

# VETUS TESTAMENTUM

QUARTERLY PUBLISHED BY THE

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE  
STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Vol. XX

JULY 1970

No. 3

## CONTENTS

J. R. BARTLETT, Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites . . . . .	257
C.-A. KELLER, Probleme des hebräischen Sprachunterrichts . . . . .	278
J. MAUCLINE, Implicit signs of a persistent belief in the Davidic Empire . . . . .	287
J. P. SCHÄFER, Die Termini „Heiliger Geist“ und „Geist der Prophetie“ in den Targumim und das Verhältnis der Targumim zueinander . . . . .	304
S. TERRIEN, The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion . . . . .	315
W. A. VAN DER WEIDEN, Prov. XIV 32B „Mais le juste a confiance quand il meurt“. . . . .	339
SHORT NOTES . . . . .	351
PH. DERCHAIN, Les plus anciens témoignages de sacrifices d'enfants chez les Sémites occidentaux. — F. CH. FENSHAM, The battle between the men of Joab and Abner as a possible ordeal by battle? — E. M. GOOD, Exodus XV 2. — A. JEPSEN, Ein neuer Fixpunkt für die Chronologie der israelitischen Könige? — M. MANNATI, Sur le sens de <i>min</i> en Ps. IV 8. — J. A. SOGGIN, Ein ausserbiblisches Zeugnis für die Chronologie des J <sup>ehô</sup> ʾāš / Jôʾāš, König von Israel. — W. G. E. WATSON, Antecedents of a New Testament proverb. . . . .	371
REVIEWS . . . . .	371
H. G. Liddell-R. Scott-H. S. Jones, Greek-English Lexicon. A Supplement (W. BAARS). — H. J. Boecker, Die Beurteilung der Anfänge des Königtums in den deuteronomistischen Abschnitten des 1. Samuelbuches. (P. A. H. DE BOER). — M. Rehm, Der königliche Messias im Licht der Immanuel-Weissagungen des Buches Jesaja. (P. A. H. DE BOER). . . . .	382
<i>Appel pour un relevé général des citations patristiques de la bible grecque</i> . . . . .	382
BOOKLIST . . . . .	383



LEIDEN  
E. J. BRILL  
1970

## THE OMPHALOS MYTH AND HEBREW RELIGION

BY

SAMUEL TERRIEN

New York

It has long been recognized that the omphalos myth played an important part in the cults of ancient Greece. The pioneering work of Jane HARRISON, at the end of the XIXth century<sup>1)</sup>, was followed by numerous monographs, especially those of W. H. RÖSCHER, R. MERINGER, A. B. COOK, E. ROHDE, Ch. PICARD, F. ROBERT, Marie DELCOURT, and H. -V. HERRMANN<sup>2)</sup>. Studies of the Greek forms of the myth have alerted the attention of Orientalists, like A. J. WENSINCK and E. BURROWS<sup>3)</sup>, to the importance of this belief for the understanding of Semitic as well as Hellenic religions. Historians of comparative religions and cultures, like G. DUMÉZIL, Mircea ELIADE

---

<sup>1)</sup> J. HARRISON, „Delphika,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* XIX, 1899, pp. 225 ff.; *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge 1903, 1907; reprinted, London 1961), pp. 319 ff., 556 ff., figs. 91, 96, 97, 122, 158; *Themis*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 1927; reprinted, New Hyde Park, N. Y., 1962, pp. 384-428.

