

Recent Biblical and Oriental Archaeology.

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Merodach.

MARDUK or Merodach, the god of Babylon, was identified by the Babylonians with A'sari-mur-dugga, the son of Ea, the culture-god of Eridu. As I have stated in my Gifford Lectures, the real origin of his name was lost, and a punning etymology endeavoured to explain it with the help of the two ideographs *amar* and *utu*, which were read *amar-utuki*, and translated 'the heifer of the goblin.' Support was found for the etymology in the fact that *amar-utu* would have signified 'the heifer of daylight,' and thus have corresponded with the astronomical name of Merodach in Sumerian, Gudi-bir, 'the ox of light.' It is possible that a Semitic etymology of the name was also sought in a common title applied to A'sari-mur-dugga in the magical texts of Eridu, Mar-Eridugga, 'the son of the Good City' Eridu. But all such attempts to find a derivation for the name were little more than puns.

I believe, however, that I can now suggest a more convincing etymology. A'sari-mur-dugga means 'the prince who does good to man,' as was first pointed out by Lenormant, whose rendering seems to me preferable on grammatical grounds to that of Hommel, 'the good man,' though the latter agrees better with the Egyptian title of Osiris, Un-nefer, 'the good being.' The Sumerian word for 'man' has long been misread; some years ago, however, I showed that on the early Babylonian seals the ideograph representing it was sometimes replaced by the character *ur*, and the newly-found fragment of the Babylonian legend of Gilgames informs us that in some instances its Sumerian pronunciation was 'sur', while the dialectal form of the word was *mulu* or *mul*. *M* in Sumerian differed but little in sound from *w*, and *mu* consequently became *wu* and *u*; the character which denotes *mur*, for example, having also the value of *ur*. On the other hand, a vocalic termination was lost in neo-Sumerian, while *g* passed into *h* in borrowed Semitic words; thus *ê-gal*, 'great house,' or 'palace,' becomes the Assyrian *ekallu*, Hebrew *hékâl*; *gur*, 'tun,' becomes *karru* or *karu*, etc. Hence A'sari-mur-dug,

'A'sari who benefits man,' could easily have become A'sari-Murduk, 'the Prince Murduk,' in Semitic mouths. Murduk, once admitted into the Semitic vocabulary, would soon have been 'Semitized' into Marduk, in accordance with the requirements of Assyrian grammar.

Noah.

In the *Actes du premier Congrès international d'Histoire des Religions*, ii. 2, Dr. Pinches has published a very useful and suggestive article on the Divine names which enter into the names of individuals found in contracts and other legal documents of the age of Khammurabi. There are two of these names to which I would more especially draw attention. One is Nakhum-Dagan, 'a resting-place is Dagan,' formed like Abum-ilu (the Abimael of Gn 10²⁸), 'a father is the god.' The Babylonian Nakhum is the biblical Noah, and there is a certain passage in the narrative of Genesis, the bearing of which, so far as I can see, has been persistently ignored by the commentators, which indicates that the name of Noah also once had attached to it the old Babylonian mimmation. In Gn 5²⁹ the name is derived from the verb *nâkham*, thus implying that it terminated in *-m*. As such mimmated forms go back to the early Babylonian period, and do not belong to the Assyrian age, the fact is an additional argument on the side of the view maintained by Professor Hommel in his *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*. Like the other names of the patriarchal epoch quoted by him, it will have been handed down from the Abrahamic age. Noah will originally have been Nakhum-(ilu), Nakhum-(Ea), or something similar, though the analogy of Jacob for Ya'kubu-ilu makes *ilu* more probable than the name of a specific divinity.

Gihon.

The second name to which I have referred is Ibi-Sakhan, 'proclaim, O Sakhan,' the determinative of divinity being prefixed to the name of the god. In the lexical tablets, 'Sakhan, as the name is there written, is given as a synonym of the Euphrates, and I have long had an idea that it is the original of the Gihon of Gn 2¹³. The

Hebrew Gihôn, the 'Stream,' is not known in Assyrian, and though there was a Sumerian word *gikhan*, meaning perhaps some kind of reed, which was borrowed by the Semitic Babylonians under the form of *gikhinnu*, it was never used of any of the Babylonian rivers. I would suggest, therefore, that the Hebrew *gikhôn* has been substituted for 'Sakhan in the passage of Genesis either by the original writer or by a copyist. The Gihon, we are told, 'compasseth the whole land of Cush' or the Kassi, the name under which the Babylonians were known in the age of the Tel el-Amarna tablets. What portion of the Euphrates, or which of the canals that flowed into it, was understood by the Babylonians under the name of 'Sakhan we do not at present know. I should mention that among the early Babylonian names collected by

Dr. Pinches are some compounded with the names of the deified rivers of the country; thus we have Mur-id-Edina, 'the man of the River of the Plain (Eden)'; Ibku-Idigla, 'the Tigris has given abundance.'

Ari.

Dr. Weissbach, in his *Babylonische Miscellen* (No. XI.), has published a syllabary from which we learn that the ideograph BUR-BUR, besides representing Uri or Ur, Assyrian Akkadû, and Tilla, Assyrian Urdhû or Ararat, also represented Ari, Assyrian Amurrû. Amurrû, the land of the Amorites, denoted Syria and Palestine, more especially the mountainous part of them, and in Ari I see a Sumerian (?) reproduction of the Canaanitish *har*, 'mountain.' Cp. Dt 1⁷. 19. 20. 24.

Bishop Lightfoot and Professor Ramsay on Early Calendars.

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PROFESSOR RAMSAY does me the honour of agreeing with me as to the date of the martyrdom of Polycarp, 155 A.D. I thought that some months ago he showed leanings to 166 A.D. By incurring the censure of Dr. Ramsay, I may be thought to have removed myself 'out of the ranks of regular progressive scholarship.' I do not think I have—but this is only an hypothesis of mine, and Dr. Ramsay is a little hard on my hypotheses. He calls on me to prove my theory of the 'great Sabbath' to the satisfaction of the 'authorities on that branch of study.' To begin with, I should be thankful to learn who these 'authorities' are. Will the Professor name one? For years I have been looking for them among Jews and Christians, and my diligent search has not yet been rewarded. There is no lack of writers on the technicalities of the Jewish Calendar. They range from the Mishnah and Maimonides to Cyrus Adler and Poznański, and from Clement of Alexandria to Dr. Margoliouth. Professor Ramsay will surely not expect me to mention Lightfoot in this connexion, nor yet the great 'authority' known as the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, which, in the article

'Calendar,' wisely or unwisely, shrinks from making the least reference to the difficulty of difficulties about the week-days eligible for the Passover. Of each and all of the scores of 'authorities' I have consulted, the Professor might write as he writes of my view on the 'great Sabbath': 'Mr. Power's theory must rank at present as one among many theories.' Quite so. The call for evidence where only hypothesis is accessible is like the cry of the child for the moon. Moonshine is all that he will ever get out of that luminary, and hypothesis is all that Dr. Ramsay can require from me or anybody else. If evidence were to be had, it would surely have been forthcoming from abler students than myself. I make no claim to have overleaped the misty bounds of hypothesis and to have passed into the cloudless region of evidence; and I am confident that Dr. Ramsay is equally modest. But in the use of my poor hypothesis, I have tried to follow an authority in logical methods, J. S. Mill. I have applied my view to ascertained facts, and it has not been found in conflict with them. Had it been otherwise, I should have frankly abandoned it. Had it been proved to be the only