

KIR = UR OF THE CHALDEES

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For the past thirty years I have advocated excavations in the traditional home of Abraham, Ur of the Chaldees. I was delighted to find in Dr. Peters' *Nippur* (2, 300) the statement: *I have seen no mound which seemed easier and safer to excavate, or promised richer results than Mugheir* (BB, n. 43; MuS 527, 40).¹ *Mugheir* or, more accurately, *al-Muqájjar*, the Arabic name of this ancient city, means *asphalted*, built with asphalt. Arab. *qîr*, pitch, as well as Greek *κηρός*, wax, and Heb. *gîr*, lime, are all derived from the Sumer. *gir* which denotes an *asphalt-furnace* or *pitch-pot*. Heb. *kîrâim*, chafing-dish, represents the same word (AkF 32, below). The primary meaning of Sumer. *gir* is *reducer*, Heb. *kibšân* (JSOR 1, 8, below; BL 129-132).

We need not discuss the question whether or not Abraham was a historical person.² We may safely assume that the ancestors of the Israelites (*Mic.* 19, n. 18) were Arameans (*cf.* JBL 35, 167) who emigrated from the Euphrates to Ephraim, whereas the ancestors of the Jews, who invaded Palestine from the south, after they had sojourned in Egypt, were Edomites (MuS 516, 7). This southern settlement was about 400 years later than the Israelitish invasion from the northeast.³ The Israelites, it may be supposed, came to Palestine through Raqqah on the Euphrates, Palmyra, and Damascus, and they settled first in the northern region of the country east of the Jordan, *i. e.* Bashan and Gilead.⁴ The ancestors of the Israelites are connected with the two centers of the Assyro-Babylonian worship of the Moon, Ur of the Chaldees and Haran (MuS 527, 23; JBL 35, 75, 267). The religion of the Jews, on the other hand, is derived from the solar monotheism developed at Heliopolis

¹ For the abbreviations see above, p. 75, n. 1.

² See OLZ 18, 72; *Mic.* 19, n. 17; JBL 32, 20, below; EB¹¹ 1, 71^a; 11, 581^a; 15, 374^a; *cf.* also PSBA 39, 9, 14.

³ See WF 199, n. 15, *ad finem*; 211, n. 8; 214, l. 10; CoE, n. 23.

⁴ See BB 366; WF 195, n. 1, *ad fin.*

near the western end of Goshen, on the road from Goshen to Memphis.⁵ Moses may have been the son-in-law of a priest of Heliopolis, the city of the sun-god (MuS 522, 19). Moses' Egyptian wife is contemptuously referred to as a *negress* (MuS 522, 40). Laban, the father of Leah and Rachel, is called an Aramean in Gen. 25:20 (P) and in 31:20. 24 (E) and in Deut. 26:5 Israel's ancestor is called a *stray Aramean*, Heb. *Ārammî ôḥēḏ* (contrast *Mic.* 44). According to the gloss in Gen. 31:47 Laban used the Aramaic name *īēgār sāhdūtā* for the Heb. *gal'êḏ*. Both Israelites and Judahites adopted the language of Palestine, which we call Hebrew.⁶

In the last poem of Amos, which was composed after Tiglath-pileser had deported the Galileans (*Mic.* 48, below) in 738, the Israelitish poet predicts the fall of Damascus, Ammōn, Moab, and Israel. Damascus succumbed to the Assyrians in 732; Ammon and Moab were made tributary in 734; Samaria fell in 722 (JBL 35, 287). Amos says of Damascus, which he calls the *Rich Valley*⁷ and a terrestrial paradise:⁸

- 1, 3 For the threefold crime of Damascus,
aye, fourfold! I'll requite her,⁹
Since with threshing-sledges of iron
they crushed to powder Gilead.
- 4 To Hazael's house I'll set fire
devouring Ben-hadad's mansions.¹⁰
- 5{ } I'll cut off the Rich Valley's settlers,
the scepter-bearer of Paradise;
{ } I'll break the bars of Damascus,
to Kir will Aram be exiled.

⁵ MuS 513, 5; 523, 11; BB 356-359.

⁶ WF 200, n. 17, *ad fn.* and ZAT 34, 229.

⁷ *Lit. Valley of Abundance*, Heb. *biq'at-ōn*; cf. the German name *Wonnegau* for the fertile plain in which Worms is situated (EB¹¹ 28, 832^b).