<sup>2)</sup> E. ROHDE, *Psyche, The Cult of Souls and Beliefs in Immortality Among the Greeks* 1st ed., 1983; tr. from the 8th ed., by W. B. HILLIS, London 1925, pp. 97 ff., 111 ff., notes 32 ff.; W. H. ROSCHER, *Omphalos: eine philologisch-archäologisch-volkskundliche Abhandlung über die Vorstellungen der Griechen und anderer Völker vom „Nabel der Erde*,” Leipzig 1913; *Neue Omphalosstudien: ein archäologischer Beitrag zur Vergleichenden Religionswissenschaft*, Leipzig 1915; *Der Omphalosgedanke bei verschiedenen Völkern*, Leipzig 1918; R. MERINGER, „Omphalos, Nabel, Nebel,” *Wörter und Sachen* V, 1913, 43-91; „Nachtrag zum Omphalos,” *id.* VI, 1914, p. 144; Ch. PICARD, *Ephèse et Claros*, Paris 1922, pp. 110, 464, 551; A. B. COOK, *Zeus* II, Cambridge 1925, p. 169 ff.; F. ROBERT, *Thymélé*, Paris 1939, pp. 278-283; J. DEFRADAS, „L'omphalos de la terre,” *Les thèmes de la propagande delphique*, Paris 1954, pp. 102 ff.; M. DELCOURT, „ombilic du monde,” *L'oracle, de Delphes*, Paris 1955, pp. 144 ff.; H. W. PARKE and D. E. W. WORMELL, *The Delphic Oracle*, Oxford 1956, I, pp. 3 ff.; H.-V. HERRMANN, *Omphalos*, Bonn 1959.

<sup>3)</sup> A. J. WENSINCK, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth*, Amsterdam 1916; *Tree and Bird as Cosmological Symbols in Western Asia*, Amsterdam 1921, pp. 10 ff., 44 f.; E. BURROWS, „Some Cosmological Patterns in Babylonian Religion,” in S. H. HOOKE, ed., *The Labyrinth*, London 1935, pp. 51 ff. At the same time, there has been some limited research on the Oriental origin of the Greek motif: F. POULSEN, *Delphische Studien*, København 1924, pp. 29 ff., 83, fig. 1. Cf. T. H. GASTER, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament*, New York and Evanston, 1969, p. 428; bibliogr. on p. 533.

and W. MÜLLER <sup>1)</sup>, have described manifestations of similar beliefs that are widespread among numerous ethnic groups. At the same time, biblical scholars have pointed out that the Canaanite myth of the earth-navel appears also in the literature of the ancient Hebrews. W. CASPARI and H. W. HERTZBERG, for example, have discussed the possibility that Mount Tabor was considered at one time to be the center of the land, and perhaps of the earth <sup>2)</sup>, but W. F. ALBRIGHT has shown that the relation between the name „Tabor” and the word *tabbúr* is unlikely <sup>3)</sup>. On the contrary, W. HARRELSON, B. W. ANDERSON, G. E. WRIGHT, and E. NIELSEN, among others <sup>4)</sup>, have reminded us, on the basis of Judg. ix 37, of the significance of the myth in the XIth cent. B. C. for the inhabitants of Shechem. Brevard CHILDS has analyzed the growth of the same mythical motif in connection with the temple of Solomon and the later speculations on the new Jerusalem <sup>5)</sup>. In spite of these scholarly monographs, the omphalos myth still receives on the part of contemporary historians of Hebrew

<sup>1)</sup> G. DUMÉZIL, *Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus*, Paris 1941, p. 229; M. ÉLIADÉ, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, tr. by R. SHARD, New York 1958, pp. 231 ff.; 367 ff., *The Sacred and the Profane*, tr. by W. R. TRASK, New York 1957, pp. 36-54; *Cosmos and History; The Myth of the Eternal Return*, tr. by W. R. TRASK, New York 1959, pp. 7-11; 14 f.; W. MÜLLER, *Die Heilige Stadt: Roma quadrata, Himmlischer Jerusalem und die Mythe vom Weltnavel*, Stuttgart 1961; see also J. CAMPBELL, „The World Navel”, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, reprinted, New York 1956, pp. 40 ff.; Th. H. GASTER, *Thespis: Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East*, new and revised ed., Garden City, N.Y., 1961, p. 183.

<sup>2)</sup> W. CASPARI, „*tabur*”, *ZDMG*. LXXXVI, 1933, pp. 49 ff.; H. W. HERTZBERG, „Die Melkisedeq-Traditionen”, *JPOS*. VIII, 1928, pp. 174-176.

<sup>3)</sup> The word „Tabor” possibly represents a Canaanite root, *tblrt*, „brightness, purity”; W. F. ALBRIGHT, *Yabweh and the Gods of Canaan*, Garden City, N.Y., 1968, p. 111, note 4; yet cf. D. WINTON THOMAS, „Mount Tabor: the Meaning of the Name”, *VT*. I, 1951, pp. 229 f., who suggests the root *nbr* (2 Sam. xxii 27), which may be related to the Ethiopic *benbert* and the Amharic *enbert*, „navel”.

