have been "receptacle."

(Schrader, Delitzsch) seems to me to rest on a misconception. *Tiāmat* is the Heb. תְּיָמָת, with the fem. ending.

6. *Gīpara* (*gīparra*) is from Akk. *gi*, "shadow," "shade," "protection," and *para*, "to spread out." I take it to mean the "firmament" or "expanse" = Heb. רָקִיעַ, Gen. i. 6), with which it corresponds fairly well in meaning.—*Šē'a* (*šē'u*) is possibly the Heb. חֵץ (Fried. Delitzsch, Lenormant, Haupt, Schrader); but the comparison is hardly satisfactory, the Heb. word being apparently written with the hard ח (= Arab. ح), as is implied by the Assyr. *šihū* = *pirhū*, "sprout." Weakened roots, "doublets," are, however, not uncommon.

8. *Zukkura* (*zukkuru*) is the Pu'ul (Piel) permissive (3rd pers. sing.) of *zakāru* (see line 2).

10. *Lahmu* and *Lahamu* are the Δάχη and Δάχος (= Δάχη and Δάχος) of Damascius (G. Smith, Lenormant, Schrader, Jensen), and are apparently the same as the *Lahma* and *Lahama* of the lists of gods. Both are explained (W.A.I. iii., 69, 14a, compare also ii., 54, 9e, 40e) as equivalent to Anu^m (Anu) and Anatu^m, the male and female deities of the heavens.

12. For *Anšar* and *Kišar* (Ἄσσωπος and Κισσάρης) see the foregoing page, col. 1.

VERSE 2.

And the earth was waste and void (תְּהוֹת וְרֵקֵת). In the Assyro-Babylonian inscriptions reference is often made to a goddess Bau, whose name has been compared with the *bohū* of the above phrase. This goddess was identified by the Babylonians with Gula, goddess of healing, and is mentioned as consort of the god Zagaga (Ninip). The name of Bau oftens forms a component part of

other names, e.g. *Azaga-Bau* = *Bau-ēllit*, "Bau is glorious," the name of an early Babylonian queen; also *Dun-agaba-šiti* = *Bau-takiša-bullit*, "O Bau, thou hast given, preserve alive!" and *Dun-galadumu-ta-ē* = *Bau-rubi-ma-dume-lāmur*, "O Bau, increase and let me see (my) child!" the names of two early kings or heroes. The month Tisri ("the month of the glorious mound") was sacred to her.

The name of Bau is also supposed to be expressed by one of the characters standing for *apsū*, the abyss of waters.¹ The goddess thus indicated is described as the mother of the god Ēa or Aē (*Ama-En-kiga-gi*), the lord of the seas and of deep wisdom (see the foregoing page, col. 2). She is named, moreover, *Ama-utu-ana-ki*, "the mother who brought forth heaven and earth."² If, therefore, the Heb. *bohū* have anything to do with the Mesopotamia Bau, it would be derived from her being the goddess who was mother of the earth and of the watery waste (supposing the above identification to be correct).

To the Babylonian, under the name of Gula, Bau was "the mother of mercy" (*ummi rēmi*), and as such they addressed to her prayers for life and health.

¹ The character in question has the values of *i*, *id* (river, river-god), *engur* (abyss), *Nammu* (river-god), and *zikum* (heaven), but Bau does not occur.

² Jensen contends that the identification of this goddess with Bau is unprovable and impossible, and he is possibly right. In that case, Ur-Bau of Lagaš, Ur-Babi (= Ur-Bau), father of Dungi, king of Ur, and Ur-Nammu (?) or Ur-Id (?), king of Ur, are three different persons; and the identification of *bohū* with Bau most unlikely. Cf. also my note in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* for November 1883, p. 10.

Erratum.—By a slip of the pen, the words "for the saving of his life" were omitted from the translation on p. 65, col. 2, line 26.

Notes on Habakkuk ii. 2.

לְמַעַן יִרְמָן קִרְיָא בּוֹ

"That he may run that readeth it."

I.

Does this text wholly exclude the translation, "That he that runs may read;" the meaning being, that a man may read the tablet easily or quickly, as he runs along from one word to another? The

Variorum Bible translates, "That a man may read swiftly," giving the first verb an adverbial force. A tablet might be written so clearly and distinctly that it might be quickly read without any delay or difficulty. It could not be read while a man was hurrying along the road, unless it consisted but of one or two catch-words. Habakkuk's vision concerned character, and was not brief. I do not think that this text deals with running in the sense of running to a place of safety. Simply it means