



A map of the ancient Near East

THE BABYLONIAN GENESIS

The Story of Creation

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CHAPTER III

OLD TESTAMENT PARALLELS

SCHOLARS all over the world have long recognized that the Babylonian accounts presented in translation on the preceding pages contain a considerable number of points which invite comparison not only with the first few chapters of the Book of Genesis but also with various other portions of the Old Testament. Thus *Enûma elish* and Gen. 1:1—2:3 both refer to a watery chaos, which was separated into heaven and earth; in both we have an etymological equivalence in the names denoting this chaos; both refer to the existence of light before the creation of the luminous bodies; both agree as to the succession in which the points of contact follow upon one another; and in both cases the number seven figures rather prominently. And turning to the poetic writings of our Old Testament literature, we find quite a number of passages which, like the story of Marduk's fight with Ti'âmat, treat of a conflict between the Creator and various hostile elements.

These and other parallels between the Babylonian cosmological texts and the Old Testament have led many scholars to the conclusion that the biblical passages in question are founded upon Babylonian exemplars. It is the purpose of this chapter to determine whether this view can be maintained, and, should it be found correct, it will be the further purpose to inquire into the extent to which the Old Testament passages in question are dependent on Babylonian sources and what implications this may then have for questions of religious faith. To this end we shall examine all the more outstanding points of comparison between Babylonian cosmology and the Old Testament, consider the main arguments that can be advanced pro and con, and draw our conclusions. Chief among these points of comparison are the following.

DIVINE PRINCIPLES

The Babylonians and Assyrians assumed two sexually distinct divine principles, called Apsû and Ti'âmat, the former being masculine and the latter feminine. Apsû was the father of the gods and Ti'âmat the mother. Ti'âmat is almost universally held to have been a dragon or some serpentine monster of a forbidding aspect. Since this point will become of importance later on in this chapter, it will be advisable to consider it in some detail.

The evidence which has been cited in support of the view that Ti'âmat was a dragon is taken chiefly from Babylonian and Assyrian art and literature. The literary evidence is based principally on a few passages in *Enûma elish* and on a story which in this volume bears the title "The Slaying of the *Labbu*" (see Appendix).

It has been urged that since *Enûma elish* (Tablet I:132 ff.) represents Ti'âmat as having borne monster-serpents, Ti'âmat must herself have been a great and powerful serpent, or some serpent-like monster.¹ Against this, however, it must be remembered that Ti'âmat gave birth also to the good and benevolent gods, who expressly call her "our bearer" (Tablets II:11 and III:15), and that, even after she has brought forth monsters, Marduk still calls her "a woman" (Tablet II:110 f.),² as does also Berossus. Ti'âmat was a goddess, and as such she could give birth to dragons without herself being a dragon.

The second passage from *Enûma elish* which has been quoted in this connection is found on Tablet IV:97, which states that "Ti'âmat opened her mouth to devour" Marduk as he approached her in deadly combat.³ But this does not necessarily

¹ Thus Friedrich Delitzsch, *Babel and Bible* (trans. from the German; Chicago, 1906), p. 159.

² The assertion made by L. W. King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation* (London, 1902), lxxi, n. 1, that the term "woman" is employed with reference to Ti'âmat's sex and not to her form cannot be maintained. The natural interpretation of Tablet II:110 f. quite obviously is that Marduk, in his statement to Anshar, regards Ti'âmat as one of their own kind. H. Gunkel's idea (*Genesis* [Göttingen, 1917], p. 126), that Ti'âmat was originally a female monster which in later times was conceived as a woman, is groundless.

³ King, *loc. cit.*

make Ti'âmat a dragon. For analogous cases we may point to the Greek god Kronos, who swallowed almost all his children, and to Polyphemus, the one-eyed Cyclops who imprisoned Odysseus (or Ulysses) and devoured several of the latter's companions. No one would call them dragons. Ti'âmat was such a gigantic being that she felt she could swallow up Marduk; and since under the circumstances this may have appeared to her to be the most expeditious way of getting rid of Marduk, or even the only way of salvation, she tried to do it.

The third of the more important passages that have been invoked are two broken lines in the story "The Slaying of the *Labbu*." Lines 5 and 6 of this myth have been translated by King⁴ and others as follows:

Who was the dragon [. . .]?
Ti'âmat was the dragon [. . .].

In more recent years, however, a tablet has been found at Ashur which contains another version of "The Slaying of the *Labbu*" and which shows beyond doubt that the above lines must be restored and translated about as follows:

Who [brought forth] the serpent(-dragon)?
The sea [brought forth] the serpent(-dragon).

This, of course, invalidates the argument completely. Furthermore, the monster of which this legend speaks appeared *after* the creation of the universe, after the earth had already been populated by man, and therefore it cannot be identical with Ti'âmat, out of whose body Marduk fashioned heaven and earth. Finally, in this myth the dragon is masculine, as is evidenced by the verbs and suffixes referring to it, while Ti'âmat was feminine.⁵

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 116 f.

⁵ The assertion by Erich Ebeling, *Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1931), p. 35, that Ti'âmat was bisexual is ill-founded. The text to which Ebeling refers is a late astrological-mythological commentary dating from about the period of the Arsacidae. The passage in question reads: "The mouth-star = the corpse-star; its name is Ti'âmat the she-ibex(?); it has two faces, it is male and female." The text states in unequivocal terms that the "mouth-star" is male and female. While it is difficult to determine the exact meaning of this line, there is no warrant for the deduction that Ti'âmat herself, the mother of the gods, was conceived as being both male and female.

To this category belong two texts which to my knowledge have not yet been quoted in proof of the dragon-like appearance of Ti'âmat but which may lead one to such a conclusion. The first text is a late commentary to certain rituals, particularly of the New Year's festival, and has been published by Erich Ebeling in *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*, No. 307. The lines which concern us at the moment are found on the reverse of the tablet and read as follows:

1. ". . . Ti'âmat, the lord vanquished [her],
2. [He seized her, decreed her destiny, and split her open like a mussel(?) into two (parts).
3. Her two right eyes are the Tigris, her two left eyes are the Euphrates.
11. The wild ass is the departed spirit of Enlil; the jackal is the departed spirit of Anu.
13. The camel is the departed spirit of Ti'âmat; the lord cut off her horns.
14. He severed her [ho]rns (and) cut off her tail."⁶

This quotation elucidates the second text to which I have just referred. It is a small and very fragmentary Neo-Babylonian commentary to *Enûma elish* and has been published by King (*The Seven Tablets of Creation*, Vol. II, Pl. LXII [R. 395]). The two lines in question read:

Out of her eyes he opened the river[s Tigris and Euphrates].
He twisted (*e-gir*) her tail into a *durma*[*hu*(?) . . .].

Considering that this passage is taken from a commentary to *Enûma elish* and considering the very similar phraseology in the text quoted a moment ago, it is obvious that "her tail" has reference to the tail of Ti'âmat.

According to these later materials, Ti'âmat had not only four eyes, like Marduk, but also horns and a tail. The last two characteristics may seem to justify or even necessitate the conclusion that we are here dealing with a dragon-like monster. However, the horns may possibly refer to the horns of the divine tiara, which in later times were "the invariable mark of a divini-

⁶ For a transliteration and a translation of this text see Ebeling, *Tod und Leben. . .*, pp. 31-37. Cf. also Benno Landsberger in *Archiv für Keilschriftforschung*, I (Neudruck, 1938), 46, n. 6. This "Neudruck" (or second printing) contains a valuable additional note.

ty,"⁷ while the idea of a tail may have been suggested by the fact that the departed spirit of Ti'âmat was visualized as a camel, just as the departed spirits of Enlil and Anu were pictured as the wild ass and the jackal, respectively. On the other hand, it is at least equally possible that Ti'âmat, like Ishtar, Ningal, Ninlil, and Ninsun,⁸ was portrayed or conceived also as a wild cow. At any rate, the horns and the tail show as little that Ti'âmat was a dragon as the same features prove the dragon-like nature of the bull-man, represented in glyptic art.⁹

The second type of evidence adduced in support of the contention that Ti'âmat was a dragon, or some such creature, is derived from Babylonian and Assyrian sculpture and cylinder seals.¹⁰

Perhaps the most important of these pictorial representations is found on two slabs coming from the entrance to the temple of the warrior-god Ninurta at Nimrûd (the biblical Calah).¹¹ The two slabs are sculptured and picture a winged god with two thunderbolts in pursuit of a monster which is half-lion and half-bird. Across the picture runs an inscription starting with an invocation to Ninurta (Figs. 6 and 7).¹² In certain quarters this picture is still believed to portray the fight between Marduk and Ti'âmat. But since the inscription begins with a prayer to Ninurta and since the sculpture comes from one of his temples, there can be no doubt that the deity pursuing the monster is Ninurta and not Marduk. As for the monster, it is clearly masculine, whereas Ti'âmat was feminine. Moreover, it is a creature of the land and the air, while Ti'âmat was a water deity. The

⁷ E. Douglas van Buren in *Archiv für Orientforschung*, X (1935/36), 59. Such horns were worn also by goddesses (see H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* [London, 1939], pp. 22 and 32).

⁸ Knut Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta* (Helsinki, 1938), p. 166.

⁹ See Frankfort, *op. cit.*, pp. 61 and 171.

¹⁰ See W. H. Ward, *The Seal Cylinders of Western Asia* (Washington, D.C., 1910), pp. 197-212.

¹¹ E. A. Wallis Budge, *Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum, Reign of Ashur-nasir-pal* (London, 1914), Pl. XXXVII; C. J. Gadd, *The Stones of Assyria* (London, 1936), p. 138, Nos. 27-29.

¹² For a translation of the inscription see Budge and King, *Annals of the Kings of Assyria* (London, 1902), pp. 254 ff.

theory is further weakened by the fact that on a plaster impression of a cylinder seal in the Walters Art Gallery (Baltimore) the same dragon is attacked by a winged god or semigod with scorpoid attributes,¹³ showing that also in this case the aggressive deity is not Marduk.

The beast which in Figure 1 is resting at the feet of Marduk has also been identified with Ti'âmat.¹⁴ In its fully developed form it is a composite monster, with the elongated head, the forked tongue, and scale-covered body of a serpent; with the forelegs of a lion and the hind legs of an eagle or some such bird; and with an upright horn and a wriggling tail, terminating in the sting of a scorpion (Fig. 5). But it should be observed that the Marduk statue (Fig. 1) represents the monster merely as *subdued*, at the most, while Ti'âmat was *slain* and her body split in two and used in the creation of heaven and earth. Furthermore, it can be stated with almost complete certainty that this composite being is the same as the dragon mentioned in Tablet I:140.¹⁵ There, however, we learn that the dragon was not Ti'âmat herself but one of the creatures brought forth by her. There is no reason whatever why this monster should be identified with Ti'âmat.

Of the cylinder seals mentioned in connection with this subject, perhaps the most interesting is the one on which appears a huge horned serpent with two short arms and two hands, pursued by a god armed with thunderbolts in each hand (Fig. 8). But neither here nor in any other instance is the name of Ti'âmat found in connection with the pictorial rendition. Identification of this or any other Babylonian or Assyrian monster with Ti'âmat is without any factual basis; this could be done only if we had literary evidence to warrant it.

¹³ See Cyrus H. Gordon in *Iraq*, VI (1939), Pl. XI, Fig. 88 (cf. also E. Unger's treatment of the scorpion-man in *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte*, VIII [1927], 201-2). Another close parallel to the pictorial rendering from Nimrûd has been published by E. Douglas van Buren in *Orientalia*, XV (New ser., 1946), Pl. VIII, Fig. 32 (discussed *ibid.*, pp. 40-42).

¹⁴ Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 159, and Unger, *Babylon, die heilige Stadt* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1931), p. 210.

¹⁵ See H. Zimmern in E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (Berlin, 1903), p. 504.

In general, it should be remembered that dragons were most likely much more numerous in Babylonian and Assyrian religious belief than the available cuneiform records would indicate. Thus we find that the number of monsters mentioned by Berosus in his description of conditions prior to the formation of heaven and earth far exceeds the list given in *Enûma elish*, but, according to H. Frankfort,¹⁶ all these figures are known from the seals. It would therefore be a mistake if we tried to identify every dragon portrayed in Babylonian or Assyrian art with some dreadful monster referred to in the inscriptions.¹⁷

No conclusive proof has yet been found for the idea that Ti'âmat was a dragon, or a similar being, while against it can be cited the testimony of Berosus and of *Enûma elish* to the effect that Ti'âmat was a woman, the wife of Apsû, and the mother of the gods. Jensen¹⁸ is therefore unquestionably right in his declaration that the supposed dragon-form of Ti'âmat is "a pure figment of the imagination" (*ein reines Phantasiegebilde*).¹⁹

Apsû and Ti'âmat were not simply the ancestors of the gods. They represented at the same time the living, uncreated world-matter; Apsû was the primeval sweet-water ocean, and Ti'âmat the primeval salt-water ocean.²⁰ They were matter and divine spirit united and coexistent, like body and soul. In them were contained all the elements of which the universe was made later on, and from them were descended all the gods and goddesses of the vast Babylonian-Assyrian pantheon.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 199.

¹⁷ For further information on the dragon in ancient Mesopotamia see Unger in *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte*, VIII, 195-216, and E. Douglas van Buren in *Orientalia*, XV, 1-45, where many additional references will be found. On the "monster" Kur, which S. N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology* (Philadelphia, 1944), pp. 76-96, thought to have detected, see T. Jacobsen in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, V (1946), 143-47.

¹⁸ In *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, II, 85 (under "Chaos").

¹⁹ Cf. also Jensen, *Das Gilgamesch-Epos in der Weltliteratur*, I (Strassburg, 1906), 60-63. The same view has been expressed by Witton Davies in his discussion of the apocryphal story of Bel and the Dragon (see R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* [Oxford, 1913], I, 653 f.).

²⁰ Jensen in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, I, 122-24; A. Deimel, "Enuma Eliš" und *Hexaëmeron* (Rome, 1934), p. 22.

In sharp contrast to this, the Book of Genesis speaks of only one divine principle, existing apart from and independently of all cosmic matter.

WHENCE MATTER?

From what has just been said relative to the nature of Apsû and Ti'âmat it is apparent that for the Babylonians matter was eternal. This conclusion is confirmed by the historian Diodorus Siculus (last century B.C.), who expressly states: "The Chaldeans say that the substance (*φύσις*) of the world is eternal (*ἀίδιος*) and that it neither had a first beginning nor that it will at a later time suffer destruction."²¹ The Babylonians could conceive of a time when there was neither heaven nor earth, a time when only Apsû and Ti'âmat existed, but apparently they could not conceive of a time when there was nothing whatever except a transcendental deity; they postulated the existence of the material as well as that of the spiritual or the divine.

