THE COSMOLOGY OF THE SUMERIANS.¹

ACCORDING to the Sumerian conception the earth as a world-edifice consisted of three parts:

(1) The heavenly ocean or AN.
(2) The terrestrial ocean or KI.
(3) The yväjë or LIL, which stands between the AN and KI.

These three parts were assigned to the first triad or rah of the Sumerian pantheon, i. e., to Anu, Ea, Bel. To these as such belongs the world-edifice.

As there existed a heavenly and a terrestrial ocean, so the LIL or yväjë was considered also under a double aspect:

(a) As a heavenly yväjë or AN = shamû, סהמיד (shamaim) or "heaven."
(b) As a terrestrial yväjë or KI = irtsitu, ארץ (arets) or "earth."

The former keeps back the heavenly and the latter the terrestrial ocean.

This latter consideration gives us the so-called twofold division of the earth as world-edifice. According to this it consisted:

(1) Of the upper world, which is AN-ta = elish, i. e., above: the heavenly world;
(2) Of the lower world, which is KI-ta = shaplish, i. e., below: the terrestrial world.²

¹ The present article consists of the additions to the article of Dr. Radau promised in the last Monist (p. 625).
² Translated in the authorised version "firmament."
³ This twofold division is mentioned by Diodorus II. 30, translated in Winckler,
The heavenly firmament or ָּרָּקָּע appears in and is of the form of a "half-circle" or better "plate"—and as the heavenly is only the reflex of the terrestrial, this latter was considered to be the other half of the circle as a whole, i. e., of the firmament ָּרָּקָּע as such. And if the firmament ָּרָּקָּע be round then the heavenly and terrestrial ocean must have the same shape.

The world-edifice is inhabited. The inhabitants which dwell either in or within the firmament ָּרָּקָּע are ZU, UD, Innanna, Nin-Girsu. Thus they had to become necessarily his, i. e., LIL’s children. LIL thus becomes not only the LUGAL or "king," but also the AB-BA or "father" of the gods. ZU, UD, Innanna are the moon, sun, morning or evening-star. Thus we find that even according to Gen. i. 14 the stars are put ָּרָּקָּע, i. e., in the firmament of the heavens. Each one of these stars has his abode and special sphere not only in the terrestrial but also in the heavenly ָּרָּקָּע. When they are in the latter they are visible, but when in the former they become invisible. The road they had to travel when in the heavenly ָּרָּקָּע was marked out for them by the so-called zodiac, which was called in later times ֶּשֶׁפֶע ָשָׁמֶה, i. e., "the dam of heaven."

The functions of the stars, especially those of the two great luminaries are according to Gen. i. 14, 15 threefold:

(1) ָּלָאְו רַפְּאִי אָלֶט אָלֶחֶם
(2) רָבְּרָבִיָּי בָּלַי רֶחֶם יָרַח הָרֶא
(3) הוּא לָאֵלָחֶם אִלִּימוֹנִים תָּמִים

"Himmels- und Weltenbild der Babylonier" (Der alte Orient, III.), p. 62, with these words: "Von diesen beobachten die Hälfte (sc. of the 36 gods) die überirdischen, die andere Hälfte die unterirdischen Stätten, indem sie über das bei den Menschen und den Göttern geschehende gleichzeitig wachten."