⁸ Heb. *bēḏ-'ēdn*, lit. *House of Delight*, *3 domus voluptatis* (CoE, n. 8).

⁹ Cf. TOCR 1, 327 and the translation of the second stanza of this poem in AJSL 32, 71.

¹⁰ Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 9, 4, 6, *ad fn.* Hazael of Damascus oppressed Israel for half a century (cf. 2 K 8:12). He devastated Gilead (2 K 10:32). He had smothered his master Ben-hadad c. 843 B. C. (2 K 8:15). Ben-hadad had tried to starve Samaria into surrender (2 K 6:24). Also Hazael's son was called Ben-hadad (2 K 13:3). According to AJSL 27, 284 the king murdered by Hazael was not Ben-hadad, but Hadad-ezer.

ועל-ארבעה לא אשיבנו	1, 3	על-שלשה פשעי דמשק
ושום כעפר הגלעד:		על-דוישם בחרצות הברזל
ואכלה ארמנות בן-הדרך:	4	ושלחתי-אש בבית חזאל
ותומך שבט מבית-ערן	{ 5	והכרתי יושב מבקעת-און
והגלו עם-ארם קיריה:		וישברתי בריח דמשק

In the final chapter of the Book we find the last of Amos' prophetic visions, which refers to the ancient stone-pillar (JBL 35, 181) Jacob was supposed to have set up in the sacred cromlech north of Beth-el (WF 208, n. 57). The poet says:

- 9, 1 I saw One who stood by the altar,
and He said, Strike thou the top!¹¹
Thus will I shatter their head,¹²
and the rest I'll slay with the sword.
- 3 If they conceal themselves on Carmel,
I'll hunt them up and reach them;
If they hide on the bottom of the sea,
I'll bid the Serpent bite them.

ויאמר הך הכפתור	9, 1	ראיתי נצב על-המזבח
ואחריהם בחרב אהרג:		כן-אבצע ¹¹ ראש כלם
משם אחפש ולקחתים	3	אם-יחבאו בראש הכרמל
אצוה את-הנחש ונשקם:		ואם-יסתרו בקרקע הים

that is, If the Israelites try to hide in the thick woods and numerous caves of Mount Carmel, they will not be safe from the Assyrian invaders; and if they attempt to escape in ships, they will be wrecked. The Serpent corresponds to the Babylonian *Ti'âmat* and to the Old Norse *Midgardsorm*, the world-serpent which lies about the earth in the encircling sea. The

¹¹ The top of Jacob's stone-pillar (Gen. 28: 18: *yaî-îççôq šâmn 'al-rôšâh*) beside the altar (EB 2981, 5) in the cromlech north of Beth-el (EB 2977, d). The pillar was a menhir, the altar a dolmen. Moore says (EB 2983) that Amos does not speak of *maççebôt*.

¹² King Menahem of Israel (743-737).

¹³ The prefixed *bē*, which might be explained according to JBL 32, 112, n. 19; 113, n. 23, is an erroneous repetition of the *bē* of *bē-rôš* in the following verse, just as *miš-šâm* in v. 3^b and v. 4 is due to vertical haplography of *miš-šâm* in v. 3^a. Cf. WF 217, iii.

Hebrew name of this mythical sea-monster is *Leviathan* or *Rahab*.

This poetic passage is followed by a number of explanatory glosses, illustrative quotations, and theological additions including fragments of psalms and other Maccabean passages. Only the first three verses of c. 9 contain genuine lines of Amos; the following twelve verses are all secondary, tertiary, and quaternary. V. 4 contains the explanatory lines:

4 If they are led away captive,
I'll bid the sword to slay them;
I'll set mine eyes against them
for evil, not for good.

וְאִם יִלְכוּ בַשְּׂבִי אִצְוָה אֶת־הַחֶרֶב וְהִרְגָתֶם 4
וְשִׁמְתִי עֵינַי עֲלֵיהֶם לִרְעָה וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה:

Amos did not predict that the prisoners would be massacred; he only said, If the Israelites try to conceal themselves on Mount Carmel, they will be caught, and if they try to escape in boats they will be wrecked. The Assyrians would have deported the captives, but they would not have slain them.

