

God made all things; and He was the Only One who could consistently be termed "king of kings."

The Mesopotamians also felt this, because their god Ea was called Ea-ban-Kala, "creator of the universe." The goddess Šala was Ša Kallati, and Sin, the Moon-god, Sin-li-i-Kallati, "lord over all things." The earliest yet known cuneiform text using this phrase is in a hymn addressed to the primitive deity Enlil, and designates him "lord of lords" and "king of kings." See *Proc. Soc. Biblical Archaeology*, 1912, p. 155. This view of the Deity was echoed by the Emperor Julian, who was steeped in Oriental lore, and who speaks of *ἄραρχεὺς τῶν ὄλων* "Ἡλίου." But the Mesopotamians deified their kings, thus derogating to them the attributes of God, an act impossible to a Jew who possessed concepts of the Divine far above those of the surrounding peoples.

(To be continued.)

THE WARNING WRITING ON THE WALL AT BELSHAZZAR'S BANQUET.

By JOSEPH OFFORD.

WHEN commenting upon "An Aramaic Text upon a Babylonian Contract Tablet" in the April *Quarterly Statement*, p. 97, I mentioned that the word *paras*, there used for a half mina, was of interest in connexion with the Greek version word *peres*, of Daniel v, 25, in the mystic sentence, *Mene, mene, tekel peres* (*Upharsin*). It is convenient, therefore, that in the same volume of our Journal some significant sentences in cuneiform literature tending to show that the supernatural phenomenon of a hand writing upon a portion of the hall, or room, in which Belshazzar's fateful feast was held, would not be deemed a very surprising occurrence to the Babylonian and Assyrian courtiers and guests.

The, to us, almost pathetically persistent belief of ancient peoples in priestly magic or in priestly power to interpret events, has preserved, especially in Babylonia, hundreds of records of enchant-

ments and inexplicable wonders. Derivable from dreams, and a prolific fancy when awake, such imaginary marvels were utilised as omens. Frequently the augurs interpreted "visions and appearances," and their renderings of these are still preserved to us in imperishable clay-tablets. Although the remnants of these omen records we possess are such a small proportion of their original number, we already have several which refer to portents portrayed by mysterious ghostly or non-mortal writing or drawing upon a wall, or objects of stone.

In the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* for 1914, cuneiform texts are given concerning omens deducible from such an occurrence as: "If in a man's house an 'Algamish' is designed upon a wall." Other lines upon the same tablet refer to figures upon a wall, but it does not indubitably appear that these were supposed to have been delineated by spirits or supernatural agency.

Prof. Prince¹ quotes from a cylinder of Gudea, patesi of Telloh, or Lagash, the following words: "The queen of lands appeared in a vision. In the midst of my dream there was a woman, a pure pen (stylus) she held in her hand. The tablet of the good star of heaven she bore. A second hero there was. Beside me a tablet of lapis lazuli he held in his hand. The temple's plan he gave to me."

These sentences show that written communications, and even architectural plans, could be derived from dreams. It is possible that we possess a copy of this very supernatural temple plan, for Gudea's statue bears one such engraved resting upon his lap.

Prof. Prince has also been able to supply a much closer parallel to the story of Belshazzar's banquet warning given by Daniel from a text concerning King Assurbannipal as follows:—

"Upon that day a certain scribe fell asleep, and saw a vision, namely, upon the surface of the crescent of the god Sin (the moon), it stood written thus: Whoever has devised evil against the king of Assyria, to them will I give a baneful death. By the swiftly casting into the fire.² These things I heard (understood). I trusted in the words of the god Sin, my lord."

¹ *American Journal of Biblical Literature*; and Cylinder of Gudea, IV, 13, etc.

² For "fire," compare the furnace into which Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego were placed. Assurbannipal in his Annals (ll. 163-164) says: "Saulmugina my rebellious brother who made war with me, into a fiery furnace burning they threw him and destroyed his life."

It may be suggested that the dreamer saw the ominous text graven upon the crescent moon in the heavens. But it is far more probable that his vision conjured up one of the god Sin's lunar emblems emblazoned upon, or attached to, the walls of some temple, or house, in the city. Or it may have been some crescent symbol, perhaps silvered and placed in some sacred shrine, or above the grand altar in a holy place.