Genesis, chapter 1, on the other hand, predicates a creation out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*), that is to say, it asserts that by the sovereign will and power of God matter was brought into existence from vacuous nothing at the creation of the universe.²²

This concept, however, cannot be deduced from the Hebrew verb *bārâ*, "to create," as it has been done. For although this term is invariably employed to designate the creative activities of God and "never takes the accusative of the material from which a thing is made, as do other verbs of making, but uses the accusative to designate only the thing made,"²³ there is no conclusive evidence in the entire Old Testament that the verb itself ever expresses the idea of a creation out of nothing. This applies even to Gen. 2:3b, which is probably best rendered as follows: "For on it He rested from all His work, in doing which God had

²¹ ii.30. On the above translation of *φύσις* see H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised and augmented by Sir Henry Stuart Jones, Part 10 (Oxford, 1940), p. 1965.

²² This is not identical with the Vedic concept of creation out of a seeming or transcendental nothing (i.e., a transcendental substance originating in and emanating from the deity), on which see Carl A. Scharbau, *Die Idee der Schöpfung in der Vedischen Literatur* (Stuttgart, 1932), esp. pp. 33-35 and 72-82.

²³ Julian Morgenstern in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XXXVI (1920), 201.

brought about creation."²⁴ *Bārā* occurs as a synonym of *‘āsā*, "to do," "to make" (Gen. 1:21-27; 5:2; Isa. 41:20; 43:7); *yāšar*, "to form," "to fashion" (Isa. 43:1 and 7; 45:7 and 18; Amos 4:13); *kônēn* (the *pōlēl* of *kūn*), "to set up," "to establish" (Isa. 45:18); and of *yāsad*, "to found" (Ps. 89:12 f.). The Septuagint usually renders *bārā* by *ποιεῖν* ("to do," "to make") or *κτίθειν* ("to found," "to create"), but never by *ποιεῖν ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* ("to make out of nothing"), or the like. In South Arabic the root *br* signifies "to make," "to construct."²⁵ Hebrew *bārā* has about the same meaning as *‘āsā*, with this difference, that *bārā* contains the idea of a new²⁶ and extraordinary or epochal production, never necessitating toil on the part of the Creator,²⁷ while *‘āsā* is used in the general, colorless sense of "to do" or "to make." But the idea of a creation out of nothing is a connotation which has been read into *bārā*,²⁸ the same applies to Latin *creare*,²⁹ from which, of course, the English verb "to create" is derived, and to the German *schaffen*.³⁰

However, the doctrine in question can be deduced from the expression *bērēshîth*, "in the beginning" (Gen. 1:1), i.e., in the very beginning of things (cf. *ἐν ἀρχῇ* in John 1:1). At that time God created "heaven and earth." Elsewhere in the Old Testament the phrase "heaven and earth" denotes the *organized*

²⁴ Cf. T. J. Meek in J. M. P. Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Bible: An American Translation* (Chicago, 1935). For the grammatical construction see Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, edited and enlarged by E. Kautzsch and translated by A. E. Cowley (Oxford, 1910), sec. 114, *o*; and Franz Delitzsch, *Neuer Commentar über die Genesis* (Leipzig, 1887), p. 70 (esp. Eccles. 2:11).

²⁵ See Karolus Conti Rossini, *Chrestomathia Arabica Meridionalis Epigraphica* (Rome, 1931), p. 117.

²⁶ In Isa. 41:20; 43:1 and 15; 65:18; Pss. 51:12; 102:19; 104:30 it is used in the sense of re-creating something, of creating something new but with old material.

²⁷ However, not always merely by word or volition; for sometimes additional means are obviously employed (cf., e.g., Isa. 43:7; 54:16; Mal. 2:10).

²⁸ For a detailed discussion of *bārā* see Franz Böhl's article in *Alttestamentliche Studien Rudolf Kittel . . . dargebracht* (Leipzig, 1913), pp. 42-60.

²⁹ In ecclesiastical Latin *creare* does have the idea of a creation out of nothing but not in classical Latin (see A. Ernout and A. Millet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine* [Paris, 1939], p. 230).

³⁰ Friedrich Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1934), p. 504.

heaven and earth, the *organized* universe, the cosmos. This alone, however, does not prove that it must of necessity have the same meaning in the opening verse of Genesis, which introduces the account of how heaven and earth were created and organized. Elsewhere also the word "earth" denotes the *organized* earth, but in Gen. 1:2 it undeniably refers to the earth "in its primitive chaotic, unformed state."³¹ This usage clearly decides the signification of "earth" in the preceding verse; and that, in turn, determines the sense in which "heaven" is to be taken in the same verse. This fact and the circumstance that the following verses describe the elaboration and completion of heaven and earth³² justify us in concluding that in the initial verse of Genesis the phrase under discussion designates heaven and earth as first created out of nothing in a rude state but in their essential or basic form.³³

This interpretation is completely in line with the following passages: "The Lord formed me³⁴ as the beginning of His way(s),³⁵ as the first of His works of old; from everlasting was I established, from the beginning, from the origin of the earth; when there were no depths was I brought into being, when there were no fountains heavy-laden with water; when He had not yet made the earth and the fields, nor the first of the clods of the world" (Prov. 8:22-26); "I beseech thee, O child, lift thine eyes to heaven and earth, look at all that is therein, and know that God did not make them out of things that existed" (*ὅτι οὐκ ἐξ ὄντων ἐποίησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεός* [II Macc. 7:28]);³⁶ "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was with God in the beginning. All things were made through Him, and without Him not one thing was made that is made" (John 1:1-3); "By faith we perceive

³¹ S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (London, 1904), p. 3.

³² For the elaboration of the celestial regions see vss. 6-8 and 14-19.

³³ A *creatio ex nihilo* has been derived from Gen. 1:1 also by J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927), p. 296, and W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, II (Leipzig, 1935), 50 f.

³⁴ I.e., Wisdom.

³⁵ I.e., procedure, performance, or creation (cf. Job 26:14; 40:19).

³⁶ Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart, 1935), I, 1117.

that the universe was created by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which appear" (Heb. 11:3). There is not a single passage in the entire Bible which teaches the opposite.

This interpretation, however, has been seriously contested. For some commentators, either leaving *bārā* (בָּרָא) intact³⁷ or changing it to the infinitive construct, *bērō* (בֵּרֹא), hold that the initial verse of Genesis forms a subordinate clause and that the second verse predicates a pre-existent chaos. Some therefore translate the introductory verses of Genesis as follows: "When God began to create heaven and earth—the earth being a desolate waste, with darkness upon the abyss and the spirit of God hovering over the waters—God said: 'Let there be light!' And there was light." Others translate: "When God began to create heaven and earth, the earth was a desolate waste and darkness was upon the abyss and the spirit of God hovered over the waters. And God said: 'Let there be light!' And there was light." This view is based chiefly on the twofold assumption that *bērēshîth*, because of the lack of the definite article, stands in the construct state and that Gen. 1:2 would have to begin with *wattēhî hā-āreš* (instead of *wē-hā-āreš hāyēthā*) if verse 1 were an independent sentence.³⁸

But terms like *rēshîth*, "beginning,"³⁹ *rōsh*, "beginning,"⁴⁰ *qedem*, "olden times," and *ōlām*, "eternity," when used in adverbial expressions, occur almost invariably *without* the article, and that in the absolute state.⁴¹ In the Greek transliterations of

³⁷ On this construction see Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, sec. 130, d.

³⁸ Thus Schrader, *Studien zur Kritik und Erklärung der biblischen Urgeschichte* (Zurich, 1863), pp. 43-47; and, less emphatically, J. M. P. Smith in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XLIV (1927/28), 108-10.

³⁹ For which cf. esp. Isa. 46:10, which has *mērēshîth* in place of *min-hārēshîth* or *mēhārēshîth*.

⁴⁰ Cf. *mērōsh*, Isa. 40:21; 41:4; Prov. 8:23; Eccles. 3:11.

⁴¹ See Eduard König, *Historisch-comparative Syntax der hebräischen Sprache* (Leipzig, 1897), sec. 294, g, and *Die Genesis* (Gütersloh, 1919), p. 130, n. 1. W. F. Albright, in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXII (1943), 369-70, denies the validity of this argument on the grounds that *mē-ōlām* and *miqqedem* are "old expressions probably going back to the age preceding the introduction of the article into common use in Hebrew" and that *mērōsh* and *mērēshîth* "occur only in verse, where the article is not nearly so frequent as in prose, owing to the conservative

the Hebrew text which have come down to us, *bērēshîth* in the opening verse of Genesis appears as *βαρησήθ*, *βαρησέθ*, *βρησίθ*, *βρισήθ*, and *βρησιδ*; Jerome transliterated it *bresith*.⁴² This may be simply an indication that instead of *bērēshîth* (בֵּרֵאֲשִׁית), which we should normally expect on the basis of the usage of this and similar Hebrew words, one could also say *bārēshîth* (בָּרֵאֲשִׁית), without any difference in meaning. The transliterations *βαρησήθ* and *βαρησέθ* support the old and generally accepted translation and interpretation of verse 1, while the absence of the definite article in *bērēshîth* cannot be used as a point against it.

The second argument, viz., that verse 2 would have to begin with *wattēhî hā-āreš* if verse 1 really formed an independent statement, is equally untenable. The first verse of Genesis briefly records the creation of the universe in its essential form, and the second verse singles out a part of this universe, viz., the earth, and describes its condition in some detail. In verse 2 the emphasis thus rests on *earth*, and for this reason the subject is placed *before* the verb. For analogous examples we may quote the following lines: "And God called the light 'day,' but the darkness he called 'night'" (*wē-lahōshek qārā lāyēlā*) (Gen. 1:5a); "Now the serpent was (*wē-hannāhāsh hāyā*) more clever than any beast of the field" (Gen. 3:1); *bānīm giddaltî wē-rōmamtî wē-hēm pāshē-ū bî*, "Sons have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me!" (Isa. 1:2b). In the last passage, the two perfect forms *giddaltî* and *rōmamtî* correspond to the perfect *bārā* in Gen. 1:1, and the phrase *wē-hēm pāshē-ū*

or archaistic character of poetry." Albright's first point, founded chiefly on conjecture, need not detain us. As regards his second point, it is to be noted that the introductory chapter of Genesis is not so prosaic as Albright's statement seems to indicate. In the very first two expressions we have alliteration (בָּרָא בְרֵאֲשִׁית); in the second verse there is assonance (*tohā wābohā*); in verse 24 we meet the archaic construct *hayēthō* followed by *ereš* without the article (as against vs. 25); and verses 27-28 are poetry pure and simple. The whole chapter is written in a solemn tone and in dignified prose (cf. Gunkel, *op. cit.*, p. 117), which easily glides over into poetry.

⁴² Fridericus Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*, Vol. I (Oxford, 1875), 7; Paul de Lagarde, *Ankündigung einer neuen Ausgabe der griechischen Uebersetzung des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen, 1882), p. 5.

corresponds to *wě-hā-āreš hāyēthā* in verse 2. The second verse of the first chapter of Genesis could also be rendered by "Now the earth on her part was a desolate waste, . . ." ⁴³ There is thus no necessity for the use of the imperfect tense in this verse. ⁴⁴

The translations which take verse 1 as a temporal clause yield good sense, but they militate against all the ancient versions and the simplest and most natural interpretation of the Massoretic text. If the Massorettes had regarded verse 1 as a temporal clause subordinate to what follows, they would probably have used the more natural form *bērō* (בְּרֹ) in order to avoid ambiguity. While the verdict of the versions and of the Massorettes is by no means final, it nevertheless deserves our careful consideration and should not be set aside without good reasons. And in the present case no such reasons exist. Furthermore, the sentence structure in the first of the two translations treating verse 1 as a subordinate clause is unnecessarily complicated, although it cannot be denied that involved constructions do occur in the Old Testament (cf. Num. 5:12-15 and Josh. 3:14-16). And in the case of the second translation we should ordinarily expect verse 2 to begin with *wattēhî* if the meaning of the passage in question really were as translated (cf. Jer. 7:25). There is no exact analogy anywhere to support this translation, not even in Gen. 2:4 f., since *bēyôm* *‘asōth* is there followed by the imperfect, instead of the perfect. ⁴⁵

In further support of the translations which regard verse 1 as a subordinate clause, reference has been made also to the Wisdom of Solomon (11:17): "For Thine all-powerful hand, that created the world out of formless matter (*ἐξ ἀμόρφου ὕλης*), ⁴⁶ lacked not means to send upon them a multitude of bears, or fierce lions." The Wisdom of Solomon is a combination of Greek and Hebrew thought, and the expression "formless matter," as it stands, conveys a purely Greek philosophical conception. One

⁴³ In contradistinction to this passage, Isa. 45:18 ("He did not create it a desolation" [*tohu*]) treats not of the preliminary stages of the earth but of the final result.

⁴⁴ König, *Die Genesis*, pp. 135 f.

⁴⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 137 f.

⁴⁶ Rahlfs, *op. cit.*, II, 361.

could, no doubt, interpret this passage to mean that God first created shapeless matter and then formed the universe with it. However, since the author's aim was to advance the strongest possible arguments for the omnipotence of God, and since a creation out of nothing would have been a much more convincing demonstration of God's sovereign power than would the mere arrangement and orderly disposition of matter, he would not have used a phrase which to his Greek readers would convey the idea that matter was eternal and that God merely molded it to his purpose, had he believed in a creation out of nothing. We may therefore conclude with certainty that the author of the Wisdom of Solomon did not accept this doctrine but that, under the influence of Greek philosophy, he posited a pre-existent chaotic material. ⁴⁷ And since his belief was based on Greek speculation, this passage cannot serve as argument either pro or con. ⁴⁸

A final argument to be considered very briefly in this connection is derived from the fact that most Mesopotamian creation stories begin with a subordinate clause, starting with *enūma* in Babylonian and *ud-da* in Sumerian, both of which expressions mean "on the day that" or simply "when" and correspond to Hebrew *bēyôm*. But if the writer of the first chapter of Genesis had patterned the initial verse after the style of the Sumerian-Babylonian cosmologists, it would be most extraordinary that instead of using the Hebrew equivalent *bēyôm* he introduced the expression *bērēshîth*, which finds no parallel in the cosmogonies of Mesopotamia. Had the biblical writer adopted the style of the Sumerian-Babylonian mythographers and had he purposed to start out with a subordinate sentence, he would in all probability have begun with the normal and unequivocal phrase *bēyôm*, which is precisely what we find in Gen. 2:4 and 5:1-2, the latter passage, like the present verse, being assigned to the Priestly narrative by modern scholarship (cf. also Ezek. 28:13).

⁴⁷ See Charles, *op. cit.*, I, 553.

⁴⁸ This is true also of the works of the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (born shortly before the Christian Era); not only was he under the sway of Greek philosophy but he does not even seem to have been strictly consistent on the point at issue (see *The Jewish Encyclopedia* [New York and London, 1907], IV, 338).