To the first hemistich of this secondary couplet we find some tertiary and post-tertiary additions in the prosaic v. 7. A later glossator says here: *Are ye not to me as the sons of the Ethiopians?* i. e. Ye will be treated like negroes, like black slaves. Cardinal Mercier might have imputed this statement to the Kaiser with reference to the Belgians. A third glossator has added the antiquarian gloss, *Did not I bring Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Arameans from Kir?* i. e. If Israel is deported to Assyria, this enforced emigration is not unprecedented: the Israelites¹⁴ came to Palestine from Egypt, the Philistines (*Mic.* 48, n. *; cf. JBL 35, 169) from Crete, the Arameans from Kir, but JHVH, who delivered the Sons of Israel¹⁴ out of the house of bondage in Egypt, will also be able to turn the Babylonian Captivity of Israel.

The Israelites never were in Egypt, only the Edomite ancestors of the Jews sojourned there for some time, while Israel was settled in Palestine; but how many modern exegetes realize

¹⁴ That is, the Edomite ancestors of the Jews; see *Mic.* 19, n. 18.

that?¹⁵ The true Israelites were originally as Aramean as the people of Damascus. Kir appears here as the original home of the Arameans. The idea (DB 3, 1^a) that the passage in c. 9 is older than the line in c. 1 is untenable; Am. 1:5 is not interpolated from the prosaic passage in c. 9.

Also the third passage in which Kir is mentioned, 2 K 16:9, *The king of Assyria went up against Damascus and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin* (732 B. C.) is a late (post-Septuagintal) addition derived from Am. 1:5. **6** has simply καὶ συνέλαβεν αὐτὴν καὶ ἀπόκισεν αὐτήν. **6**^A has Κυρήνην. This erroneous interpretation is also found in **7** (לקריינא; cf. לקיריני in Am. 1:5; מקיריני, Am. 9:7).

In Is. 22:6, describing Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem (a mutilated passage of what Cheyne regarded as Isaiah's last poem) Kir appears among the subjects, or allies, of Assyria, in conjunction with Elam:

Elam carried the quiver,
with chariots and horses,
And Kir uncovered the shield,¹⁶

* * * * *

The second hemistich of this line is not preserved. Winckler proposed to read *Kôr* instead of *Kîr*, and identified this name with the Carians mentioned by Arrian (EB 2676; contrast IN 249, n. 2). They seem to have dwelt between the Tigris and the mountains toward Elam. In the preceding line we should, perhaps, read:

מקרקר קוע ושוע עלי ההר

¹⁵ Cf. MuS 528, 16; BB 358; JBL 32, 12.18.25-29.34.39.42.45.47. Paton's interesting address on *Israel's Conquest of Canaan* would have been clearer if he had not used *Rachel tribes* for Israelites, and *Leah tribes* for Judahites; contrast ZAT 29, 284; JAOS 32, 17; MuS 528, 22. Dr. Morgenstern says: *Thus we know to-day that Moses was really the hero who led one tribe, most probably Judah, out of Egypt. . . . The sojourn in Egypt and the exodus under Moses were undoubtedly historical facts, but only in the life of some one single tribe, probably Judah* [Judah was no tribe; see MuS 516, 12] . . . Not until the time of David were the loosely-related tribes bound together into a fairly close union; see pp. 11. 39.42 of his paper *The Foundations of Israel's History*, reprinted from the Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, vol. 25 (1915). Contrast JBL 35, 167.

¹⁶ Cf. Caesar, *Bell. Gall.* 2, 21 (*scutis tegimenta detrudere*).

Koa and Shoa batter against the mountain

instead of **אל ההר מִקְרָקֵר קָר וְשׁוּעַ** which is supposed to mean: *breaking down the walls and of crying to the mountains*. The mountain which Koa and Shoa batter is Mount Zion. We have two or three passages in the Talmud Jerushalmî where *qirqér* means *to batter, destroy, tear down*; cf. Assyr. *naqâru* (KAT², 512) and Arab. *inqâra*, to fall. Koa corresponds to the cuneiform *Qû* or *Qutû*. It is mentioned in connection with Shoa in Ezek. 23:23. The prophet says to Aholibah, *i. e.* Jerusalem: *Thus said Jahveh, Behold, I shall bring against thee the Babylonians, all the Chaldeans, Pekod, Shoa and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them*. The home of Koa was north of Bagdad, southeast of the Lower Zâb, between the two tributaries of the Tigris, Radân and Turnat (DB 3, 11^b).