1 The abode of UD, e. g., is Ud-unug-ki, i. e., "Shamash-abode" or Larsa; that of ZU or Uru; Uru-unug-ki-ma, i. e., Nannar (or Sin)-abode = Ur; that of Innanna: Innanna-ab-ki (or also to be read: Innanna-unug-ki) etc., etc.
2 See Winckler, l. c., p. 62 ff.
3 To give light upon the earth. Gen. i. 15.
4 To divide between the day and between the night. Gen. 1. 14.
5 To be for signs. This expresses the astrologic signification of the stars.
6 And for seasons and for days and years. On the course of the stars, especially on that of the sun and moon the calendar is based.
No. 2, i. e., "the dividing between the day and the night" is done by the sun. He divides what we call "day" into two equal halves—but this he does only on two days during the whole year, i. e., at the vernal and the autumnal equinox. Where the sun rises on these two days is the East and where he sets is the West. On these two days it takes therefore just as many hours for the sun to travel over the heavenly as over the earthly רקיע, or in other words: the sun is just as many hours visible as he is invisible. East and West becomes thus the two points in the רקיע as a whole where the earthly and the heavenly touch, i. e., East and West divide the רקיע and thus also the whole world-edifice into two equal halves: into the upper or heavenly and into the lower or terrestrial world. The East of the terrestrial world is however at the same time the West of the heavenly and vice versa, for when the sun rises for the "earth" he sets for the "heaven."

The "nether world" or Hades was considered to lie in the South, i. e., under that point of the "earth" or terrestrial רקיע where the sun stands at noon during the equinox. Also the upper world has a Hades which likewise was considered to be in the South, i. e., under the same point of the "heaven" or heavenly רקיע indicated by the sun at noon during the equinox. We would get thus in the world-edifice as a whole two points for East, West, and South! The opposite of the South is the North. If we would prolong the two points indicating the South towards the North they would (1) meet in one and the same point of the line which connects the East and the West or which divides the world-edifice into the upper and lower world, (2) divide the lower as well as the upper world again into two equal halves. The point where they meet is the North. The North becomes thus not only the centre of the רקיע, which, as we saw, was considered to be a circle, but also that of the whole world-edifice. Here in this North, in this centre "dwelt the gods," there also the "mountain of the gods," "der Götterberg" was situated.

Now we understand the name for the North. In Assyrian it is called ishtānu or itānu, i. e., "the only one"—thus called in contradistinction to all the other points, of each of which we have two.
There is only one North in the world-edifice, this North is the same for the heavenly as for the terrestrial world. In Sumerian the North has the name IM-SI-DI, which Delitzsch\(^1\) translates by "gerade Richtung," i. e., all the radii of the great periphery of "heaven and earth" are directed towards it as the centre.\(^2\)

If sun, moon, and the stars are in the יִשְׁרָאֵל, to what god has to be assigned the region around the centre of the world-edifice, i. e., the space between "heaven and earth"?

Speaking from our present standpoint the space between "heaven and earth" is filled out by the air—hence we might be inclined to assign that region to the "god of the air" to the "Herrn der Luft." But there does not seem to exist—either in Hebrew, or in Assyrian, or in Sumerian—a word for "air," at least no such word is known to me. The Hebrew מַלְאָך does not mean "air," but "wind, spirit, breath." The Sumerian LIL is = the Assyrian zaqîqu, i. e., "wind, storm," and IM is = šāru, which again means "wind." This latter word gives us the right solution. So far we were able to assign all gods to a special sphere or function in the world edifice. One god, however, remained to whom no such sphere has been assigned as yet, and this is Nin-Gir-su or Rammân. He is, as we have seen above, not a star, but the "god of storm, rain, thunder, lightning, and clouds," and must therefore necessarily belong to the region between the heavenly and the terrestrial יִשְׁרָאֵל! With this, of course, agrees also Gudea's description of Nin-Gir-su = Rammân, who is said as regards his RI-BA to be like heaven and earth! Rammân, the thunderer, fills all the space between heaven and earth and thus reaches from the lower to the upper "firmament." To this space must, of course, also be assigned the seven sons of Nin-Gir-su. They too have as the "seven winds" their abode between heaven and earth.

We are thus able to draw the subjoined picture\(^8\) of the Sumer-

\(^1\) H. W. B. p. 152.

\(^2\) See also the E-pa e-ub-7-na! Ub = kibratu, "Weltgegend, -richtung," i. e., "the temple of the seven regions." Gudea, Statue D, ii, 11. (K. B., ii\(^1\), p. 50.)