Hence the usage of *bērēshūth* is far from being "the most obvious and clear-cut illustration of ultimate dependence on Mesopotamia in the Old Testament account of the Creation."⁴⁹ In fact, it points in the opposite direction.

Still other commentators treat the initial verse of Genesis as a superscription summarizing the entire creative process recorded in chapters 1:2—2:3. But the use of the copula *wē* ("and") at the beginning of verse 2 speaks against it.⁵⁰ This copula, which is here followed by a noun occupying an emphatic position, as we have seen, cannot attach itself to a heading. Besides, verse 1 would be a peculiar superscription.

POLYTHEISM AND MONOTHEISM

The Babylonian creation stories are permeated with a crude polytheism. They speak not only of successive generations of gods and goddesses proceeding from Apsû and TiĀmat, with all of them in need of physical nourishment, since all consist of matter as well as of spirit, but they speak also of different creators. According to *Enûma elish*, Apsû and TiĀmat are the ancestors of all the Babylonian and Assyrian divinities. But these in turn personify various cosmic spaces and the different forces in nature. Consequently, Apsû and TiĀmat are not simply the parents of divine beings, without having anything to do with the work of creation; but, by giving birth to these deities, they have a direct share in the actual creation of the universe. The earliest stages of creation are thus ascribed to sexual congress. Then after war had broken out among the gods, Ea killed Apsû, and with his carcass he formed the subterranean sea, on which the earth rests. Finally, after a considerable portion of the universe had thus been created, Marduk, the chief creator, appeared on the scene. He is credited with the creation of heaven and earth, the luminary bodies, grain and legumes, and, together with Ea, he is said to have fashioned man.

Other accounts tell us that "the gods in their assembly" made the world and the living creatures therein (p. 64); that Anu, Enlil, Shamash, and Ea created the universe and, to-

⁴⁹ Albright in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXII, 369.

⁵⁰ König, *Die Genesis*, p. 135.

gether with the Anunnaki, formed the first two human beings, Ulligarra and Zalgarrā (pp. 68-71); that Anu made the heavens, and that Ea created various minor patron deities, the king, and mankind (pp. 65-66); that Anu, Enlil, and Enki (i.e., Ea) created the moon and the sun (pp. 73-74); that Marduk was assisted by the goddess Aruru in his work of creating mankind (p. 63); and, finally, that the goddess Mami (also called Ninĥursag) at the behest of Enki and other deities fashioned man from clay mixed with the blood of a slain god (pp. 66-67).

Against all this, the opening chapters of Genesis as well as the Old Testament in general refer to only one Creator and Maintainer of all things, one God who created and transcends all cosmic matter. In the entire Old Testament, there is not a trace of a theogony, such as we find, for example, in *Enûma elish* and in Hesiod. To this faith the Babylonians never attained.

PRIMEVAL CHAOS

Enûma elish and Genesis, chapter 1, both refer to a watery chaos, a feature which is found also in the cosmologies of the Egyptians⁵¹ and Phoenicians⁵² and in the Vedic literature.⁵³ *Enûma elish* conceives of this chaos as *living* matter and as being an integral part of the first two principles, Apsû and TiĀmat, in whom all the elements of the future universe were commingled, while, according to Genesis, it is nothing but a mass of *inanimate* matter, which was afterward separated into the waters above and below, into dry land and ocean.

The concept of a primeval ocean at the very beginning of time has repeatedly been advanced as a strong argument for the Babylonian origin of the biblical account of creation. *Enûma elish*, it is asserted, is a nature myth symbolizing the change of seasons from winter to spring. The watery chaos, it is held, reflects the heavy winter rains, the overflow of the rivers, and the

⁵¹ W. M. Flinders Petrie in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. Hastings, IV, 144; H. Grapow in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, LXVII (1931), 34.

⁵² John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (New York, 1910), pp. 48-49.

⁵³ Scharbau, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37 and 46-51.

disorder which they cause, when the land of Babylonia is inundated; while the parting of the water and the creation of heaven and earth represent the spring, when the clouds and the water vanish, when Marduk, the god of the spring sun, appears and creates life and order. With this picture the biblical narrative is said to agree so closely that its importation from Babylonia to Palestine may be regarded as a certainty, especially if one considers how impossible it would have been for such an idea to arise on Hebrew soil, where climatic conditions are so much different.⁵⁴

Some years ago, however, Albert T. Clay⁵⁵ called attention to the fact that the rainy season and the overflow of the rivers of Babylonia do not synchronize, and the average fall of rain in Babylonia, amounting to about six inches per year,⁵⁶ is too small to be of any consequence; in fact, it is so small that the land would be a desert were it not for the irrigation canals and the inundations. The rivers do not flood in the winter but in the spring, from March to June, following the melting of the snows on the Zagros and the mountains of Armenia. The watery chaos, resulting from the overflow of the rivers, sets in after the winter is over and after the god of the spring sun has made his appearance.

TI'ÂMAT AND TĒHÔM

In both accounts we find an etymological equivalence in the names by which this watery mass is designated. In *Enûma elish* it is the word *Ti'âmat*, in Genesis the term *tĕhôm*, which occurs in 1:2 and is usually translated with "the deep." *Ti'âmat* is almost invariably employed as a proper name; but rarely does it stand for *tâmtu*, a generic term for "ocean," "sea," or "lake." And the absence of the definite article in *tĕhôm*, with the exception of the plural forms in Ps. 106:9 and Isa. 63:13, shows that

⁵⁴ See Zimmern in *Der alte Orient*, II, Heft 3 (1903), 17; Driver, *op. cit.*, p. 28; and Jastrow in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, XXXVI (1917), 277 and 296.

⁵⁵ *The Origin of Biblical Traditions* (New Haven, Conn., 1923), pp. 75-78. See also George A. Barton's remarks in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, XLV (1925), 27 f., and Clay's rejoinder, *ibid.*, p. 141.

⁵⁶ See M. G. Ionides, *The Régime of the Rivers Euphrates and Tigris* (London and New York, 1937), esp. pp. 24-36.

tĕhôm comes close to being a proper name, corresponding in this respect to Hebrew *tĕbĕl* (the inhabited earth) and *shĕ'ôl* (the subterranean spirit world, etc.) and to the English term "hell," all three of which regularly occur without the definite article; also the English word "heaven" (in the singular) is ordinarily used without the article. The lack of the article may be due to the fact that *tĕhôm* is used almost exclusively in poetry, being found in prose only four times out of thirty-five passages.

Though coming from the same root, the two words do not denote the same thing. This is nothing surprising, for root relationship does not itself prove identity in meaning. We can illustrate this quite easily by a few well-known examples. French *actuellement* ("at present") and German *selig* ("blessed") are derived from the same roots as English "actually" and "silly," respectively. But what divergencies in meaning!

Ti'âmat, as we have observed, is a mythical personality. Such significance the Old Testament *tĕhôm* never has. The complete lack of mythological associations appears with unmistakable clarity from Gen. 1:2: "And darkness was upon the *face* of *tĕhôm*," i.e., on the surface of the deep. If *tĕhôm* were here treated as a mythological entity, the expression "face" would have to be taken literally; but this would obviously lead to absurdity. For why should there be darkness only on the *face* of *tĕhôm* and not over the entire body? "On the face of the deep" is here used interchangeably with "on the face of the waters," which we meet at the end of the same verse. The one expression is as free from mythological connotation as is the other. In the Old Testament, *tĕhôm* is nothing but a designation for the deep, the sea, the ocean, or any large body of water; in Gen. 1:2 it refers to the vast expanse of water from which the waters above the firmament were separated on the second day and out of which the dry land emerged on the third day (cf. Ps. 104:6). But, while *tĕhôm* stands for the *entire* body of water, Ti'âmat represents only one *part* of it, the other being represented by Apsû, who finds no mention at all in the biblical creation story.

It has been asserted that Hebrew *tĕhôm* is a derivative of Babylonian *Ti'âmat* and that here we have a point in favor of the view that the creation story in Gen. 1:1-2:3 is dependent

upon *Enûma elish*.⁵⁷ But to derive *têhôm* from *Ti'âmat* is grammatically impossible, because the former has a masculine, the latter a feminine, ending. As a loan-word from *Ti'âmat*, *têhôm* would need a feminine ending, in accordance with the laws of derivation from Babylonian in Hebrew. Moreover, it would have no *h*, unless it had been derived from a Babylonian form *Tihâmat*, which may have existed in Babylonian speech. Had *Ti'âmat* been taken over into Hebrew, it would either have been left as it was or it would have been changed to *ti'âmā* or *te'âmā*, with the feminine ending *ā*, but it would not have become *têhôm*.⁵⁸ As far as the system of Semitic grammar is concerned, *têhôm* represents an older and more original formation than does *Ti'âmat*, since the feminine is formed from the masculine, by the addition of the feminine ending, which in Babylonian and Assyrian appears, in its full form, as *-at*.

The only way in which we can account for the above-mentioned morphological differences between *Ti'âmat* and *têhôm* is by assuming that both words go back to a common Semitic form. As common Semitic words, they could without any difficulty whatever have different terminations of gender, as we can see, for example, from such common Semitic words as Hebrew *ʔeres* ("earth") and Babylonian *ʔersetu*, Hebrew *nefesh* ("breath," "life," "soul") and Babylonian *napishtu*. That the two terms under consideration actually are common Semitic words, ultimately going back to one and the same form, is

⁵⁷ See, e.g., R. W. Rogers, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* (New York, 1908), p. 137; and Morgenstern in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XXXVI, 197.

⁵⁸ The Hebrew name *Elām* cannot be advanced as counterargument, because the Hebrew form does not revert to Babylonian *Elamtu* but to Sumerian *Elam*, as shown by A. Poebel in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, XLVIII (1931), 20-26. Nor can one invoke Babylonian *ekallu* ("palace," "temple") and Hebrew *הֵיכָל* to explain the *h* in *têhôm*, for both words are derived from Sumerian *é-gal*, which may have been pronounced *he-gal*, as pointed out by Poebel in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, XXXIX (1929), 143-45. Furthermore, in Hebrew *הֵיכָל* the consonant *h* stands at the beginning, while in *têhôm* it is found in the middle, which makes a decided difference, as we can see, e.g., from the treatment of the *spiritus asper* or rough breathing in Greek compound verbs. A secondary *h* can develop at the beginning of a word (cf. Ethiopic *Hēnōs* and Hebrew *ʔEnōsh* [Gen. 5:6-11], Ethiopic *Hagrippās* and Latin *Agrippa*); but there does not seem to be any proof that such an *h* can appear in the middle.

borne out by the fact that the same root appears again in Babylonian *tâmtu* (which occasionally interchanges with *Ti'âmat*), in Arabic *Tihâmatu* or *Tihâma*, a name for the coastal land in western Arabia,⁵⁹ and on the tablets from Ras Shamra (on the northern coast of Syria), where we find the form *t-h-m*, meaning "the ocean" or "the deep." The occurrence of *têhôm* in the first chapter of Genesis is worth noting, inasmuch as it is a comparatively rare word in the Old Testament and is used chiefly in poetry, but it does not deserve much more consideration than does the occurrence of such common Semitic words as *shamâmu* ("heaven") and *ʔersetu* ("earth") in *Enûma elish* and *shāmayim* and *ʔeres* in Genesis.⁶⁰

PRIMEVAL DARKNESS

Another correspondence between the two narratives is the idea of a primeval darkness, which is found also in the cosmologies of other ancient nations (e.g., the Phoenicians and the Greeks). In *Enûma elish* this conception is not expressly stated, but we can deduce it from the fact that *Ti'âmat*, according to Berossus (pp. 77-78), was shrouded in darkness, as we saw in the preceding chapter. Moreover, Berossus says very explicitly: "There was a time in which all was darkness." But while from *Enûma elish* this idea can be inferred only with the aid of Berossus, in Genesis it is expressed in clear and unequivocal terms: "And darkness was upon the face of the deep."

LIGHT BEFORE THE LUMINARIES

Both accounts refer to the existence of light and to the alteration of day and night before the creation of the heavenly bodies. In *Enûma elish* day and night are spoken of as being already in existence at the time of Apsû's revolt against the ways of the gods, his children (Tablet I:38). Furthermore, Tablet I:68 makes mention of the radiance or dazzling aureole which surrounded Apsû. Finally, Marduk, the conqueror of *Ti'âmat* and the fabricator of the world, was a solar deity, from whom

⁵⁹ Cf. R. P. Dougherty, *The Sealand of Ancient Arabia* (New Haven, 1932), p. 173.

⁶⁰ In reply to criticism, I want to emphasize that I deny the Babylonian derivation of *têhôm* from *Ti'âmat* for purely grammatical reasons.

Not
borrowing

light proceeded as from a luminary; he is explicitly called the "son of the sun-god, the sun-god of the go[ds]" (Tablet I:102). In Genesis day and night are likewise mentioned as existing before the celestial bodies, but here light is a *creation* of God and not a divine *attribute*. "God said: 'Let there be light!' And there was light; and God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light 'day' and the darkness He called 'night.'"

THE MARDUK-TI'ĀMAT CONFLICT

In *Enûma elish* the first four tablets deal almost exclusively with the contest between Marduk and Ti'āmat and the events leading up to it, while the creation story proper occupies less than two tablets. The Hebrew account, on the contrary, deals almost exclusively with the creation, and not a trace is found anywhere in the first two chapters of Genesis of a conflict between God and some mythical figure. No one will deny that.

Some of the poetical books of the Old Testament, however, do contain passages in which the idea of a conflict between God and some hostile elements is brought out very distinctly. In many quarters these portions of Sacred Writ are regarded as the last shattered remnants of a creation story in which God, like Marduk, was pictured as having contended with a huge monster and its helpers *before* the making of heaven and earth. The first to collect and discuss all the pertinent material was Hermann Gunkel, in his book *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*, published in Göttingen in 1895. The most outstanding examples advanced by Gunkel are the following ones:

ISA. 51:9-10

Awake, awake, put on strength,
O arm of the Lord!
Awake as in the days of old,
(as) in the generations of ancient times!
Was it not Thou that didst hew Rahab in pieces,
that didst pierce the crocodile (*tannîn*)?
Was it not Thou that didst dry up the sea,
the waters of the great deep;
That didst make the depths of the sea a way
for the redeemed to pass over?

Ps. 89:9-12

O Lord, God of hosts, who is strong like Thee, O Lord?
And Thy faithfulness is round about Thee.⁶¹
Thou rulest over the raging of the sea;
When its waves rise Thou stillest them.⁶²
Thou didst crush Rahab like one who is slain;⁶³
With Thy strong arm Thou didst scatter Thine enemies.
The heavens are Thine, the earth also is Thine;
The world and its fulness—Thou didst found them.