The foregoing curious coincidences with the miracle reported by Daniel will cause the following sentence adduced, of similar character, to be perused with less surprise. In a tablet numbered 11030 in the British Museum collection, is a text which A. Boissier renders thus: "If upon the summit of a palace a finger designs a figure, the Diviners gather together. If upon the *napsat* of a palace, a finger designs a figure, [word false, incomplete]. If in the midst of a palace, a finger designs a figure, the brigands will overcome the country. If at the base of a palace a finger designs a figure, the Diviners of a strange country will attain power."

The similarity of these acts of handwriting and that of Daniel's story is still more striking if an improved translation of the Bible text suggested by M. Boissier is adopted. He connects the word rendered wall (כַּתָּל) with the Assyrian word *Kutallu*, meaning a special, or grand hall, or saloon. Daniel appears to have intended to convey the idea that the *Kutallu* was not the actual banquet hall, but an *entresol*, or *selamluk*, communicating with the festival room by a wide doorway. M. Boissier thinks the best rendering of the words is that the king, being seated facing the wall separating the banquet-hall from the *Kutallu* hall, saw the shadow projected by the chandelier upon the extremity of the hand which was writing upon the wall. He renders the critical words thus:

"At this moment appeared the fingers of a man's hand, and they wrote in front of the chandelier upon the wall of the *Kutallu*, of the royal palace." He therefore translates *gīrā* "wall," not plaster, but the meaning may have been "stuccoed" wall, thus implying both.¹

The notion of the Deity judging mortals by means of a balance, and thus demonstrating to themselves the equity of the decision, is, in the Greek classics, applied to man's fate whilst upon earth. Thus, Aeschylus writes in the "Suppliants":—

¹ See *Proceedings Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 1896, p. 237.

"O, Almighty Zeus, thou swayest the earth; yet thine wholly is the beam of the balance, and without thee what cometh to pass for mortals." Theognis, alluding to the same deity, says: "Zeus inclines the balance one time one way; and another, another."¹

These ideas may have originated in and been adopted from both Mesopotamia and Egypt. In the latter land the weighing of a heart figure in the great judgment hall of Osiris was the culminating crisis of the soul's career of struggles and adventures after death before any possibility of obtaining admission to the Elysian Fields. The scene was the favourite vignette picture for costly illustrated papyri of the "Book for the Dead." There is reason to think that the Assyrian God Nergal was a counterpart of Anubis, who superintended the Egyptian soul-weighing, Nergal being called *ša hâte* probably meaning "the weigher," or "of the scales," from the root *hātu*, "to weigh." He was lord of the dead, or custodian of them, and so a fit deity to decide their fate.

Some persons, to insure a true balance being used, took the precaution of having a pair of accurate scales deposited beside their mummy for the gods to utilise. Nothing could be more ethical or noble than the literary statements concerning this momentous trial, and the terms in which are couched the asseverations of never having cheated by false weights or scales whilst living.

But, with the occasional frivolity which appears to have permeated all Egyptian theology, the spirit who had reason to fear that his failures here would tell fatally against him hereafter, seems to have resorted to fraud, or hoped to be able so to do, to insure a favourable decision.

Success was achieved when the figure of truth outweighed the miniature heart symbol. The deities Anubis, Horus and Thoth superintended the séance. We see Horus verifying the cord and its suspended plummet which acted as a check indicator, whilst Anubis arrests the too prolonged swaying of the beam; and Thoth, in his divine "Book of Judgment," registers results.

But sometimes we notice depicted a little figure, supposed to be the

¹ See also Homer, *Iliad*, VIII, l. 68; XXII, l. 209, and Virgil, *Aeneid*, XII, 725; also *Iliad*, XXII, l. 209:

"Then it was that the Father drew out to their length the golden scales, and therein he placed two lots of death that brings low woe; and lifted them off the ground, and down sank, for Hector, the day of doom."