\(^8\) For another picture see Jensen, Kosmologie der Babylonier, Anhang, Tafel III.
ian world-edifice. (See the explanations given underneath). This picture explains also the following points:

1. God EN-LIL or Bel is called very often the "lugal-kur-kur." Kur may mean either "the mountain" (shadū) or "the land" (mātu). Lugal-kur-kur might thus be translated either by "king of the mountains" or "king of the lands." Both translations are possible. If the former translation be accepted, "the mountains" would be the two halves of the ūrcreat. The upper ūrcreat or "heaven" as well as the lower ūrcreat or "earth" appear as a mountain

(a) Heavenly ocean: AN, Anu; (b) Terrestrial ocean: KI, Ea; (c) Heavenly ūrcreat: AN = šanat šamā or heaven; (c') Terrestrial ūrcreat: KI = šamā, irtsiu or earth; (c + c') The domain of LIL or Bel. On this ūrcreat is to be found the shupuk šamā, i.e., the road which the sun, the moon, etc., had to travel; (d) the domain of Nin-Gir-su = Rammān; (E', W', S') the heavenly world; (E, W, S) the terrestrial world; (E) East of the earth = (W') West of the heaven; (E, W) divide the world edifice into two equal halves, and signify the East and West where the sun rises and sets at the equinox; (N') North, the centre of the world edifice; (S, S') the terrestrial and the heavenly Hades.
when looked upon from the *North* or *center* of the whole world edifice! Lugal-kur-kur, when taken in this sense, would mean literally "*king of the TWO mountains.*"

The priestly tradition, commonly abbreviated *P*, informs us (in Genesis xi. 31) that Abraham and his wife and Lot came with Terah his father from *Ur of the Chaldees*. This Ur was, as we know now, one of the chief Babylonian cities in early times, it being especially celebrated on account of its temple dedicated to the moon-god, i. e., to EN-ZU or Uru-ki, the first-born of EN-LIL or Bel. It is generally supposed that Terah together with his son Abraham worshipped or were followers of this very moon-god, because they stopped on their way to Canaan in *Harran*, where there was another celebrated temple of the moon-god. This view, no doubt, is true of Terah, for it ought to be remembered that *he* it is who leaves Ur and goes to Harran, simply taking with him his son Abraham. Terah, therefore, and not Abraham, puts himself again under the protection of his old god while in Harran! From another place, however, we know whom *Abraham* worshipped. In Exodus vi. 2, 3—which also belongs to *P*—we read:

"And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jahveh: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name Jahveh I was not known to them."

From this passage we learn that the *same* god appeared unto Abraham as well as unto Moses, but unto the latter under a different *name*. The name had been changed, it is true, at the time of Moses, but the *essence* of that god was and remained the same! Who, then, was this שַׁדַּי, El Shaddai?

The common translation "*lord or god almighty*" is simply based upon the LXX. παροικάρωπ and the Vulg. "*omnipotens, " and is as such merely a guess. Two explanations seem possible.

1. Shaddai is derived either from the root shadad (שדד), "to be dense, to be or to make tight," or
2. It comes from shadah (שד), "to be high," from which we have the Assyrian *shad*, "mountain."

If No. 1 be accepted, shadad would be a synonym of *raqa* (רהא) from which we get the raqʿa, i. e., something which is or is made
dense, tight,—hence our word firmament! The ai at the end represents the old dual ending indicating that there are two firmaments. El shaddai would mean according to this explanation: the god (el) of the two (ai) firmaments or raq'as. The god of the two firmaments, i. e., of heaven and of earth, is EN-LIL or Bel. Abraham would thus become a worshipper of Bel, the father of the moon-god Sin.