JOB 9:13-14

God does not turn back His anger.
Under Him bowed the helpers of Rahab;
How much less shall I answer Him,
(Or) choose my words (to reason) with Him?

JOB 26:12-13

By His power the sea is quiet,⁶⁴
And by His understanding He smites⁶⁴ Rahab;
By His breath the sky is cleared,
His hand pierces⁶⁴ the fleeing serpent.

ISA. 27:1

On that day the Lord will punish
With His sword, which is hard and great and strong,
Leviathan, the fleeing serpent,⁶⁵
And Leviathan, the tortuous serpent,
And He will slay the crocodile (*tannîn*) that is in the sea.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Is in evidence on every side.

⁶² Cf. Ps. 65:8 and Matt. 8:23 ff.

⁶³ With the same ease.

⁶⁴ For this use of the perfect see *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, sec. 106, k. The context requires the present tense in English. For the translation of נָשַׁט in the sense "to be quiet," "to be at rest," "to repose," see Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Boston and New York, 1907), p. 921; cf. also the Septuagint translation *κατανασσει*, "he quieted."

⁶⁵ A serpent in flight looks crooked or tortuous. If we consider this expression from that viewpoint, "the fleeing serpent" forms a beautiful parallel to "the tortuous serpent" of the next line.

⁶⁶ In this line "the sea" probably refers to the Nile, as in Isa. 19:5; Nah. 3:8, and Job 41:23 (cf. also Jer. 51:36, where "the sea" stands for the Euphrates). In Arabic the word *baḥr* denotes not only the sea but also any large river, such as the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Tigris (E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, Book I, Part 1 [London and Edinburgh, 1863], p. 156, c).

Ps. 74:12-17

God is my king from of old,
 Who works salvation in the midst of the earth.
 Thou didst divide the sea by Thy power;
 Thou didst crush the heads of the crocodiles (*tannîm*) by the waters.
 Thou didst shatter the heads of Leviathan,
 Thou didst give him as food to the desert-folk.⁶⁷
 Thou didst cleave fountain and brook,
 Thou didst dry up unfailing rivers;
 Day and night are both Thine,
 Thou didst establish the light and the sun.
 Summer and winter—Thou didst make them.

Here, then, we have unmistakable references to a conflict between God and some hostile beings—Rahab, Leviathan, the serpent, and the crocodile. But what is meant by these terms, particularly by "Rahab" and "Leviathan"? The sense of these expressions cannot be established with mathematical precision, but we have some very good indications as to their general meaning.

Let us begin with "Rahab." In Isa. 51:9 this word forms a parallel to *tannîn*, which denotes a long-bodied creature and is used in the Old Testament for the serpent, the crocodile, and evidently also for such sea monsters as the whale and the shark (cf. Gen. 1:21; Ps. 148:7); in Isa. 51:9 *tannîn* is no doubt to be taken in the sense of "crocodile," because of the relation which that passage bears to Egypt, as we shall see. "Rahab" is found again in Job 26:12 f. This passage consists of two couplets, which, in turn, form a quatrain, in which the first line corresponds to the third and the second line to the fourth. Accordingly, "Rahab" in this text forms a parallel not only to the sea but also to the fleeing serpent. From the fact that in verse 12 "Rahab" parallels the sea, Gunkel⁶⁸ concluded that Rahab was identical with the sea. But this deduction does not agree with the context. How these two lines must be interpreted is shown by verse 13. There the fleeing serpent is not the sky itself, rather

⁶⁷ I.e., the beasts of the desert (cf. Prov. 30:25 f., where $\square\aleph$, "people," "folk," is applied to the ants and the rock badgers).

⁶⁸ *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen, 1895), pp. 36 f. (cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 91 ff.).

it is a *feature* of the sky, something *in* the sky. It may be either the dragon which the ancients associated with eclipses,⁶⁹ or perhaps a poetical personification of the clouds that move across the sky.⁷⁰ The latter interpretation seems preferable in view of the statement: "By His breath [i.e., His wind] the sky is cleared." In like manner "Rahab" cannot be identified with the sea but must be regarded as something *in* the sea; it must refer to a huge marine creature. The sense of verse 12, then, is that God is master over the sea and the most formidable creature found in it. In Isa. 30:7 and Ps. 87:4 "Rahab" occurs as a designation of Egypt, which resembled a gigantic serpent, or a crocodile, stretching far along the sea. The same term is evidently also applied to Egypt in Ps. 89:11 and in Job 9:13. Both verses doubtless refer to Israel's passage through the Red Sea, when God not only revealed his power over the waters of the sea, so that by the blast of his nostrils "the streams stood up like a heap (and) the floods were congealed in the heart of the sea" (Exod. 15:8), but also scattered and destroyed the Egyptians and rescued his people from the power of their enemies (Exod. 14:23-31; 15:6), while "the helpers of Rahab," i.e., either the gods of Egypt (cf. Exod. 12:12; also 15:11) or her mighty warriors,⁷¹ unable to avert the disaster, had to admit defeat and, as it were, bow under the God of the Hebrews.⁷² From these references it is clear that "Rahab" is a synonymous term for the serpent and the crocodile.

The term "Leviathan" occurs in Job, chapter 41 (Job 40:25-41:26 in the Hebrew text), not in reference to some mythical monster of the past but, as attested by the context, of an actual living animal of the present; it is used as a designation of the crocodile, which is there described in poetic language,

⁶⁹ With regard to the superstition which this explanation seems to involve, it should be remembered, first, that we may have before us a mere metaphor and, second, that Job was not a member of the tribes of Israel.

⁷⁰ Cf. König, *Das Buch Hiob* (Gütersloh, 1929), p. 257.

⁷¹ With the latter possibility cf. Ps. 89:11, where "Rahab" is paralleled by "Thine enemies," i.e., the Egyptians or the armed forces of Egypt.

⁷² The argument that such a direct reference to an event in the history of Egypt and Israel would be contrary to the character of the Book of Job is quite inconclusive. There are exceptions to every rule.

even as breathing fire and smoke.⁷³ This application of the word is in full accord with the etymology of the name. "Leviathan" is an adjectival formation, and means, as far as can be determined, something coiled or wreathed (cf. *lîvyā*, "wreath," Prov. 1:9; 4:9). The term apparently alludes to the rows of scales that cover the body of the crocodile.⁷⁴ In Job 3:8 "Leviathan" probably refers either to the dragon which in ancient times was believed to produce eclipses by swallowing the sun or the moon or by surrounding it in its coils,⁷⁵ or to the clouds that hide the sun and the moon.⁷⁶ In Isa. 27:1 "Leviathan" is called "the fleeing serpent" and "the tortuous serpent." These two epithets are synonymous with "the *tannîn* (the crocodile) that is in the sea," as in Ps. 74:14, where Leviathan forms a parallel to "the *tannînîm* (the crocodiles) by the waters."⁷⁷ From Ps. 104:25 f. we learn that Leviathan was created to frolic in "the sea great and broad." If by this expression is meant the Mediterranean, then "Leviathan" can hardly stand for the crocodile, since the crocodile is a sweet-water animal; the allusion is then in all probability to some cetacean animal. However, it is far more likely that "the sea great and broad" was intended as a designation for the Nile, which in Isa. 19:5 and Nah. 3:8 very clearly bears the appellation the "sea" and which even to the present day is called by the Arabs *el-Bahr*, "the Sea."

⁷³ This poetic description, however, agrees remarkably well with prosaic reality (see Eduard Hertlein in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XXXVIII [1919/20], 148 f.; S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job* [New York, 1921], I, 359-71; König, *Das Buch Hiob*, pp. 432-46).

⁷⁴ The underlying root of the name in question appears also in the Babylonian-Assyrian words *lawû* or *lamû*, "to surround," "to enclose"; *lîmêtu*, "environs"; and *lamûâtênu*, "slave," "servant."

⁷⁵ See Driver and Gray, *op. cit.*, pp. 33 f., and E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (New York, 1924), I, 328-35.

⁷⁶ König, *Das Buch Hiob*, pp. 61 f.

⁷⁷ The term *tannîn* occurs also in the literature of Ras Shamra, where in one passage it parallels, or is equated with, Shalyaṭ, an epithet of Lôtan, i.e., Leviathan. Albright, in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 84 (1941), 16, has rendered the passage in question as follows:

I muzzled Tannin, I muzzled him(?)!
I have destroyed the winding serpent,
Shalyaṭ of the seven heads.

We have seen that both Rahab and Leviathan are paralleled with the crocodile; in fact, that Leviathan is actually identified with the crocodile. We have also seen that Rahab is, moreover, paralleled with the "fleeing serpent" and that the "fleeing serpent" is Leviathan. This interchange of terms shows quite definitely that "Rahab" and "Leviathan" are synonyms.

From these observations it is apparent that "Rahab" and "Leviathan" are properly terms for real animals but that they are also employed for imaginary entities closely resembling the animals with which these names originated. Thus in Job 26:12 "Rahab" denotes a real aquatic creature of some kind, and in Job, chapter 41, "Leviathan" is obviously used of an actual crocodile. Also in Ps. 104:25-29 a real animal is meant by "Leviathan." For there it is stated, as we have seen in part, that Leviathan was formed by the Lord to play in the sea and that together with the innumerable creatures that swarm therein this great monster waits upon the Lord for its food. But in Ps. 74:14, where the poet speaks of "the heads of Leviathan," the picture is that of an imaginary monster, a sort of Greek Hydra.

The latter interpretation of "Leviathan" finds strong confirmation on a tablet excavated some years ago at Ras Shamra.⁷⁸ In a battle scene recorded on the first column of that inscription a certain deity is addressing another one, saying:

"When thou shalt smite Lôtan, the fleeing serpent,
(And) shalt put an end to the tortuous serpent,
Shalyaṭ of the seven heads. . . ."⁷⁹

In this myth Lôtan has seven heads; this shows that he is here pictured as a fabulous ophidian being. The seven-headed serpent is mentioned in Old Babylonian lists and omens and in the bilingual epic *Andimdimma*, in which the weapon of the god Ninurta is compared with this monster.⁸⁰ Furthermore, such a

⁷⁸ See Ch. Virolleaud in *Syria, revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie*, XV (1934), 305-36; J. A. Montgomery and Z. S. Harris, *The Ras Shamra Mythological Texts* (Philadelphia, 1935), pp. 39 ff. and 78 ff.

⁷⁹ With the translation cf. Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook* (Rome, 1947), pp. 91 f., and Albright in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 83 (1941), 39 f.

⁸⁰ See Landsberger, *Die Fauna des alten Mesopotamien* (Leipzig, 1934), p. 60, o.

serpent is represented on a Sumerian macehead (Fig. 15);⁸¹ and on a seal coming from Tell Asmar (ancient Eshnunna), fifty miles northeast of modern Baghdad, and dating back to about the middle of the third millennium B.C., is a dragon with seven serpent heads (Fig. 16).⁸²

The passage from Ras Shamra at the same time shows that "Leviathan" denotes a creation of fancy also in Isa. 27:1:

On that day the Lord will punish
With His sword, which is hard and great and strong,
Leviathan, the fleeing serpent,⁸³
And Leviathan, the tortuous serpent,⁸³
And He will slay the crocodile that is in the sea.

On the basis of these considerations, however, we cannot conclude that God is anywhere represented as actually at war with monsters, as is Marduk in *Enûma elish*; for in all the Old Testament passages which speak of a struggle between the Almighty, on the one hand, and Rahab, Leviathan, and their variant designations, on the other, the terms under consideration are mere figures of speech applied to powerful nations which are hostile to God or his people, although we may not always be able at this remote point of time to determine with certainty what particular nation is meant.⁸⁴ We can see this quite clearly from Ps. 87:4 and Isa. 30:7, where "Rahab" occurs as a poetical name for Egypt;⁸⁵ from Ezek. 29:3 and 32:2, where the king of Egypt

⁸¹ Frankfort in *Analecta orientalia*, No. 12 (1935), p. 108.

⁸² Frankfort, *Iraq Excavations of the Oriental Institute, 1932/33* (Chicago, 1934), p. 49. Howard Wallace, in the *Biblical Archaeologist*, XI (1948), 63, seems to be of the opinion that Leviathan is everywhere a seven-headed serpent, for he writes: "We know that Leviathan is a seven headed serpent connected with water." In Job 40:25-41:26 (according to the Hebrew text), Leviathan has very definitely only one head, since the poet speaks of his tongue, nose, jaw, *head*, and mouth in the *singular*.

⁸³ The Hebrew text has שָׂרָפָה for "serpent," while the passage from Ras Shamra has a word which etymologically corresponds to the less frequent Hebrew term שָׂרָפָה.

⁸⁴ See König, *Bibel und Babel* (Berlin, 1902), pp. 25 ff., and "Altorientalische Weltanschauung" und *Altes Testament* (Gr. Lichterfelde-Berlin [1905]), pp. 39-43; Aloys Kirchner, *Die babylonische Kosmogonie und der biblische Schöpfungsbericht* (Münster i.W., 1911), pp. 27-45; Morris Jastrow, Jr., *Hebrew and Babylonian Traditions* (New York, 1914), p. 115; Hertlein in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XXXVIII, 113-54; and Aug. Bea in *Biblica*, XIX (1938), 444 ff.

⁸⁵ On Isa. 30:7 see König, *Das Buch Jesaja* (Gütersloh, 1926), pp. 271 f.

is expressly called "the great *tannîn* (or *tannîm*)" and a "*tannîm* in the seas," respectively; and from Isa. 51:9 f. and Ps. 74:12-16. The last two passages unquestionably refer to the occasion of Israel's passing through the Red Sea. As far as Isa. 51:9 f. is concerned, this point emerges with great clarity from the fact that in verse 9 the poet calls on God to display his power not as in the period before the creation but "(as) in the *generations* of ancient times" (i.e., in *historic* times, long *after* the advent of man) and from verse 10: "Was it not Thou that didst dry up the sea, the waters of the great deep; that didst make the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?" The event here alluded to did not coincide with the creation of the world, for at that time the sea was *not* dried up, neither according to *Enûma elish* nor according to Genesis; but it *was* dried up in the days of the Exodus. Hence the "redeemed" are the same of whom the poet, in his hymn of victory, sings: "In Thy mercy Thou hast led the people whom Thou hast redeemed" (Exod. 15:13).⁸⁶ That the same experience, together with some of the subsequent events, is referred to also in Ps. 74:12-16 is obvious in the light of Exod. 14:15-30; 15:6 f.; 17:6; Num. 20:8; and Josh. 3:17.⁸⁷ In Isa. 51:9 f. and Ps. 74:12-16 Rahab, Leviathan, and the crocodiles are clearly emblematic designations for Egypt and the Egyptians. Also in Isa. 27:1 the allusion evidently is to earthly kingdoms or powers, the expressions "the fleeing serpent," "the tortuous serpent," and "the crocodile" probably being metaphors for Assyria (situated along the swift-running Tigris), Babylonia (along the winding Euphrates), and Egypt (symbolized by the crocodile in the sea, i.e., in the Nile), respectively.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Since in the same hymn (vss. 5-10) the waters of the Red Sea are called "mighty waters" and *têhômôth*, there is no reason why they could not equally well be designated as *mê têhôm rabbâ*, "the waters of the great deep," inasmuch as the latter phrase has the same force as the plural *têhômôth* (*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, sec. 124). This form—*têhômôth*—we encounter again in Ps. 106:9 and Isa. 63:13, which likewise treat of Israel's passage through the Red Sea.