The conception of the balance of the gods must be as old as the selection of a constellation supposed to depict that instrument among the zodiacal signs.

defunct, pressing with his hand upon the tray containing the symbol of truth and honour to make it outweigh the opposite heart figure. What fee the priests demanded for inserting this interesting possibility of defeating justice and imposing upon the deities we shall never know.¹

If there were Persians present in the assembly, the conception of judgment by balance would not be novel to them. The old Zoroastrian books speak plainly of it. The three versions of the *Mōinōg-i-Khirad* all recite the following description, which is rendered by Prof. William Jackson from the Pehlevi text: "There is the mediation of Mitra and Srosh and Rashnū, and the weighing of Rashnu the Just with the balance of the spirits, which renders no favour on any side, neither for the righteous nor yet for the wicked; neither for the lords nor monarchs, as much as a hair's breadth it will not turn, and has no partiality." A similar story is to be found in the *Çatapatha Brahmana*.²

The discovery of the Aramaic docket upon a cuneiform written tablet, giving the word *paras* as equivalent for a half-mina, renders the explanation given by M. Clermont-Ganneau of the simple meaning of the words perfectly natural, though it scarcely explains the duplication of the word *mane*, or mina. He would understand the sentence as "a mina, a shekel, and a half mina," and it is to be borne in mind that Theodotion's version reads, *Μάνη Θεχέλ Φάρες*. But the first word may have read *Menah*, Numbered, and so the common or ordinary signification of the words may be the version

¹ Like so many other Egyptian religious ideas, this puerile view of the solemn Psychostasia was in some form adopted by the mediaeval church, wherein the office of the Egyptian superintending deities was undertaken by St. Michael, a close connexion of St. George and the Dragon, who is none other than Horus and the Crocodile, of the long myth inscribed upon the Temple of Edfū, and of the Metternich Stele, see M. Moret's "Horus Sauveur," *Rev. de l'Hist. des Rel.*, 1915.

M. Paulin Paris relates a story in a manuscript, preserved in France, of a cleric who, after death, was accused of many crimes by some enemy, similar to the "Adversary of Job." So Michael had his soul placed in a balance before God, together with all his good deeds, whilst in the other end of the scale all the evils the foe had alleged were accumulated. Unfortunately the sins were far the heavier and hope fled, when the Virgin interfered and, placing all the Ave Marias the pious ecclesiastic had repeated in the balance with his inadequate good works, gained paradise for him. As Ave Marias can be procured by payment, the object of the story is pretty plain.

² See *Acts of Xth Oriental Congress*, Geneva, p. 65, *et seq.*

preferred by Dr. Haupt: "(There has been) counted a mina, a shekel, and a half mina."¹

The plain interpretation of the words is quite distinct from their mystical meaning, which Daniel solely was competent to supply. The mental route by which he arrived at his rendering has given rise to much literature. Dr. Barton considers Daniel read the words as Babylonian ones, *Mani manū šiklu uparsi*, which, omitting one *mene*, would, in its shortest possible sense, run: "Number, weigh, divide," or Persian.²

For the final word Daniel utilises both its significations. *Manū* may have borne the sense of completion, of summing up of an enumeration, and thus Daniel uses that synonym for his version of the warning, if so the two *menes* are correct.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES OF PUBLICATIONS.

Two more volumes have been published by the Babylonian section of the University Museum, Pennsylvania University. Of these, Vol. VII, by Dr. Ungnad, contains "Babylonian Letters of the Hammurapi Period." These add to our knowledge of the conditions of the age of the great Hammurabi—or, as his name is now spelt, Hammurapi—the Babylonian monarch who is famous for the most ancient code of laws in the world, and who is commonly identified with the Amraphel of Gen. xiv. Dr. Ungnad gives translations of some of the letters, and calls attention to their value for the light they throw both on Babylonian philology and the general circumstances of the period—the prominent part taken by women being specially noticeable. Vol. X, No. 1, contains the "Sumerian Epic of Paradise, the Flood, and the Fall of Man," by Dr. Stephen Langdon, Reader of Assyriology, Oxford. In discussing these most interesting tablets (for a synopsis of which see the next paragraph) he observes that: "Beyond all doubt the Nippurian school of Sumerian theology originally regarded man as having been created from clay by the great mother-goddess." The

¹ See the weight in the British Museum inscribed פֶּרֶשׁ, and Stanley Cook, *Aramaic Glossary*, 99.

² See *American Journal of Biblical Literature*, XVIII, 1898, p. 70.