The second etymology, however, seems to be much better and has already been given by Delitzsch who, however, translates El shaddai on the basis of the Assyrian ilu shadu'a by "god is my mountain." This translation I do not think can be maintained. The ai at the end of Shaddai must be taken again for the old dual ending, which occurs, e. g., in Shalmaneser II.: "the camels sha shu-na-ai tsi-ri-shi-na, i. e., whose back is double." The double d stands for dj, i. e., the j assimilated itself to the d. El Shaddai would thus become "the god of the two mountains," i. e., the lugal-kur or EN-LIL, who was the god of the upper and the lower mountain or heaven and earth. El Shaddai accordingly means "god of heaven and earth," or lugal-an-ki. Thus even according to this etymology the El Shaddai of the patriarchs is the EN-LIL of the Sumerians. Above we have seen that even ṣer was = EN-LIL, because both when they appear are accompanied by a prime-minister or angel—viz., by his nin-an and EN-LIL by his ur-sag liggā  Ningir-su,—i. e., they appear always under thunder and lightning and surrounded by clouds. The statement of P, therefore, that ṣer appeared unto the patriarchs only under another name, viz., El Shaddai, remaining however the same god as

---

1 The Hebrew Language, p. 48.

2 For such a retrogressive assimilation of the j comp. among others bunju = būnu = būnu; zimju = zimmu = zīmu. Such a word as shaddū, given by Del, H. W. B. p. 642 does not exist. The writing SHAD-di-e, etc., ought to be transcribed by shadē di-a, i. e., shadū plus two phonetic complements.

3 Whether ṣer was a name taken from the Kenites or not, would not affect our argument. I myself would see in ṣer simply another name for "rock," i. e., šer = "he who is, was, and will be," the "rock" that will not pass away nor change. Comp. here the proper name ṣerสาธาร "my rock is Shaddai," the KUR-
before, is thus shown to be fully justified. El Shaddai is thus proved to be an Assyrian name which translates simply the Sumerian “lugal-kur-kur” or “lugal-an-ki”! Abraham coming from Ur where the Sumerian pantheon was fully developed and known becomes thus a worshipper of Bel or EN-LIL the lugal-kur-kur!

The title lugal-kur-kur however is translated in the later Semitic Babylonian inscriptions always by bel mātāti,1 “lord of the lands.” If this transcription and translation be correct, then the idea expressed here would be that Bel as the firmament embraces all the “lands” on the terrestrial as well as on the heavenly sink— for the “lands” are situated in the ʾēlim.

2. The dominion of Bel is sometimes spoken of as a char-sag kalam-ma or shad mātāti as “the mountain of the lands,” and Bel himself is called KUR-GAL2 or shadū rabû, i. e., “the great mountain.” Bel is the god of the ʾēlim, which is, as we saw, a circle or a mountain. In this mountain or circle as a whole the “lands of heaven and earth” are situated. Bel becomes thus not only “the great mountain” or “circle,” the ʾēlim, but also the “mountain of the lands.”

3. Later inscriptions speak of a so-called “mountain of the rise of the sun” and of a “mountain of the setting of the sun,” which mountains lie in the East and West respectively. The earth being considered as the lower half of the great circle called ʾēlim is, of course, at its extremities, i. e., in the East and West higher than on any other part. The earth seems to be always higher at the horizon than where we stand.

4. The earth as world-edifice in the form of a circle or better globe3 explains the whole system of the Sumerian reckoning, according to which the circle was divided into 360 degrees, the year into 360 days, etc., etc.

GAL (the great rock) and the char sag kalam-ma (the mountain of the lands) of the Sumerians, and see below.

1 See e. g. Shalmaneser II. Obelisk, l. 3: ilūbel KUR-KUR. Or should we transcribe here also “shadai”?


3 Consisting of two halves or plates—the upper being put or resting upon the lower.
5. It removes all the difficulties which Winckler still finds in his conception of the Babylonian cosmology.1

* * *

A few minor points may be added by way of a postscript:2

A strange difference is to be found between the Biblical account of the creation and the Sumerian theogony. According to the latter Sin or EN-ZU, the moon-god, is the firstborn of EN-LIL, and hence precedes Shamash or UD the sun god. In Gen. 1:16 on the other hand Shamash is called "the greater light,"3 while Sin is named "the lesser light,"4 thus the former apparently precedes the latter.