<sup>4)</sup> W. HARRELSON, *The City of Shechem: Its History and Importance* (dissertation), New York 1953, p. 208 f.; E. NIELSEN, *Shechem*, Copenhagen 1955, p. 167; W. HARRELSON, B. ANDERSON, and G. E. WRIGHT, „Shechem, ‘Navel of the Land’”, *BA*. XX, 1957, p. 2. However, the expression may refer to „the navel of the earth” or to „the center of the land”. Cf. G. F. MOORE, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges*, 2nd ed., Edinburgh 1908, pp. 260, 262; J.-M. LAGRANGE, *Le livre des Juges*, Paris 1903, pp. 175 f.; C. F. BURNEY, *The Book of Judges*, London 1918, p. 283; H. W. HERTZBERG, *Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth*, Göttingen 1953, p. 206; E. TÄUBLER, *Biblische Studien: die Epoche der Richter*, Tübingen 1958, p. 153, note 1; J. GRAY, *Josua, Judges and Ruth*, London 1967, p. 324; it is not likely that the rendering should be „the center of the land” in the sense of the meeting place of the north-south and east-west roads (GRAY) since such a spot would have to be in the valley. More probably, the term alludes to the cosmic significance which was attached to a mountain, possibly Mt. Gerizim (HERTZBERG).

<sup>5)</sup> B. S. CHILDS, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, London 1960, pp. 83-93.

religion no mention whatever or at best only scant attention<sup>1)</sup>.

In all probability, the myth of the navel of the earth, far from being an incidental aspect of worship at the temple of Jerusalem, constitutes in effect the determining factor which links together a number of its cultic practices and beliefs that otherwise appear to be unrelated.

Following the work of W. H. ROSCHER, A. J. WENSINCK, H. GRESSMANN, K. L. SCHMIDT, A. LAUHA, O. EISSFELDT, and others<sup>2)</sup>, Brevard CHILDS has shown that, according to the biblical traditions, the sacred space of the Jerusalem temple is set apart from all other spaces of the earth, not only because Yahweh has chosen Zion as his *menubab*, his "resting place"<sup>3)</sup>, but also because the Judahites have adopted from the Canaanites of ancient Jebus the belief that the site of Zion was related to the navel of the earth. Solomon's temple is built on a rock<sup>4)</sup> which is the earth-center, the world mountain, the foundation stone of creation, the extremity of the umbilical cord which provides a link between heaven, earth, and the underworld<sup>5)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> R. E. CLEMENTS, *God and Temple*, Philadelphia 1965, p. 62; H.-J. Kraus, *Worship in Israel*, tr. by G. BUSWELL, Richmond 1965, pp. 201 ff.; G. VON RAD, *Old Testament Theology*, II, tr. by D. M. G. STALKER, New York 1965, pp. 345 f.; H. RINGGREN, *Israelite Religion*, tr. D. E. Green, Philadelphia 1966, p. 161; H. H. ROWLEY, *Worship in Ancient Israel*, Philadelphia 1967, pp. 76 ff.

<sup>2)</sup> Cf. *supra* p. 315 notes 2s; also H. GRESSMANN, *The Tower of Babel*, New York 1928, pp. 56 ff.; A. LAUHA, *Zaphon, der Norden und die Nordvölker im Alten Testament*, Helsinki 1943; O. EISSFELDT, *Baal Zaphon, Zeus Kasios und der Durchzug der Israeliten durchs Meer*, Halle 1932, p. 5 ff.; Ch. VIROLLEAUD, "La montagne du Nord dans les poèmes de Ras Shamra", *Babyloniaca* XVII, 1937, pp. 145-55; W. F. ALBRIGHT, "Baal-Zaphon", *Festschrift A. Bertholet*, Tübingen 1950, pp. 1-14; K. L. SCHMIDT, "Jerusalem als Urbild und Abbild", *Eranos Jahrbuch* XVIII, 1949, J. DE SAVIGNAC, "Note sur le sens du terme SÂPHÛN dans quelques passages de la Bible", *VT*, III, 1953, pp. 95 ff.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. Ps. CXXXII 14; B. S. CHILDS, *Myth and Reality*, p. 85; see also H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, Neukirchen 1960, bibliog. cited on p. 876; also E. NIELSEN, "Some Reflections on the History of the Ark", *Suppl. to VT* VII, 1959, pp. 66 f.; J. SCHREINER, *Sion-Jerusalem: Jahwes Königssitz* (München 1963), pp. 47-56.