⁸⁷ See also Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, trans. D. Eaton, II (New York, n.d.), 382 f.; C. A. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, I (New York, 1907), 155; and König, *Die Psalmen* (Gütersloh, 1927), pp. 670 f.

⁸⁸ See A. Dillmann, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, rev. and ed. by R. Kittel (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 239 f., and König, *Das Buch Jesaja*, pp. 242 f.

Friedrich Delitzsch⁸⁹ held that Isa. 51:9 f. has reference to the supposed conflict between God and a mythical figure called "Rahab" and that the prophet coupled these mythical reflections with Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, as another triumph of God over the waters of the deep, or the *têhôm*. But, as we shall see more clearly in the course of this discussion, there is no justification whatever for this assumption; it certainly cannot be found in the fact that the destruction of Rahab and the piercing of the crocodile is placed in "the days of old" (*yēmê qedem*), for this very same phrase is used in Mic. 7:20 to designate the age of the patriarchs, while in Isa. 63:11 the days of Moses are even referred to as "the days of eternity" (*yēmê ʿôlām*). The simplest and most natural interpretation of Isa. 51:9 f. is to regard "Rahab" and the crocodile as metaphorical terms for Egypt. Parallels to this use of metaphors in poetic writings are found in Isa. 30:6 and in Amos 4:1; in the former passage the Egyptians are referred to as "the beasts of the south," and in the latter the prophet addresses the women of Samaria by the uncomplimentary phrase "Ye cows of Bashan." Further examples are the "bulls" and "dogs" in Psalm 22 and the "wolves" and "lions" in Zeph. 3:3 (cf. also Isa. 14:29 and Dan. 7:3 ff.).

But whence did the prophets and poets derive this imagery? The assertion has been made by Gunkel⁹⁰ and others that Rahab, Leviathan, etc., are synonymous with the "dragon" Ti'âmat and the monsters associated with her and that the biblical passages under discussion are echoes of Marduk's victory over Ti'âmat and her forces. In support of this contention reference has been made to the fact that God shattered the heads of Leviathan (Ps. 74:14) and hewed Rahab in pieces and pierced the crocodile (Isa. 51:9), that with his skill or understanding he smote Rahab and slew the fleeing serpent (Job 26:12 f.), that with his strong arm he scattered his enemies (Ps. 89:11), that under him the helpers of Rahab bowed (Job 9:13), and that he threatens to spread his net over the crocodile (the king of Egypt) and to draw it up in his seine (Ezek. 32:3); these

⁸⁹ *Babel and Bible*, p. 160.

⁹⁰ *Schöpfung und Chaos*, pp. 29 ff.

phrases are said to be reflections of the Babylonian story relating how Marduk, the wise and skilful, caught Ti'âmat in his net, how he pierced her with the arrow of his bow, how he smashed her skull and cut her body in two, how he broke her band and dispersed her host, and how he finally vanquished her helpers and trampled them underfoot (Tablet IV:93 ff.).

While we cannot raise any valid objections against the general idea that the sacred writers of the Old Testament could or might have derived, whether directly or indirectly, certain figures of speech from the Babylonian myth of the Marduk-Ti'âmat fight in order to illustrate truth, provided that this story was sufficiently well known in Israel (for otherwise the allusions to it would have had little force and significance), an examination of the correspondences between the biblical passages in question and the Babylonian story will readily reveal that the similarities are by no means strong enough to show that they actually did so in this case, especially since the supposed allusions are found in *different* books of the Bible. The only points which might impress one at first sight are the use of the net, the mention of the helpers of Rahab, the fact that Ti'âmat in *Enûma elish* and Rahab in the Old Testament are punished more severely than their helpers, and the general idea of a conflict between good and evil. A moment's reflection, however, will show that even these similarities carry no weight. The net was known to both nations; the phrase "the helpers of Rahab," which is reminiscent of the helpers of Ti'âmat, may have arisen independently, especially if we consider that *Rahab* had become a poetical name for Egypt and that "the helpers of Rahab" may refer either to the gods of Egypt or to her warriors, as we have pointed out; the fact that the ring leaders are punished more severely than are their helpers is just what we should expect in any story of this type, and the further fact that both *Enûma elish* and the Old Testament contain the idea of a conflict between good and evil does not prove anything either as far as the sources of the biblical passages are concerned, because that idea is universal. Furthermore, it still remains to be proved, as we have observed, that Ti'âmat was a dragon or a dragon-like creature. It is, of course, *possible* that Ti'âmat, in spite of the fact

that she was a woman and the mother of the gods, was in later times portrayed as a dragon, just as Satan, the chief of the fallen angels, is designated in Rev. 12:9 as "the great dragon" and "that old serpent." But we have no proof that such a thing was actually done in the case of Ti'âmat, whether in Babylonia or in Palestine.

Some of these figures of speech the Hebrews obviously derived from traditions current in the West, as evidenced by the unusually close correspondences between Isa. 27:1, Ps. 74:14, and the text from Ras Shamra. But whether they derived them from North Syrian documents directly or whether they received them through the channels of a long oral tradition, we cannot tell. Nor does it matter, as we shall see. Furthermore, we have no assurance as to whether these traditions originated somewhere in the West or whether they must ultimately be traced back to Babylonia. Neither does this matter. The idea of the seven-headed serpent would seem to have emanated from Babylonia. But while some of these Old Testament figures of speech are no doubt due to foreign influence of some kind, others may quite as well have been suggested to the sacred writers by their own observation of nature. The statement made by Jensen almost half a century ago still stands, viz.: "When the Old Testament speaks of a conflict of Yahweh [or Jehovah] against creatures resembling serpents and crocodiles, there is no occasion to assume, with Delitzsch and an imposing number of other Assyriologists, a connection with the Babylonian myth of the Ti'âmat conflict."⁹¹

It now remains to inquire *when* God engaged in these conflicts. As we saw above, in many circles it is held that they took place *before* the creation of the world, on the grounds that in some passages acts of creation are mentioned immediately *after* God's victorious combat.⁹² Attention has been drawn to such passages as Ps. 89:9-12 and 74:12-17, where the founding of "the world and its fulness," the establishment of light and sun, and the fixing of "all the bounds of the earth" are spoken of *after* the slaying of Rahab and Leviathan. But that alone proves

⁹¹ Translated from *Die christliche Welt*, Vol. XVI (1902), col. 490.

⁹² See Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos* . . . , pp. 29 ff.; Clay, *Light on the Old Testament from Babel* (Philadelphia, 1907), pp. 69-71; Rogers, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-36.

nothing. What evidence do we possess that the order in which these acts are described was intended to be chronological? If the mere order in which these things are recorded is a decisive criterion for chronological sequence, then it follows that in both instances Gunkel's hypothesis is definitely not in agreement with the context. For in Psalm 89 the poet plainly speaks *first* of the present (vs. 10), and *then* he mentions the crushing of Rahab (vs. 11). And in Psalm 74 the poet extols God's works of salvation "in the midst of the *earth*," i.e., the salvation which he wrought *after* the earth had been brought into existence. This is confirmed by verse 14b ("Thou didst give him as food to the desert-folk"), which shows very distinctly that the recorded conflict dates from the time *after* the creation of the desert and its inhabitants and hence *after* the creation of the earth. Moreover, in the same psalm the dividing of the sea, which work is itself an act of creation according to *Entäma elish* and Genesis, is mentioned *before* the destruction of Leviathan.⁹³ In both psalms the context shows quite clearly that the poet is not at all concerned about chronology; he simply picks out at random some of the mighty deeds of God to exemplify his omnipotent power without regard for chronological sequence. If Psalm 89, for example, were really meant to be a chronological enumeration of events, verse 11b would even have to come before verse 11a. Furthermore, in Isa. 51:9 f., which admittedly refers to Israel's deliverance from Egypt and her passage through the Red Sea, when God hewed Rahab in pieces and pierced the crocodile, this conflict very obviously takes place *after* creation. And in Isa. 27:1 the encounter is still in the future. Finally, in the aforementioned inscription from Ras Shamra the fight with Lôtan is likewise joined *after* creation, as we can discern from column i, lines 14-17, where one of the gods says:

"(It is) his will⁹⁴ that a sheep excite the desire of a lioness,
Or the appetite of a dolphin in the sea.
(And yet) behold, my knees overtook wild bulls,
. . . they have overtaken hinds!"⁹⁵

⁹³ In the Babylonian conflict, of which these passages are said to be a reflection, Ti'âmat is killed first and then divided.

⁹⁴ The will of the death-god.

⁹⁵ The rendition is that of Albright in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 83, pp. 41 f.

This statement is made while Lôtan is still at large, and while the combat is still in the future, as shown by lines 26-31. This proves, of course, that the tablet from Ras Shamra *presupposes* the creation of the world. In this respect the above myth from Ras Shamra corresponds to the Babylonian tradition of Enlil and a monster named *labbu* and to the myth of the Zû-bird (see Appendix); in both cases the fight *follows* the creation. There is, accordingly, no evidence in these Bible passages of a conflict *preceding* the creation, but there are very good reasons for placing these struggles *after* the creation. The whole theory of a Hebrew cosmogony in which the making of heaven and earth was preceded by a contest between the Creator and certain monsters, as in *Enûma elish*, thus falls to the ground.⁹⁶

After this digression let us now return to the Book of Genesis and continue our points of comparison between the various Babylonian versions of creation and the first two chapters of the Old Testament.

THE CREATION OF THE FIRMAMENT

The next point of contact between *Enûma elish* and Genesis, chapter 1, is found in connection with the creation of the firmament. Both accounts agree that this act was accompanied by a division of primeval waters. *Enûma elish* speaks of three different types of waters: there was Apsû, the sweet-water ocean; Ti'âmat, the salt-water ocean; and Mummu, apparently representing the fog, the mist, and the clouds, which rose from Apsû and Ti'âmat and hovered over them. The waters of Apsû and Mummu were disposed of by Ea before the birth of Marduk. For we have seen that Ea slew Apsû and established his abode

⁹⁶ R. H. Pfeiffer's contention, in the *Journal of Bible and Religion*, X (1942), 246 f., that G. Sarton, in *Osiris*, II (1936), 406-60, has shown "the fight with the dragon" to be "the most characteristic element common to the ancient Mediterranean world," is so decidedly at variance with the facts that his appeal to this article is difficult to understand. In the first place, Sarton's study is "devoted to the highest cultural achievements of the Middle Ages, especially to those which occurred in the period extending from the eighth century to the thirteenth" (p. 406). And, in the second place, Sarton barely touches on the dragon fight, dedicating about a dozen lines to it on p. 459 and probably alluding to it in a few more lines on the next page—out of a total of about fifty-five pages.

on the waters of the latter, while he seized Mummu for himself and held him by his nose-rope, which plainly indicates that now the waters of Mummu were in some way brought under the control of Ea, the god of the deep (Tablet I: 59-72). The only waters which were still beyond the control of the younger gods were those of Ti'âmat. These waters were conquered by Marduk and were then divided by him. From one half of Ti'âmat he formed the earth and from the other half he formed the sky, or the firmament. Moreover, he fixed the crossbar and posted guards, commanding them not to let the celestial waters escape (Tablet IV: 128-45).

In Genesis, God creates a firmament "in the middle of the waters" to cause a division between the waters under the firmament and the waters above it (cf. also Ps. 148:4). The biblical account appears to imply that the waters of the earth and those of the clouds originally commingled, like the waters of Apsû, Mummu, and Ti'âmat, without a clear intervening air space, thus producing a condition like that obtaining during a dense fog on the water. Of what the firmament was made is not stated in Genesis.

Noteworthy as this parallel may seem, it alone does not establish the source of the biblical account. For, in the first place, the general view that the creation of heaven and earth was accomplished in part by a process of division or separation is "common property of almost all cosmogonies."⁹⁷ Thus in Egypt the air-god Shû separated heaven and earth by lifting the sky-goddess Nût from the earth-god Geb and placing himself between the two,⁹⁸ while according to Phoenician and Indian speculation the cosmic egg or world egg split into heaven and earth.⁹⁹ And, in the second place, the concept of a primeval watery chaos is met with also elsewhere, as we have observed above.

⁹⁷ W. Wundt, *Elemente der Völkerpsychologie* (Leipzig, 1913), p. 387 (cf. *ibid.*, p. 383).

⁹⁸ Cf. H. and H. A. Frankfort in H. and H. A. Frankfort, John A. Wilson, T. Jacobsen, and W. A. Irwin, *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Chicago, 1947), pp. 17-19.

⁹⁹ See Skinner, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-50, and F. Lukas, *Die Grundbegriffe in den Kosmogonien der alten Völker* (Leipzig, 1893), pp. 88 ff.

THE CREATION OF THE EARTH

The creation of the earth as related in the first chapter of Genesis finds its counterpart in *Enûma elish*, Tablets IV:143-45 and VII:135, and in the excerpt from Berossus. After Marduk had fashioned the sky and thus had got rid of one half of the gigantic body of Ti'ámat, the way was clear for the formation of the earth. Thereupon Marduk measured the dimensions of the *Apsá*, i.e., the subterranean sea, and with the other half of Ti'ámat's body made a great structure in the shape of a canopy, or a vault, and placed this hemisphere over the sea, upon which the Babylonians imagined the earth to rest. The material out of which the earth was made had existed from eternity; but Marduk evidently separated this material from the primeval salt-water ocean, personified by Ti'ámat, and created the dry land.¹⁰⁰ In the first chapter of Genesis the earth was created "in the beginning," but, as in *Enûma elish*, it was covered with water, from which it was not separated until the third day, when the waters were "gathered together unto one place" and the dry land appeared.