What is the reason for this?

Winckler5 confesses: "Das babylonische Pantheon stellt nicht den Sonnengott, sondern den Mondgott an die Spitze—warum, ist noch unklar." The reason is this: As the chaos preceded the cosmos, as the darkness the light, thus the night preceded the day, and Sin6 being "he who governs the night," must necessarily

---

1 See Winckler, "'Himmels- und Weltenbild der Babylonier." Der alte Orient, III. (1901) pp. 59-65.
2 See editorial note in last Monist, p. 625.
3 'en-šar-ri-ru
4 'en-šar-ri-ru
5 "Himmels- und Weltenbild," etc., p. 65.
6 Sin precedes Shamash also in the old Arabian pantheon. Our investigation enables us to identify that pantheon with the second triad or rahšt of the Sumerians. Wadd, Sin, 'Amm, Haubas—all names for the Sumerian EN-ZU or Uru-ki, the moon-god, have been correctly identified. The same is true of Athtar and Sham—the former is the dingir Inanna, the morning or evening-star, the latter dingir UD, the sun—with the difference, however, that Athtar has become a masculine and Shamš a feminine. Even in later Semitic Babylonian inscription Ishtar as "the morning-star" was, as was pointed out above, p. 39, considered to be a masculine deity. If the old Arabian pantheon represents the gods of the second triad or rahšt of the Sumerians, then an-Karich, Chaul, Anbāj, and Almāqu-hū must be Nin-Gir-su or Rammān. Hommel, Die südarabischen Altertümer des Wiener Hofmuseums, p. 28 ff., identified them either with Nebo, because (1) "Anbāj" is a broken plural of Nabīja, which stands for the older Nabī'ū; (2) Chaul = Nābīl = "Phoenix" ("der ja vom Weihrauchlande, Hadramōt, her nach Aegypten fliegt, also ein richtiger Nābīl oder Götterbote ist"), or with the "Sternenheer" = Almāqu-hū. With regard to an-Karich he is in doubt, thinks however, that this god is "wohl auch" = Nebo.

Above we have seen that Nin-Gir-su is the ur-sag of EN-LIL,—hence a נִינָגִיר or minister, just as Chaul = נבל is. Chaul is here the minister of Sin, because Sin is the chief-god, who was even in Assyrian times identified with Bēl (see above p. 50) hence might also have an ur-sag! But it is not necessary at all to identify Chaul with the bird Phoenix (see Job xxix. 18 and Herodotus ii. 73); the signification which the root נבל gives on hand, is a much better one. נבל or also נבל is used in Jerem. xxiii. 19; xxx. 23 of the storm and has the signification: wirbelnd losbrechen hernieder auf etwas (c. נבל). See Gesenius-Buhl sub voce. Even in Assyrian we have a root נבל with the signification "beben, erbebend," and a chilhu
precede Shamash, who governs the day. This is also the reason why in early times the "day" consisted of "night and day"—accepted even by P: "there was evening and there was morning, the . . . day." This latter, no doubt, is a relic of the Sumerian conception of the day—for among the Sumerians Sin was the father of Shamash. The precedence of Shamash represents thus a later stage: it shows P lived at a time when Shamash had been put before Sin. But if the day began with the evening or night, then the year must have begun with the winter, and the beginning of the year could not have been the 21st of March (the 1st Nisan) but must have been the 21st of September (the 1st Tishri). This month Tishri, which signifies "beginning," corresponds, as was shown in E. B. H. p. 295, to the month Ezen dingir Ba-u, which was still at the time of Gudea (about 3300 B. C.) the first month of the year.1 According to another nomenclature Tishri corre-

or Hochflut, see Del. H. W. B. pp. 274, 275. The god Chaul would become thus the "god of the stormflood!" and might be read Châwîl.