<sup>4)</sup> H. SCHMIDT, *Der Heilige Fels in Jerusalem*, Tübingen 1933, pp. 7 ff., 40 ff.; K. MÖHLENBRINK, *Der Tempel Salomos* (Stuttgart, 1932, pp. 36 ff.; H. W. HERTZBERG, "Der heilige Fels und das Alte Testament," *JPOS*, XII, 1932, pp. 32 ff.; M. BUBER, *Israel und Palästina*, Zürich 1950, pp. 50 ff.; J. SIMONS, *Jerusalem in the Old Testament*, Leiden 1952, pp. 381 ff.; H.-L. VINCENT et A.-M. STÈVE, *Jérusalem de l'Ancien Testament*, Paris 1956, pp. 526 ff.; R. de VAUX, *Ancient Israel: its Life and Institutions*, tr. by J. McHugh, New York 1961, pp. 318 ff.; H.-J. KRAUS, *Worship in Israel*, tr. by G. BUSWELL, Richmond 1965, pp. 201 f.; R. E. CLEMENTS, *God and Temple*, Philadelphia 1965, p. 49, n. 1; H. H. ROWLEY, *Worship in Ancient Israel*, Philadelphia 1967, p. 76.

<sup>5)</sup> Since beliefs in the cosmic navel not only point to the spatial relationship of heaven, earth and abyss, but also use the biological function of the umbilical

It therefore becomes associated with the cosmic tree,<sup>1)</sup> the garden

cord as a mythopoetic expression, both temporal and spatial, of the spot where the foundation of the earth began (cf. HARRISON, ROSCHER, WENSINCK, *et al.*), it is significant to observe that the verb *qanab* means „to own”, „to possess”, as well as „to create” in the sense of „procreate”, especially in the expression *qoneb shamayim wa'ares*, „maker of heaven and earth” (Gen. xiv 19, 21; cf. P. HUMBERT, „*Qana en hébreu biblique*”, *Festschrift für A. Bertholet*, 1950, p. 259 ff.; reprinted in *Opuscles d'un hébraïsant*, Neuchâtel 1958, pp. 166 ff.; see especially pp. 173 f.). The presence of such an expression in a tradition which has been associated to Jerusalem is probably more than coincidental if the omphalos myth existed in Canaanite Jebus long before the Davidic conquest. As it is well known, the Jerusalem priesthood inherited traditions and practices from the pre-Davidic shrine. See H. S. NYBERG, „Studien zum Religionskampf im Alten Testament. I. Der Gott Al: Belege und Bedeutung des Namens”, *ARW.* XXV, 1938, pp. 351, 363 f.; G. VON RAD, *Genesis*, 1949; tr. by J. H. MARKS, Philadelphia 1961, p. 174 ff.; H. SCHMIDT, „Jahwe und die Kulturtraditionen von Jerusalem”, *ZAW.* LXVII, 1955, pp. 168 ff.; G. WIDENGREN, *Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und in Judentum*, Stuttgart 1955, p. 11; A. R. JOHNSON, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff 1955, pp. 42 ff.

The omphalos myth appears in the background of „the Chedorlaomer texts” where „Babylon, the bond of heaven [and earth], which is founded toward the four winds”, receives its punishment from Marduk; M. C. ASTOUR, „Political and Cosmic Symbolism in Genesis 14 and its Babylonian Sources”, A. ALTMANN, ed., *Biblical Motifs*, Cambridge, Mass., 1966, pp. 65 ff. While the midrash of Gen. xiv is late (sixth cent. B. C.), the poetic blessing of Melchisedek (Gen. xiv 18-20) may rest on an ancient oral tradition. Cf. S. LANDERSDORFER, „Das Priesterkönigtum von Salem”, *JSOR.* IX, 1925, pp. 203-16; W. F. ALBRIGHT, „The Historical Background of Genesis XIV”, *JSOR.* X, 1926, pp. 231-69; „A Third Revision of the Early Chronology of Western Asia”, *BASOR.*, 88 Dec. 1942, pp. 33 f.; *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, Garden City, N.Y., 1968, p. 51 f.; J. H. KROEZE, *Genesis Veertien*, Hilversum 1937, pp. 133 f.; R. RENDTORFF, „El Ba'al und Jahwe”, *ZAW.* LXXVIII, 1966, p. 279.