THE CREATION OF THE LUMINARIES

From the opening lines of Tablet V we can derive another parallel. After Marduk had formed the sky and the earth, he turned his attention to the creation of the celestial bodies and to the regulation of time. He set up the signs of the zodiac, determined the year, and defined the divisions; for each of the twelve months he set up three constellations and determined the days of the year by means of the constellations. The moon he caused to shine forth and intrusted the night to her, thus making her, in a sense, the "ruler" over the night; he appointed this beautiful ornament of the night to determine or make known the days of the month. The existence of the sun is assumed in the description of the moon's relations to the sun and in the reference to the "gates on both sides" (i.e., east and west), through which the sun was believed to pass each day. The first chapter of Genesis, on the other hand, states that God created the sun,

¹⁰⁰ For a number of divergent Sumerian speculations on the origin of heaven and earth see Jacobsen in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, V, 138-41.

the moon, and the stars in the firmament of the sky to separate day from night, to serve as signs, as seasons, as days and years, and to shed light on the earth; the sun was to rule the day, the moon the night. In both accounts the main purposes of the luminaries are plainly stated; they were to yield light and to serve as time dividers and time regulators. These are functions with which every nation is acquainted. In both accounts, moreover, the production of the heavenly bodies is described from the geocentric standpoint, as in all antiquity. But while Genesis follows the well-known order sun, moon, and stars, *Enûma elish* refers to the celestial bodies in the reverse order—stars, moon, and sun, perhaps because of the great significance of the stars in the lives of the astronomically and astrologically minded Babylonians. Again, while the Babylonian narrative speaks of the luminary bodies and their purposes in astronomical terms interwoven with mythology, the Hebrew account uses the language of the layman and is free from all mythological references. Finally, the idea of gates on the eastern and western horizon through which the sun entered and departed is, of course, foreign to Genesis, chapters 1 and 2.

THE CREATION OF PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE

To date, no portion of *Enûma elish* has been recovered which contains an account of the creation of vegetation, of animals, birds, reptiles, and fishes.¹⁰¹ The opinion is frequently voiced that this act may have been recorded on the missing portion of Tablet V, of which only about 22 lines out of probably 140 have been preserved. But the missing lines of Tablet V must have contained some more astronomical material as well as a section dealing with the plea of the gods to which Tablet VI:1 refers; and whether in between that there was any space left for an account of the creation of plant and animal life is questionable. The creation of vegetation is, however, referred to on Tablet VII:2, where Marduk is called "the creator of grain and legumes" (but without the slightest hint as to when these things were created), and in the bilingual version of the creation of the

¹⁰¹ Naturally leaving out of consideration the monsters which Ti'ámat created to help her in her conflict.

world by Marduk (pp. 62-63), while the creation of animals is briefly recorded in a version which in this volume bears the title "The Creation of Living Creatures" (p. 64), in the bilingual story just cited, and on the Sumerian fragment from Nippur (pp. 71-72). Moreover, Berossus (p. 78) says that Bēl (i.e., Marduk) formed "animals capable of bearing the air." Berossus probably derived this idea from some Babylonian tradition other than *Enūma elish*.

THE CREATION OF MAN

Of the creation of man we have quite a number of Babylonian versions. On Tablet VI:1-38 of *Enūma elish* man's creation is ascribed to Marduk and Ea; Marduk conceived the plan and imparted it to his father, Ea, who put it into execution "in accordance with the ingenious plans" of his son. Kingu, the leader of Tiāmat's host, was slaughtered, and with his blood, which was mixed with earth, as Berossus says, Ea fashioned mankind, with the assistance of certain other gods, as shown by lines 31-33. On Tablet VII:29-32, however, it is stated that Marduk created mankind, whereas in reality he merely instructed Ea to do it. This diversity can quite easily be explained by the old Latin maxim *Qui facit per alium, facit per se* ("What our agent does we do ourselves"). The bilingual version of the creation of the world by Marduk (pp. 62-63) also attributes the work of man's creation to Marduk, but here Marduk is assisted by the goddess Aruru. One version makes Ea the sole creator of man (pp. 65-66). In another tradition (p. 67) it is stated that Ninḫursag (i.e., Mami) made mankind with the flesh and blood of a slain god, which she mixed with clay.¹⁰² In still another version (pp. 68-71) we are told that Anu, Enlil, Shamash, and Ea, together with the Anunnaki, formed mankind with the blood of

¹⁰² In the Atrahāsis Epic the same goddess fashions human beings from clay after the Flood, apparently to make possible a more speedy repopulation of the earth (see the writer's book *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* [Chicago, 1949], pp. 106 ff.). Clay was used also when Aruru created Enkidu as a rival to Gilgamesh, the semidivine king of Uruk (see *ibid.*, p. 19). For a number of Sumerian parallels see Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, pp. 68-72, and Jacobsen in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, V, 143.

"(two) Langa gods." Since man was fashioned with divine blood, Berossus says, he is rational and partakes of divine understanding. From this statement as well as from the further consideration that ancient oriental thought conceived of blood as being the seat of life, it is apparent, moreover, that the Babylonians traced the element of life in man back to the divine blood employed at his creation. A radically different conception of the origin of man is attested by several Sumerian traditions¹⁰³ and by the bilingual story which in this book bears the title "Another Account of the Creation of Man" (reverse, l. 20); here man is pictured as sprouting from the soil as if a plant.

The first chapter of Genesis records the creation of man in the following terms: "And God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (vss. 26 f.). And in the second chapter we read: "And the Lord God formed the man from the dust¹⁰⁴ of the ground, and breathed¹⁰⁵ into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul" (vs. 7). "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib which He had taken from the man the Lord God built up into a woman, and brought her to the man" (vss. 21 f.). The same God who conceived the idea of creating man carries out also the actual work connected therewith.

Both in *Enūma elish* and in Gen. 1:1-2:3 the formation of man constitutes the final act of creation, or the last entity brought into being. Moreover, both accounts contain clear indications of the high importance of this act. As it is stated after Marduk's victory over Tiāmat that he examined her dead body "to create ingenious things" with it (Tablet IV:136), the con-

¹⁰³ See Jacobsen in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, V, 134-37.

¹⁰⁴ Or "the soil."

¹⁰⁵ Or "blew."

templation resulting in the production of heaven and earth, so it is said that, before Marduk proceeded to the creation of man, his heart prompted him "to create ingenious things" (Tablet VI:2). In the repetition of this phrase King¹⁰⁶ rightly sees an indication of the great significance which the Babylonians attached to this part of the story. King's deduction is corroborated by the high admiration with which the Babylonian mythographers view the completed work; for they describe man's creation as a "work not suited to (human) understanding" (Tablet VI:37). In the introductory chapter of Genesis the importance of man's creation is evidenced by the solemnity with which it is attended and by the fact that man is made in the image of God and is given dominion over earth, air, and sea. In fact, these considerations show that here the creation of man is the culminating point of the whole story.

The purpose of man's creation is conditioned by the general purpose of the universe. According to *Enûma elish*, the universe was created for the benefit of the gods. Ea built the *Apsû* as his dwelling and appointed it for shrines (Tablet I:69-76). After Marduk had completed heaven and earth, he assigned the sky to Anu, the air and the surface of the earth to Enlil, and the sweet waters in and on the earth to Ea, to serve as their residences (cf. our note on Tablet I:146). Next, Marduk established "stations" for the great gods in the skies (Tablet V). Finally, he "ingeniously" arranged the ways of the Anunnaki by dividing them into two groups and placing three hundred of them in the heavens and an equal number in the underworld (Tablet VI:9 f. and 39-44). Even Babylon was built for the gods (Tablet VI:49-73). In full agreement with these divine aims, man's creation was conceived and executed not as an end in itself or as a natural sequel to the formation of the rest of the universe but rather as an expedient to satisfy a group of discontented gods. Man's purpose in life was to be the service of the gods. As we have seen in connection with Tablet IV:120, this service had originally been imposed on the defeated rebel gods. But, upon their request, Marduk decided to relieve the vanquished and imprisoned divinities and to create man and place

¹⁰⁶ *The Seven Tablets of Creation*, I, liii.

him in charge of this service. Man was made to be the servant of the gods, to be a kind of breadwinner of his divine masters, and to be the builder and caretaker of their sanctuaries. In the initial chapter of Genesis man was to be the lord of the earth, the sea, and the air. The luminaries were created for the earth, and the earth was created for man. The situation depicted in the biblical story is beautifully expressed in Ps. 115:16: "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth has He given to the children of men." A certain degree of human dominion over creation is understood in the Babylonian account, for this is implied in Tablet VI:107-20, which charges man with the building of sanctuaries and the bringing of offerings. But, in the first place, this is not expressly stated. And, in the second place, it is the dominion or authority of a *servant*, not of a lord. Each account stresses an entirely different aspect of man's place in nature.

In "A Bilingual Version of the Creation of the World by Marduk," man is likewise made for the sake of the gods. There the gods solemnly proclaim Babylon as the dwelling of their hearts' delight; but, in order to induce them to stay there, Marduk and Aruru create the race of men so that these might attend to the needs of the gods by building their sanctuaries and maintaining their sacrifices. According to a third version, which we have entitled "Another Account of the Creation of Man" (pp. 68-71), humankind was brought into being because the gods desired to have someone to establish the boundary ditch and to keep the canals in their right courses; to irrigate the land to make it produce; to raise grain; to increase ox, sheep, cattle, fish, and fowl; to build sanctuaries for the gods; and to celebrate their festivals. All this man was to do for the benefit of his divine overlords, because "the service of the gods" was his "portion." A similarity to this last tradition is found in the second chapter of Genesis, which mentions as man's destiny the cultivation of the soil (vs. 5) and the development and preservation of the Garden of Eden (vs. 15). But this work obviously was in his own interest; the Lord God did not ask for any returns. Man's purpose in life was not idleness and useless enjoyment but pleasant and profitable work. But after the fall his work was

At.
too

cursed with a thousand ills. In the Babylonian stories man's creation is told from the viewpoint of the gods, while in Genesis it is told from the viewpoint of man.¹⁰⁷

THE FALL OF MAN

The Book of Genesis, in conformity with the whole biblical doctrine of the nature and attributes of God, from whose hands nothing morally imperfect can possibly issue, represents man as having been created in holiness and righteousness. In the first chapter God speaks, and it is done exactly as he had commanded, everything turns out in full accord with his will. Hence man could not have been morally imperfect, for God does not will moral imperfection. Moreover, had man been created evil, God would not have signified his approval by declaring that man, like the rest of his creation, was "very good" (1:31); much less would this verdict have been introduced with a solemn "behold!" And in the second chapter it is expressly stated that the Lord God breathed into the nostrils of man "the breath of life," i.e., God's own vital breath, and so "man became a living soul" or "a living being" (2:7; cf. also Eccles. 12:7). This fact and the sequel to the story again preclude the idea of original moral imperfection in man. But man did not continue in this state of holiness; by eating of the forbidden fruit, he fell into sin.

Similar stories dealing with the fall of man are sometimes said to have been current also in Babylonia and Assyria. The most important and best known of them is the Adapa Legend, of which a translation will be found in the Appendix to this volume.

Adapa was a semidivine being, the provisioner of Ea's temple in the city of Eridu. Ea had created, or begotten, him to be a leader among men; he had granted him divine wisdom, but he had not granted him the gift of eternal life. One day, as Adapa was out on the Persian Gulf catching fish for the temple of Ea, the south wind suddenly arose, overturned his boat, and threw him into the water. Enraged at this, Adapa cursed the south wind, which the Babylonians pictured to themselves either as a bird or as some composite creature with wings, and, by uttering

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Skinner, *op. cit.*, pp. 55 and 66; Eichrodt, *op. cit.*, II, 64 f.; King, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxviii.

this curse, he broke one of the wings of the south wind, so that for seven days it did not blow the cool gulf breezes over the hot land. For this incident Adapa is called before Anu, the sky-god, to give an account of his deed. But before he ascends to heaven, Ea, his father, instructs him. He is to wear long hair and to clothe himself with a mourning garment, to excite the compassion of Tammuz and Gizzida, the gatekeepers of heaven. They will ask him the reason for his mourning, and he is to tell them that he is mourning because they, Tammuz and Gizzida, who formerly lived on earth, have disappeared from the land of the living. They will be touched by this sign of reverence for them and will intercede for him. Ea tells Adapa that in heaven he will be offered the food of death, but he is not to eat of it; also the water of death he will be offered, but he is not to drink of it.

Adapa is brought before Anu and is called to account. He would probably have been condemned. But at the right moment Tammuz and Gizzida interpose on his behalf and plead his cause so successfully that Anu decides not only to let him go unpunished but even to bless him. Anu becomes calm and begins to think matters over. He probably reasons: This man is already half a god; he knows the secrets of heaven and earth; he is in possession of divine wisdom; so why not admit him fully into our circle by conferring immortality upon him? Thereupon he issues the command: "The food of life bring him, that he may eat!" The food of life is brought, but Adapa, mindful of his father's advice, declines to eat; the water of life is brought, but he declines to drink. Anu looks at him and laughs, saying to him: "Come here, Adapa! Why hast thou not eaten, not drunken? Art thou not well? . . . Take him and [bring] him back to his earth!" If Adapa had eaten and had drunk, he would have become one of the lesser gods and would have lived forever. But since he had declined Anu's offer he was sent back to earth and eventually had to die, like all other men. From fragment No. IV it is quite clear, moreover, that, by refusing the food and the water of life, Adapa not only missed immortality but also brought illness and disease upon man. This, together with the statement on fragment No. I that he was a leader among mankind, apparently implies that he was in some

way regarded as man's representative. Hence we may conclude that, by refusing to eat and to drink, Adapa missed the chance of gaining immortality for mankind as well.

This, in brief, is the legend of Adapa. Let us now see what deductions we can derive from it for our purposes. First of all, it is clear that this story contains nothing to justify the conclusion that the breaking of the wing of the south wind was the *first* offense ever committed by any human being. Furthermore, it is equally clear that Adapa failed to obtain the priceless boon of immortality not because of any sin or disobedience on his part but because of his strict obedience to the will of Ea, his father, the god of wisdom and the friend of man. And, finally, there is not the slightest trace of any temptation, or any indication whatever that this legend is in any way concerned with the problem of the origin of moral evil. Like the biblical account of the fall of man, the Adapa story wrestles with the questions: "Why must man suffer and die? Why does he not live forever?" But, unlike the biblical account, the answer it gives is not: "Because man has fallen from a state of moral perfection," but rather: "Because Adapa had the chance of gaining immortality for himself and for mankind, but he did not take it. The gift of eternal life was held out to him, but he refused the offer and thus failed of immortality and brought woe and misery upon man." The problem of the origin of sin does not even enter into consideration. Consequently, it is a misnomer to call the Adapa Legend the Babylonian version of the *fall* of man. The Adapa Legend and the biblical story are fundamentally as far apart as the antipodes.