Almâqu-hâ—thus read by Hommel—is derived from the root הָּמֶל "to destroy," "to beat." Rammân as the god of lightning destroys the wicked. I would like to see in this word a surname of Rammân and read "almaq-hât," i.e., "his (sc. Sin's) chief destroyer or warrior = ur-sag lig-ga. To this explanation fits also an-Karich from the root מַל, Del. H. W. B. p. 332, b: "in Not bringen."

Anbâj too is not a broken plural of Nabîû = Nabi`u—why should there be a plural for the name of a god, seeing that this god is only a shajûm?—but also an elative form (like almaq-hût) from the root מַל and has to be read = anbajû. מַל I would like to take in the sense of מַל, Del. H. W. B. p. 442, b. "hervor-
sprudeln, hervorquellen," from which we get the nambû-. "Quell, Wasser-
quell," and the imbû-., "vegetation," and especially nibû "Frucht, Fruchttrag-

a. P. derg." Rammân would thus become as the "god of rain" he who PRODUCES vegetation—hence he is called by Shalmanesser II., Obelisk, l. 7: [in Rammân] gisb-ru shû-tu-ru bêl che-gal-lî, i.e., the strong one, the powerful, the lord of the abundance or riches (sc. of the fields). With this agrees quite wonderfully also the name ur-dingîr Nin-Gir-su, which name is not only that of an early Babylonian patesi (see E. B. H. p. 441 for references), but which also is translated in the bilingual texts by ikharû or farmer, husbandman, Landmann, Ackerbauer, Land-
wirt, see Del. H. W. B. p. 58 sub voce. Ur-dingîr Nin-Gir-su literally translated would mean the "dog or servant of Nin-Gir-su." But Nin-Gir-su is = Rammân who as the god of rain is also the god of fertility! And what is more natural than than that the farmer should be called "the servant or dog of the god of fertility"? This latter name not only proves that our identification of Nin-Gir-su = Rammân is correct, but also that anbajû may—nay, must,—have this signification here.

With this then is proven the Babylonian origin of the old Arabic pantheon, which was accepted at a time when Sin had become identified with Bel (above p. 50). That the Babylonians indeed influenced the ancient Arabsians is proved by the fact that even Semitic Babylonian words are found in old Arabic inscription, as e.g. מַל = libûtu, מַל = labânû (this latter is found in one of the oldest hadramotic inscriptions from Obne), מַל = mushkênû, מַל = sunqu, see Winckler, M. V. A. G., 1901, 4, p. 70.

1 Gudea, Statue E. V. 1, 2; G. III. 5, 6: ud zag-mû ezen dingir Ba-u "on the New Year's day, the festival of Ba-u."

This content downloaded from 137.99.31.134 on Mon, 3 Feb 2014 22:53:35 PM
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions
sponds to the month A-ki-it, which means "New-Year's festival." Tishri is also = the Canaanitish שָׁמָּתָן which again was the first month,¹ and Tishri is still the New-Year's month of the Jews of to-day. The present Jewish New-Year's month thus goes back to the most ancient times: to the time of the Sumerians.

The creation of Nin-Gir-su = Rammân, the god of thunder, lightnings, rain, storm, and clouds has been omitted by P! The reason is apparent. He did not fit into P's formula. It was impossible to say: And Elohim said: "Let there be thunderings, lightnings, storms, etc. and there were. And Elohim saw that they were good!" "Good" lightnings, storms, etc. cause quite a "good" deal of havoc. Thus not wishing to imply that the Creator might have destroyed something of what he created—P left out the creation of the storm and lightning altogether.

H. Radau.

Waterloo, Ill.

¹ 1 Kings viii. 2. E. B. H. p. 298.