In its aspect of umbilical cord between „heaven and earth”, the omphalos myth may also explain the use of these words as divine epithets in a seventh-century B.C. Aramaic papyrus (A. DUPONT-SOMMER, „Un papyrus araméen d'époque saïte. . .”, *Semitica* I, 1948, pp. 44, 47; H. L. GINSBERG, „An Aramaic Contemporary of the Lachish Letters”, *BASOR* III, Oct. 1948, p. 24 ff. and several Akkadian documents (K. Tallquist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta*, Helsinki 1938, pp. 54, 64, 69, 71, 366; cf. F. M. CROSS, JR., „Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs”, *HTR.* LV, 1962, pp. 241, 243 f.).

The late tradition and the modern conjecture which relate Salem not to Jebus but to Shechem (R. H. SMITH, „Abram and Melchizedek”, *ZAW.* LXXVII, 1965, pp. 129 ff., especially pp. 149 ff.) is significant, since both sites are related to the omphalos myth.

<sup>1)</sup> A. JEREMIAS, „Die Bäume im biblischen Paradies”, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients*, 1906; 4th ed., Leipzig 1939, pp. 86 ff.; A. J. WENSINCK, *Tree and Bird as Cosmological Symbols in Western Asia*, Amsterdam 1921, pp. 25 ff.; Ch. PICARD, *Ephèse et Claros*, Paris 1922, pp. 499 ff.; A. BROCK-UTNE, *Der Gottesgarten: Eine vergleichende religionsgeschichtliche Studie*, Oslo 1936, pp. 36 ff.; REISNER, *Der Baum des Lebens: eine Ausdeutung von Gen. 2, 8-3, 24*, Berlin 1937; H. G. MAY, „The Sacred Tree on Palestine Painted Pottery”, *JAOS.* LIX, 1939, pp. 251-59; M. ELIADE, *Le Chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase*, Paris

of Eden<sup>1)</sup>, and, at a later time, with the new Paradise, the heavenly Jerusalem<sup>2)</sup>. These beliefs do not receive an explicit formulation in the early traditions concerning the building of the temple<sup>3)</sup>, but the allusions found in the pre-exilic psalms and prophets, Ezekiel, and his post-exilic successors<sup>4)</sup> clearly indicate that the acceptance of the omphalos myth, in a modified form, antedates by centuries the

1951, pp. 244 ff.; *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, New York 1958, pp. 270 ff.; *Images et Symboles*, Paris 1952, pp. 55 ff., 213 ff.; "Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism", in *The History of Religions*, ed. by M. ELIADE and J. M. KITAGAWA, Chicago 1959, pp. 93 ff., 106.

<sup>1)</sup> H. GUNKEL, *Genesis*, Göttingen 1910, pp. 7 ff.; J. SKINNER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (Edinburgh 1910, pp. 57 ff.; W. F. ALBRIGHT, "The Mouth of the Rivers", *AJSL*, XXXV, 1918-19, pp. 161 ff.; "The Goddess of Life and Wisdom", *id.* XXXVI, 1919-20, pp. 262; Th. C. VRIEZEN, *Onderzoek naar de Paradijsvoorstelling bij de oude Semietische Volken*, Wageningen 1937, pp. 51 ff., 79 ff.; P. HUMBERT, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, Neuchâtel 1940, pp. 19 ff.; J. COPPENS, *La connaissance du bien et du mal et le péché du paradis*, Bruges-Paris, pp. 49 ff.; G. WIDENGREN, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion*, Uppsala 1951; G. VON RAD, *Genesis*, 1956, tr. by J. H. MARKS, Philadelphia 1961, pp. 76 ff.; U. CASSUTO, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, tr. I. ABRAHAMS, I, Jerusalem 1961, pp. 109 ff.