At one time it was rather generally held that the fall of man was depicted on the cylinder seal shown in Figure 17, which pictures two persons seated one on each side of a tree with fruit, toward which both figures stretch out their hands, and between the backs of the two figures the wriggling form of an upright serpent. But this idea has since been abandoned. Both figures, as we can plainly see, are clothed. This alone is in direct contradiction to the biblical story of Paradise, according to which the sense of shame was not awakened in man until after his first transgression, and man was not clothed until he had eaten of the

forbidden fruit. This sketch, as Ward¹⁰⁸ has observed, probably represents "two deities of production," a god (the one with the horned headdress) and his divine consort, partaking of the fruit of the date palm, over which they preside; and the serpent, again as Ward has pointed out, is perhaps nothing but the emblem of the goddess without having "any definite relation with the thought of the two figures seated about the palm-tree." A similar view has been given expression by Deimel.¹⁰⁹ It is quite possible that the seal belonged to someone who was engaged in the date industry. But, whatever the correct interpretation of this picture may be, there is no evidence that this scene is at all related to Genesis, chapter 3. Besides, who would think of having the scene of the fall of man engraved on his seal, which was used for commercial purposes?

So far no proof for the *first* sin has been found anywhere in Babylonian or Assyrian literature. If it is at all permissible to speak of a *fall*, it was a fall of the *gods*, not of man. It was the gods who first disturbed the peace of Apsû and Ti'âmat; it was Apsû and Mummu who planned the destruction of these gods; it was Ea who, as a measure of self-preservation, killed his ancestor Apsû; and it was Ti'âmat and her host who, in a rage of revenge, prepared to bring war and destruction upon the other gods. In Genesis man is created in the image of God; but the Babylonians created their gods in the image of man. The gods not only had human forms and were clothed in garments which differed very little from human dress¹¹⁰ but also had human needs (requiring food, drink, sleep, etc.) and were guilty of human misconduct, which is something quite different from the anthropomorphisms or human characteristics attributed to God in the Old Testament. The gods were good and the gods were bad, as good and as bad as man. Of the Babylonians can be said what Cicero¹¹¹ has said with reference to the poets of Greece and Rome: "The poets have represented the gods as inflamed by anger and maddened by lust, and have displayed to our gaze

¹⁰⁸ *Op. cit.*, pp. 138 f.

¹⁰⁹ *Orientalia*, No. 14 (1924), pp. 56 f.

¹¹⁰ Cf., e.g., Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, pp. 22 and 158.

¹¹¹ *De natura deorum* i. 16. 42 (translated by H. Rackham in the "Loeb Classical Library").

their wars and battles, their fights and wounds, their hatreds, enmities and quarrels, their births and deaths, their complaints and lamentations, the utter and unbridled license of their passions, their adulteries and imprisonments, their unions with human beings and the birth of mortal progeny from an immortal parent." How could such gods possibly be expected to create something morally perfect? Yes, it was with the blood of such gods that man was created! Since all the gods were evil by nature and since man was formed with their blood, man of course inherited their evil nature. This conclusion is in complete harmony with the following passage from the Babylonian theodicy: "Narru,¹¹² king from of old, the creator of mankind; gigantic Zulummar,¹¹³ who pinched off their clay¹¹⁴; and lady Mama, the queen, who fashioned them, have presented to mankind perverse speech, lies and untruth they presented to them forever."¹¹⁵ Man, consequently, was *created* evil and was evil from his very beginning. How, then, could he fall? The idea that man fell from a state of moral perfection does not fit into the system or systems of Babylonian speculation.

THE WORD OF THE CREATORS

The efficacy of the almighty word of the Creator in Genesis, chapter 1, where he creates the universe and all that is therein by his divine fiat, finds a rather vague parallel on Tablet IV:23-26, where Marduk, upon the wish of the gods, tests his power by destroying and restoring a garment at the word of his mouth. But this is the only manifestation of such power in all the Babylonian creation stories; the creators are consistently represented after the manner of men (except that they are endowed with superhuman size and power) who bring things into existence by means of physical work, as the Lord God is portrayed in the second chapter of Genesis. The word of the Babylonian deities was *not* almighty. Take the word of Marduk. If his word had been omnipotent, he could have destroyed or, at least, quieted Ti'amat by means of his word, as he had been

¹¹² I.e., Enlil.

¹¹³ I.e., Ea.

¹¹⁴ The clay out of which mankind was made.

¹¹⁵ See Landsberger in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, XLIII (1936), 70 f.

requested by Anshar (Tablet II:117).¹¹⁶ But the word of the Creator in the opening chapter of Genesis is almighty. He commands, and the result is in perfect conformity with his command, or, in the words of Ps. 33:9: "He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast." God creates with the same ease with which a superior issues a command to his subordinate.¹¹⁷

DIVINE REST

Upon the completion of the universe follows rest. *Enûma elish* devotes almost two full tablets to it. After Marduk has created the universe and mankind and has issued his decrees to the gods, the Anunnaki build Esagila, the temple of Marduk with its stagetower. Thereupon all the gods assemble therein and celebrate. The high point of this celebration is the proclamation of Marduk's fifty names. This act forms, at the same time, the culminating point of the entire epic, for it signifies that Marduk possesses all the power of the great multitude of Babylonian gods and that he is indeed entitled to be the head of the pantheon. Now the chief aim of the entire poem (viz., to justify Marduk's claim to supremacy among the Babylonian gods) has been attained. In comparison with this, the creation of man is of rather secondary importance; it merely serves the purpose of satisfying the discontented gods, as we have seen, and of further enhancing Marduk's glory. What a different impression Gen. 1:1-2:3 makes on us! Here not a trace is found of any proclamation of divine names or of any hymn in divine praise. Here the culminating point is the creation of man, as pointed out above. And as for the rest which his Maker enjoyed, it is described in two short verses: "And on the seventh day God declared His work finished¹¹⁸ which He had made, and He rested on the

¹¹⁶ Kramer, in the *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, II (1948), 47, n. 14, goes beyond the evidence in his declaration: "All that the creating deity [of Babylonia] had to do was to lay his plans, utter the word, and it came to be." The evidence which Kramer invokes is far too meager to prove his point.

¹¹⁷ For a general study on the efficacy of the divine word see Lorenz Dürr, "Die Wertung des göttlichen Wortes: im Alten Testament und im antiken Orient" in *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, Vol. XLII, Heft 1 (1938).

¹¹⁸ As appears from the two preceding verses, showing that God had already completed his work on the sixth day, we have here a declarative *pi-el* (see König, *Die Genesis*, p. 163; and Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, sec. 52, g).

seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; for on it He rested from all His work, in doing which God had brought about creation" (Gen. 2:2 f.).

THE SEVEN TABLETS AND THE SEVEN DAYS

The existence of the seven days in the Hebrew narrative has been traced to the influence of the seven creation tablets. But that is lacking all evidence. To attribute the number seven in Gen. 1:1—2:3 to the fact that *Enûma elish* is composed of seven tablets would be like the attempt, actually made, to establish a relation between the twelve sons of Jacob and the twelve months of the year. In the Genesis account acts of creation were performed on all of the first six days, and on the seventh day God rested; while in *Enûma elish* Tablets II, III, and most of I and IV do not deal with any part of creation, and the story of Marduk's rest begins as early as the first half of Tablet VI and then extends over virtually all of Tablet VII.

THE OUTLINES OF "ENÛMA ELISH" AND GEN. 1:1—2:3

A final and very significant point of comparison is that of the outlines of *Enûma elish* and Gen. 1:1—2:3. Compare:

"ENÛMA ELISH"

1. Apsû and Tiâmat and the birth of the first gods
2. The conflict between Ea and Apsû
3. The birth and growth of Marduk
4. The conflict between Marduk and Tiâmat
5. Marduk's work of creation
 - a) The creation of the firmament
 - b) The creation of dry land
 - c) The creation of the luminaries
 - d) The creation of man
6. The building and dedication of Esagila
7. The hymn to Marduk
8. The epilogue

GENESIS

1. The creation of matter and the formation of heaven and earth in a rude state, the creation of light and the separation of light and darkness
2. The creation of the firmament and the dividing of the waters

3. The creation of dry land, the sea, and plant life
4. The creation of the luminaries
5. The creation of the creatures of the sea and the fowl of the air
6. The creation of the land animals and of man; God blesses man and gives him his instructions
7. God rests from all his work and sanctifies the seventh day

From these two brief outlines it is apparent that each version displays a number of features which are not found in the other. *Enûma elish*, on the one hand, contains an account of the birth of the gods and the various conflicts between them, the building and dedication of a temple complex, and a hymn in honor of the creator. Of this, Genesis says nothing. The biblical account, on the other hand, speaks of a separation of light and darkness, of the creation of plant and animal life, of a charge given to man, and of a blessing bestowed on him. Of this, *Enûma elish* makes no mention.

But the order in which the points of contact follow upon one another is the same. This can perhaps best be brought out by means of the following diagram, drawn up on the basis of the above outlines and in the light of our discussion of the analogies between *Enûma elish* and Genesis.

<i>Enûma elish</i>	Genesis
Divine spirit and cosmic matter are coexistent and coeternal	Divine spirit creates cosmic matter and exists independently of it
Primeval chaos; Tiâmat enveloped in darkness	The earth a desolate waste, with darkness covering the deep (<i>têhôm</i>)
Light emanating from the gods ¹¹⁹	Light created
The creation of the firmament	The creation of the firmament
The creation of dry land	The creation of dry land
The creation of the luminaries	The creation of the luminaries
The creation of man	The creation of man
The gods rest and celebrate	God rests and sanctifies the seventh day

¹¹⁹ This light probably emanated from the beginning; but it is not alluded to until somewhat later in the account.

"ENÛMA ELISH" AND GEN. 1:1-2:3 DOUBTLESS
RELATED: THREE EXPLANATIONS

Our examination of the various points of comparison between *Enûma elish* and Gen. 1:1-2:3 shows quite plainly that the similarities are really not so striking as we might expect, considering how closely the Hebrews and the Babylonians were related. In fact, the divergences are much more far-reaching and significant than are the resemblances, most of which are not any closer than what we should expect to find in any two more or less complete creation versions (since both would have to account for the same phenomena and since human minds think along much the same lines) which might come from entirely different parts of the world and which might be utterly unrelated to each other. But the identical sequence of events as far as the points of contact are concerned is indeed remarkable. This can hardly be accidental, since the order could have been different; thus the luminary bodies could have been created immediately after the formation of the sky. There no doubt is a genetic relation between the two stories. But, if so, what is the degree of relationship? Three main possibilities have been suggested: first, the Babylonians borrowed from the Hebrew account; second, the Hebrews borrowed from the Babylonian; third, the two stories revert to a common fountainhead.

THE FIRST EXPLANATION

The first explanation is not very likely, for the Babylonian version antedates the Hebrew account. We cannot determine with certainty to what period *Enûma elish* dates back, but, as we have seen, there are good reasons for placing the date of its composition somewhere between 1894 and 1595 B.C.; moreover, certain strands of this myth undoubtedly go back far into Sumerian times. Since we cannot tell definitely when *Enûma elish* was composed, however, and since priority of publication does not imply priority of existence, this argument must be used with a certain amount of caution. The Hebrew story may have been current in some form or other many centuries before it assumed its present form.

A closely allied theory, designed to account for the similar-

ties between *Enûma elish* and Gen. 1:1-2:3, was developed by Clay.¹²⁰ He contended that *Enûma elish* was an amalgamation of a Semitic myth coming from a region called Amurru (i.e., northwestern Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine) and a Sumerian myth presumably from the city of Eridu and that the elements which *Enûma elish* and Gen. 1:1-2:3 have in common were importations from Amurru, which, he concluded, were carried to Babylonia by Western Semites emigrating to that land.¹²¹ It is generally recognized, however, that Clay's arguments, resting chiefly on his interpretation of proper names occurring in *Enûma elish*, on migrations (again relying on proper names to carry his point), and on climatic conditions,¹²² are based on premises too meager to be conclusive. Clay's idea would, of course, have much more to recommend it if it were possible to prove his thesis that Amurru was the home of the Northern Semites. But, as Poebel¹²³ and Ungnad¹²⁴ have observed, the only way in which this could be done successfully would be on the basis of historical information to that effect or on the basis of uninscribed archeological remains; to date, however, no such evidence has been found to establish Clay's contention. And, even if we had such evidence, it still would not necessarily follow that *Enûma elish* goes back to Western sources; for we still would have to reckon with the possibility that it may have arisen in Babylonia, where the incoming Amorites could have adopted it in a modified form, substituting, for example, some of their own deities for certain ones of the original, just as the Assyrian version of *Enûma elish* substitutes a number of

¹²⁰ For a detailed presentation of his arguments see his works: *Amurru, the Home of the Northern Semites* (Philadelphia, 1909), *The Empire of the Amorites* (New Haven, 1919), *A Hebrew Deluge Story in Cuneiform* (New Haven, 1922), and *The Origin of Biblical Traditions* (New Haven, 1923).

¹²¹ See esp. *Amurru, the Home of the Northern Semites*, pp. 53 f.

¹²² See *The Origin of Biblical Traditions*, pp. 66-107.

¹²³ *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, Vol. XXIV (1921), cols. 270-72.

¹²⁴ *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, XXXIV (1922), 19-23. On p. 31 of *The Origin of Biblical Traditions*, Clay maintains that Ungnad, in his brochure *Die ältesten Völkerwanderungen Vorderasiens* (Breslau, 1923), now fully concurs in his view that "the Semitic Babylonians came from Amurru." However, an examination of Ungnad's pamphlet (particularly p. 5) shows quite definitely that Ungnad is not so positive on this point as Clay's assertion would lead one to believe.

divinities for those of the Babylonian version, and that from Babylonia, moreover, it might then have spread to the Westland.

THE SECOND EXPLANATION

The second view, viz., that certain features of Gen. 1:1—2:3 are due to influences emanating from Babylonia, has enjoyed widespread popularity among scholars ever since the discovery of the Babylonian creation tablets. The main arguments that can be advanced in favor of this position are the remarkably close relationship between the biblical and the Babylonian stories of the flood,¹²⁵ and the fact that for some time during the second millennium B.C. the Babylonian script, language, and literature to a certain degree pervaded the Westland.

By approximately 1800 B.C. Babylonian writing had traveled as far west as Cappadocia, via Assyria. From about the fourteenth or fifteenth century B.C. we have numerous documents composed in Babylonian and discovered among the ruins of the ancient Hittite capital, Hattusas (near modern Boghazköy), in Asia Minor. Among these are quite a number of fragments of Sumerian-Babylonian-Hittite vocabularies and several fragments of the Gilgamesh Epic. One of the fragments of the Gilgamesh Epic is written in Babylonian, about a dozen of them are written in Hittite, and a number of other pieces are in Hurrian (or Horite). During the same period we find that Babylonian has become the diplomatic language of southwestern Asia and Egypt, so that the correspondence between the princes of Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine and their Egyptian overlords was carried on in the writing and language not of Egypt but of Babylonia, as we can see from the more than three hundred cuneiform clay tablets unearthed at Tell el-Amarna, a village in Upper Egypt. This latter observation, in particular, points to close relations between Babylonia and the West for over a longer period of time, for no language can gain such extraordinary importance overnight. What these relations were which made Babylonian the language of diplomacy we cannot tell with certainty. At first thought one might be inclined to attribute this phenomenon to Babylonian invasions. However, the

¹²⁵ See the writer's book *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*, esp. pp. 224-69.