It is important to bear in mind that *Qîr* in the two passages in the Book of Amos is preceded by *m*; in the genuine Amosian pentastich at the beginning of the Book (Am. 1:5) *Qîrâ* is preceded by 'am-Ārām, and in the late prosaic gloss c. 9 (Am. 9:7) we have *Ārām miq-Qîr*. An *m* may have been omitted through haplography, and we may read *Mēquīiār*, corresponding to the present name of Ur of the Chaldees, *al-Muqāiār*. Many of the present Oriental place-names are more than 3,000 years old. The old Assyrian form of the name may have been *Qûru* (= *quīuru*, a form like *ṭûbu* = *ṭuīubu*, well made) or *Qîru* (= *quīru*, a form like *šîmu* = *šaiīmu*, price, lit. *what is fixed*). At the time of Amos (740 B. C.) there may have been an Aramean form *Mēquīiār*,¹⁷ a form like Syr. *mēquīiām*, existing, or *mēkaiiān*, created, natural. A similar name is *Mespila*, which we find in Xenophon's *Anabasis* (3, 4, 7) for *Nineveh*; it seems to represent an Assyrian *mušpîlu* which may mean *a place where shell-limestone is found* (JAOS 28, 103; BL 129, n. †).

According to P, the Aramean ancestors of Israel came from *al-Muqāiār* in Southern Babylonia, whereas according to J they emigrated from Haran in Northern Assyria. This Judaic tradition may be reflected by the *Xappav* which in the Septuagintal rendering of Am. 1:5 appears as the equivalent of Heb. *bêl-'edn* at the end of the last line but one of the pentastich,

¹⁷ We find several distinctly Aramaic names in the cuneiform texts, e. g. *Naqibina* (BAL 94; BA 1, 169, below).

whereas, it may be supposed, it was originally the rendering of *Qîrâ* at the end of the last line. The rendering of the first pentastich in **6** is inaccurate and confused (cf. *e. g.* τὰς ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχουσας τῶν ἐν Γαλααδ at the end of v. 3) although it has preserved the correct reading *ôn* instead of *âun*.¹⁸ Riessler (cf. JBL 32, 111, n. 13) reads *mi-Hârân* instead of *miq-Qîr* in Am. 9:7. Grotius (1644) referred Kir in Is. 22:6 to Media. It is certainly not Georgia (or Gruzia) in Transcaucasian Russia (see Delitzsch's *Jes.*⁴ 267, below). Halévy (REJ 11, 60) referred Kir to Southern Babylonia; the same view was advocated by Šanda, *Die Bücher der Könige* (Münster, 1912) 2, 199.

If we hesitate to read *Měquîîâr* instead of *Qîr* in Am. 1:5, 9:7, we may regard *Kîr* as the Assyrian form of the name (*Qîr* = *qaiîru*). Also Heb. *qîr*, wall, and *qîr*, city, mean originally *built with asphalt* (cf. BL 130; GB¹⁶ 713^a; contrast AkF 9). We may therefore explain *Qîr* as a translation of the Sumerian name *Ur*, just as Arab. *el-Lejjûn* (= Lat. *legio*) is a translation of the old Canaanite name *Měgiddô*, place of troops, or as the ancient volcano, which is called *Sînâî* in OT, is now known as *el-Bedr* (JAOS 34, 415). Sumer. *uru*, city, which appears in Hebrew (GB¹⁶ 584^a) as *'îr*, is connected with Sumer. *uru*, foundation, settlement, dwelling (SGL 50; contrast GGAO 373) and with *unu*, dwelling and people (SGL 53). Similarly Assyrian. *âlu*, city, is identical with Heb. *ôhl*, tent, dwelling; Arab. *âhl*, people, and *âl*, family; Syr. *îâhlâ*, troop (GB¹⁶ 13^b). For the initial *î* instead of ' cf. ZA 2, 278, and for the *r* and *n* in Sumer. *uru* and *unu* see AJSL 32, 64, below. The original meaning of Assyrian. *âlu*, city, may be *settlement* (AJSL 22, 199).

There is no country of Kir; *Kîr* represents *Qîr* = *qaiîru* = Heb. *Měquîîâr*, Aram. *Měqaiîâr*, Arab. *al-Muqaiîâr*, the surname of Ur of the Chaldees in Southern Babylonia.

¹⁸ I have discussed this word in my paper *Their Strength is Labor and Sorrow* (BA 10, 2).