<sup>2)</sup> A. CAUSSE, "Le mythe de la nouvelle Jérusalem du Deutéro-Esaïe à la IIIe Sibylle", *RHPR*, XVIII, 1938, pp. 377 ff.; G. VON RAD, "The City on the Hill", 1949, reprinted in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, tr. by E. W. Trueman Dicken, Edinburgh 1965, pp. 232 ff.; "The Prophecies of the New Jerusalem". *Old Testament Theology*, II, tr. by D. M. G. STALKER, New York 1965, pp. 292 ff.; N. W. PORTEOUS, "Jerusalem-Zion: The Growth of a Symbol", *Verbannung und Heimkehr, Festschrift W. Rudolph*, ed. by A. KUSCHKE, Tübingen 1961, pp. 235 ff.; R. de VAUX, "Jérusalem et les prophètes", *RB*, LXXIII, 1966, pp. 494 ff.; see also KRAUS, *Worship in Israel*, pp. 208 ff.; ROWLEY, *Worship in Ancient Israel*, pp. 71 ff.

<sup>3)</sup> 1 Kgs. vi 2-10, 14-36. While the interpretation of the words *hallônê sb'qubbtm 'atumim* (vs. 4), *yasi<sup>a</sup>c* and *š'la'ôtb* (vs. 5) is uncertain, they probably indicate, together with the carved decoration (vs. 18; cf. 2 Chr. iii 5; 1 Kgs. vii 15 ff.), that Solomon's temple was intended to include rituals of a sexual character. Even if the etymological connection between *yasi<sup>a</sup>c*, "gallery" and *yasu<sup>a</sup>c*, "couch, bed", is open to debate, the semantic association between the two words could hardly escape the attention of the popular mind (Gen. xlix 4; Job v 1; etc.). Cf. J. A. MONTGOMERY, *The Book of Kings*, New York 1951, pp. 148 ff.; MÖHLENBRINK, *op. cit.*, pp. 141 ff.; G. E. WRIGHT, *Biblical Archaeology*, Philadelphia 1957, pp. 140 ff.; J. GRAY, *I & II Kings*, Philadelphia 1963, pp. 154 ff.; M. NOTH, *Könige*, I, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1964, pp. 111 ff.

<sup>4)</sup> Pss. xlviii 3; lxxiv 12 (?); cxxxii 13 ff.; Isa. ii 2 ff.; xi 6 ff.; xiv 13; xxxii 15 ff.; liv 11 ff.; lxxv 17.; Ezek. v 5; xxviii 13 ff.; xxxviii 12; xl 1-4; xlvii 1 f.; Joel iv 18 f.; J. SCHREINER, *Sion-Jerusalem, Jahwes Königssitz; Theologie der heiligen Stadt im Alten Testament*, München 1963, pp. 47 ff.; 243 ff., 279 ff.; M. DAHOOD, *Psalms I*, Garden City, N.Y., 1966, pp. 142 f., 290; *Psalms II*, 1958, pp. 204. H.-M. LUTZ, *Jahwe, Jerusalem und die Völker: Zur Vorgeschichte von Sach 12, 1-8 und 14. 1-5* (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1968), pp. 177 ff.

testimony of the Chronicler <sup>1)</sup>, the post-canonical Jewish literature <sup>2)</sup>, the New Testament <sup>3)</sup> and Christian folklore <sup>4)</sup>.

## I

In addition to the motifs which have been hitherto pointed out, one may add a number of features which are found at Jerusalem as well as in Delphi <sup>5)</sup> and at other shrines claiming an earth-navel situation: snake-worship, chthonian rites, the solar cult, male prostitution and bisexuality.

1. In the *first* place, although we have no explicit information to the effect that the Bronze Serpent, Nehushtan, which Hezekiah destroyed (II Kings xviii 4), was already in Jerusalem when David's men captured the Canaanite stronghold, we have the right to assume, after the argumentation of H. H. ROWLEY, that this cultic object belonged to the Jebusite shrine in pre-Davidic times <sup>6)</sup>, that the Jebusite priest, Zadok, was in some way related to an ophidian ritual <sup>7)</sup>, and

<sup>1)</sup> 1 Chr. xxi 18; 2 Chr. vii 1 ff.; cf. 2 Chr. iii 1 and Gen xxii 2, 14.