Babylonian invasions of the Westland before the Amarna period were few and of short duration; they alone could hardly have established Babylonian as the language of international communication throughout southwestern Asia. This remarkable circumstance was no doubt brought about through the medium of Babylonian trade, for which we have a bit of Old Testament evidence in Josh. 7:21, where reference is made to "a beautiful mantle from Shinar."

Furthermore, in order to learn the writing and the language of the Babylonians, it was of course necessary to study their literature. For this purpose, however, texts were required. And so texts were introduced. This is evident from the fact that among the tablets discovered at Tell el-Amarna were found copies, in the form of school exercises, of the Babylonian stories of Ereshkigal, the queen of the underworld, and of Adapa, who was misled into refusing the bread of life and the water of life.¹²⁶ All this, however, meant not only learning the Babylonian language but also exposing the mind to Babylonian thought and speculation.

On the basis of these considerations it is not unreasonable to assume that some of the Babylonian traditions, such as the stories of creation and of the deluge, were known also to the Hebrews, at least to their leaders. As a matter of fact, in view of the sequence in which the points of contact follow upon one another in *Enûma elish* and in Gen. 1:1—2:3, one is tempted to conclude that not only was the main Babylonian creation story known to the Hebrews but that some of this material was actually used in the composition of the biblical account.

But this way of explaining the relationship between the two accounts has received vigorous opposition ever since it was proposed. Some object to it because they hold that it would bring the date of Genesis down too far. Others reject it because they feel that a dependence of Genesis upon *Enûma elish* would be inconsistent with the integrity of the sacred writers and incompatible with the scriptural doctrine of inspiration.

In the first place, however, we need not assume, as was for-

¹²⁶ J. A. Knudtzon, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* (Leipzig, 1915), Part I; Zimmern in Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos . . .*, pp. 150 f.; and A. T. Olmstead, *History of Palestine and Syria* (New York and London, 1931), p. 148.

merly done, that the Hebrews first became acquainted with Babylonian traditions during the Exile (sixth century B.C.), when they had the life and civilization of their captors immediately before them and could not help but be exposed to their ideas. For the portions of the myths of Ereshkigal and of Adapa which have been recovered among the Tell el-Amarna tablets in Egypt plainly show that Babylonian traditions had reached Palestine and had traveled as far south as Egypt even before the Hebrews crossed the Jordan. Some of these stories may have found their way into Canaan and Egypt and have become the intellectual possession of a certain percentage of the population long before the Exodus. Some of the more learned among the Hebrews, who were not *all* slaves, may have become familiar with Babylonian literature while they were in Egypt.¹²⁷

In the second place, in those times it was natural and customary to borrow without acknowledgment. What little value the Babylonians attached to authorship is evident, for example, from the fact that hardly any of the authors of the Babylonian poetic compositions are known. As for the Old Testament, one prophet quotes or paraphrases the words of another without any indication of his source (cf. Jer. 48:5 with Isa. 15:5; Jer. 49:14-16 with Obad. 1-4; Joel 3:16 with Amos 1:2; Mic. 4:1-5 with Isa. 2:2-5; etc.). And when the Old Testament writers do refer to sources which they apparently consulted, such as the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, and the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel, it is done primarily—if not exclusively—for the purpose of supplying the student of Hebrew history with additional references, not for the purpose of acknowledging indebtedness. This can be seen quite clearly from the ever recurring statement:

¹²⁷ Some scholars have gone back even further, viz., to the time of Abraham (ca. 2000 B.C.), and have suggested that Abraham, as a native of Babylonia (Gen. 11:27 ff.) and as one who had formerly served the idols (Josh. 24:2), like his fellow-citizens may have learned this Babylonian creation story, and that, upon migrating from Babylonia to Canaan, he may have brought these cosmological traditions along and passed them on to the next generation. While the evidence making such an assumption a definite possibility is multiplying (cf. G. E. Wright in *The Biblical Archaeologist*, X [1947], 12), there is as yet no proof for this explanation.

"Now the *rest* of the acts of [So-and-so] and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?" (or "Judah," as the case may be);¹²⁸ or, "Now the *rest* of the acts of [So-and-so]; behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel."¹²⁹ Moreover, if we concede, for the sake of argument, that the creation account in Gen. 1:1-2:3 rests to some extent upon the Babylonian, what in the final analysis does it contain that deserves acknowledgment? How much of this story could one confidently trace to *Enûma elish*, if anything at all? If Gen. 1:1-2:3 really was influenced by *Enûma elish*, then it is reasonably certain that at least the following elements go back to the Babylonian epic: (1) *part* of the outline; (2) the conception of an immense primeval body of water containing the component parts of the earth; (3) the idea that the creation of the firmament was attended by a separation of the primeval waters; and (4) the existence of light before the luminaries. But even in these few points we have no complete correspondence between *Enûma elish* and Genesis; in fact, even here the differences far outweigh the similarities. If it were possible to establish definitely that the biblical account was dependent upon the Babylonian, we could, of course, conclude that in all probability some of the other ideas, in addition to those just mentioned, also went back to *Enûma elish*. But it would be impossible to say with any degree of certainty *which* of these other ideas were taken over from the Babylonian version, since they were all rather widely diffused in ancient times and therefore could easily have been derived from sources other than *Enûma elish*. Such an idea, for example, is the conception of a primeval darkness.¹³⁰

In the third place, the doctrine of inspiration is, of course, indisputably taught in Scripture; we need only recall the ever

¹²⁸ See I Kings 15:31, 16:5, 22:39; II Kings 1:18, 14:28, 15:6, 16:19, 20:20, etc.

¹²⁹ See II Chron. 32:32, 35:26 f., 36:8. In the same way we must probably interpret also I Chron. 29:29 f.; II Chron. 12:15, 16:11, 24:27.

¹³⁰ For a general treatment of the metamorphoses which myths and legends undergo as they travel from one place to another and of the difficulties connected with tracing the various strands back to their sources see Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie*, II, Part 3 (Leipzig, 1909), 500-552, and Lukas, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-65.

recurring Old Testament phrase, "Thus saith the Lord," and such New Testament passages as "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (II Tim. 3:16); "No prophecy ever originated in the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:21); and "When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye accepted it not as the word of men but, as it is in truth, as the word of God" (I Thess. 2:13). However, this does not imply that the sacred writers were exempt from all studies and investigations. On the contrary, we have just seen that the authors of the books of Kings and Chronicles consulted the archives of the land. And the author of the Third Gospel says very distinctly that he made a thorough study of the life of Christ before writing his account, for he tells us: "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to draw up a narrative concerning the things which have taken place among us, as they handed it down to us who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and who became ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, *having carefully investigated it all from the beginning*, to write thee, most excellent Theophilus, a connected account of it" (Luke 1:1-3). It is true that the biblical writers make mention only of having utilized *native* sources. They nowhere state that they ever drew upon *foreign*, or *heathen*, material; but they do not deny it either.¹³¹ And why could they not have studied foreign literature and then have incorporated in their own writings some of the elements of this material that were true or were suited to illustrate truth (cf. p. 111)? The late Professor Franz Pieper,¹³² of Concordia Theological Seminary (St. Louis, Missouri), one of the most conservative Protestant institutions in the world, has solved the problem involved in this connection as follows:

As the Holy Ghost employed the style which He *found* in the individual writers, thus He also utilized the historical knowledge which the writers al-

¹³¹ I pass over Ezra 1:2-4, 4:11-22, 5:6-17, 6:1-12, 7:11-26; Neh. 6:5-7, containing letters to or from the kings of Persia, and similar material. I pass over also Acts 17:28, I Cor. 15:33, and Titus 1:12 because the quotations which they contain were obviously embodied therein for the purpose of meeting the Greeks on their own ground.

¹³² *Christliche Dogmatik*, I (St. Louis, 1924), 284 f. The following quotation is a translation from the German original.

ready possessed either through their own experience, or through their own investigations, or through communications received from other persons. The example of the first Pentecost brings this out very clearly. Of the resurrection of Christ the apostles had knowledge through their own experience before Pentecost. Yet on the first Pentecost they spoke, as of the other mighty deeds of God, so also of the resurrection of Christ, "as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Another dogmatician of the same institution, Professor John T. Mueller,¹³³ makes the following declaration:

Independent study and historical research were indeed carried on at times by the holy writers; for they themselves tell us that they were prompted to write not only new revelations, but also such things as they knew in consequence of their general study and their special experience, Gal. 1, 17-24; Luke 1, 1 ff. However, this fact does not disprove the doctrine of inspiration, since the Holy Spirit utilized for His beneficent purpose of giving to fallen man the Word of God also the general knowledge of the sacred penmen, just as He utilized their natural gifts and talents (experience, style, culture, etc.). Inspiration is not mere revelation, but the divine prompting (*impulsus scribendi*) to record the truths which God desired that men should know in words He Himself supplied, 2 Sam. 23, 2 ff. Some of these truths were given the holy writers by direct revelation, 1 Cor. 11, 23; 14, 37; 2, 7-13; others were known to them by experience, Acts 17, 28; Gal. 2, 11-14; others, again, by direct investigation and special research, Luke 1, 1 ff. In the treatment of the doctrine of divine inspiration the question is not: "How did the holy writers obtain the truths which they wrote?" but rather: "Did the Holy Ghost prompt the sacred writers to write down certain words and thoughts which God wanted men to know?" The fact that this was actually the case is clearly taught in Holy Scripture, 2 Tim. 3, 16; 2 Pet. 1, 21, so that the doctrine of inspiration is beyond dispute.

We have, moreover, good reasons for believing that at least some of the authors of the Old Testament *were* acquainted with foreign literature and that in certain cases and to a certain degree they actually made use of it in the composition of their own books. For example, in connection with the Marduk-Ti²amat conflict we quoted the following lines from an inscription excavated at Ras Shamra:

When thou shalt smite Lôtan, the fleeing serpent,
(And) shalt put an end to the tortuous serpent,
Shalya² of the seven heads. . . .

¹³³ *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis, 1934), p. 110.

This passage, as we have indicated above, influenced Ps. 74:4, referring to "the heads of Leviathan," and Isa. 27:1:

On that day the Lord will punish
With His sword, which is hard and great and strong,
Leviathan, the fleeing serpent,
And Leviathan, the tortuous serpent,
And He will slay the crocodile that is in the sea.

To this passage from Ras Shamra we can add another one from the same place which also has left its marks on biblical literature:

Behold, thine enemies, O Baal;
Behold, thine enemies thou shalt smite.
Behold, thou shalt destroy thine adversaries!¹³⁴

These lines remind us rather forcefully of Ps. 92:10:

For, behold, Thine enemies, O Lord,
For, behold, Thine enemies shall perish!
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered!

Hardly anyone will deny that in these three biblical passages the sacred writers took over figures of speech derived from foreign literature and that they patterned their lines after those from Ras Shamra, just as certain of the classical writers of the Christian Era patterned some of their finest literary productions after Greek and Roman masterpieces. Since the Old Testament was intended also for the gentile world, it is but natural that the biblical authors availed themselves of figures of speech and imagery with which also Israel's neighbors were familiar, or which were at least easily understandable to them. It may be added, however, that identical phraseology does not necessarily imply identical theology.

Considering all this, I personally fail to see why it should be incompatible with the doctrine of inspiration to assume that Gen. 1:1—2:3 might in a measure be dependent on *Enûma elish*. But I reject the idea that the biblical account gradually

¹³⁴ See Virolleaud in *Syria*. . . , Vol. XVI (1935), Pl. XI: 8 f. With the translation cf. Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook*, p. 113, or the same author's book *The Loves and Wars of Baal and Anat* (Princeton and London, 1943), p. 20; and H. L. Ginsberg in *The Biblical Archaeologist*, VIII (1945), 54. These lines have been rendered somewhat differently by J. Obermann, *Ugaritic Mythology* (New Haven, 1948), p. 71.

evolved out of the Babylonian; for that the differences are far too great and the similarities far too insignificant. In the light of the differences, the resemblances fade away almost like the stars before the sun.

THE THIRD EXPLANATION

There is, however, yet another way of accounting for the similarities between Genesis and *Enûma elish*, viz., both versions may have sprung from a common source of some kind. One of the most recent advocates of this view was the late Professor Ira M. Price of the University of Chicago, who attributed the common elements to a common inheritance of man going back to "a time when the human race occupied a common home and held a common faith."¹³⁵

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are those who seem to be convinced that Gen. 1:1—2:3 shows Babylonian traces, while others appear to be just as convinced that it does not. In my estimation, no incontrovertible evidence can for the present be produced for either side; I believe that *the whole question must still be left open*. But whatever the true facts of the case may be, whether the biblical account is or is not dependent on Babylonian material, there is no reason, as we have seen, why anyone should be disturbed in his mind and lose his reverence for the opening chapter of the Bible. If certain features of the biblical account were derived from the Babylonian, this was done in conformity with the will of Him who according to Heb. 1:1 revealed Himself "in divers manners." Moreover, a comparison of the Babylonian creation story with the first chapter of Genesis makes the sublime character of the latter stand out in even bolder relief. *Enûma elish* refers to a multitude of divinities emanating from the elementary world-matter; the universe has its origin in the generation of numerous gods and goddesses personifying cosmic spaces or forces in nature, and in the orderly and purposeful arrangement of pre-existent matter; the world is not *created* in the biblical sense of the term but *fashioned* after the manner of human craftsmen; as for man, he is created with the blood of a deity that might well

¹³⁵ *The Monuments and the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, etc., 1925), pp. 129 f.

be called a devil among the gods, and the sphere of activity assigned to man is the service of the gods. In Gen. 1:1—2:3, on the other hand, there stands at the very beginning *one* God, who is not co-united and coexistent with an eternal world-matter and who does not first develop Himself into a series of separate deities but who creates matter out of nothing and exists independently of all cosmic matter and remains *one* God to the end. Here the world is created by the sovereign *word* of God, without recourse to all sorts of external means. God speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast. Add to this the doctrine that man was created in the image of a holy and righteous God, to be the lord of the earth, the air, and the sea, and we have a number of differences between *Enûma elish* and Gen. 1:1—2:3 that make all similarities shrink into utter insignificance.¹³⁶ These exalted conceptions in the biblical account of creation give it a depth and dignity unparalleled in any cosmogony known to us from Babylonia or Assyria.

¹³⁶ Cf. Skinner, *op. cit.*, pp. 6 f.; A. Dillmann, *Genesis*, trans. W. B. Stevenson, I (Edinburgh, 1897), 43.