<sup>2)</sup> Tob. xiii 16 ff.; Jub. viii 19 ("Mount Zion, the center of the navel of the earth"); Ethiopic (1) Enoch xc 28 f.; Test. of Dan v 12 f.; Sib. Or. V, 420 ff.; 2 Bar. iv 2-6; 4 Ezra vii 26; x 54 ff.; cf. interpolation (?) in xiii 36; for the Qumran references to the Heavenly Jerusalem, see B. GÄRTNER, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament*, Cambridge 1965, pp. 20, 63 f.; 70, 90, 93, 97 ff. For the rabbinic texts, see R. PATAI, "Temple and Creation Myths", *Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual*, New York 1967, pp. 54-104; "Symbolism and Function of the Temple", *id.*, pp. 105-39.

<sup>3)</sup> Gal. iv 21 ff.; Phil. iii 20; Rev. xiv 1; xxi 2 ff.; cf. K. L. SCHMIDT, "Jerusalem als Urbild und Abbild", *Eranos-Jahrbuch XIX*, Zürich 1950, pp. 207 ff.

<sup>4)</sup> G. KLAMETH, *Die neutestamentlichen Lokaltraditionen Palästinas I*, Munich 1914, pp. 88 ff.; J. JEREMIAS, "Die Erdenmitte", *Golgotha*, Leipzig 1926, pp. 40 f.; "Der Omphalos der Grabeskirche", *id.*, pp. 42 f.; C. KOPP, *The Holy Places of the Gospels*, tr. by R. WALLS, New York 1963, pp. 382 ff.

<sup>5)</sup> It is not suggested that direct contacts existed between Jerusalem and Delphi. Rather, one may entertain the possibility of their distinct, separated and common ancestry in the Phoenician cultus of the Second Millennium B.C. Some of the parallels observed by C. H. GORDON between Ugarit and the Aegean world may not be lightly dismissed. See C. H. GORDON, *Before the Bible, The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilization*, New York 1962, pp. 128 ff. The conjecture of a Scythian origin for practises and beliefs which appear at Jerusalem, Delphi, and Tara in Ireland, remains outside the limits of this inquiry. Cf. G. W. ELDERKIN, *Related Religious Ideas of Delphi, Tara and Jerusalem: A Study of the Dionysiac Tradition*, Springfield, Mass., 1961, especially pp. 101 ff.

<sup>6)</sup> H. H. ROWLEY, "Zadok and Nehushtan", *JBL*, LVIII, 1939, pp. 134 ff.; "Melchizedek and Zadok (Gen. 14 and Ps. 110)", *Festschrift für A. Bertholet*, 1950, p. 466; W. S. McCULLOUGH, "Serpent", *IDB*, IV, 1962, pp. 289-91; G. A. BARROIS, "Serpent's Stone", *id.*, p. 291.

<sup>7)</sup> The arguments in favor of Zadok's relationship to the sanctuary of Gibeon are not decisive, although Jebus and Gibeon may well have shared cultic per-

that such a ritual, in turn, points to the worship of the telluric aspect of the *Magna Mater* <sup>1)</sup>. Representations of serpents appear together with those of the goddess Ashera at Ugarit, at Bethshan, possibly at Beit Mirsim, at Hazor, and at many other places of Syria and Palestine <sup>2)</sup>. The *seraphim* of Isaiah's inaugural vision in the Jerusalem temple were probably "winged serpents" <sup>3)</sup>, which may reflect Egyptian rather than Canaanite mythology, as Karen Joines has recently suggested <sup>4)</sup>. Even if this is the case, however, the Egyptian cobra or uraeus is related to the underworld, and when it is endowed with hands, or feet as the Isaianic *saraph* appears to be (vi 6), it also bears a human face with feminine features which point to its connection not with a god but with a goddess <sup>5)</sup>.

The representations of the omphalos at Delphi and elsewhere, which appear to have been associated from the earliest times with Gaea, the *Magna Mater* in her chthonian aspect, always include images

sonnel. Cf. E. AUERBACH, "Die Herkunft der Sadokiden", *ZAW*. XLIX, 1931, pp. 327 ff.; H. S. NYBERG, "Studien zum Religionskampf im Alten Testament", *ARW*. XXXV, 1938, pp. 421 ff.; O. EISSFELDT, "Silo und Jerusalem", *Suppl. VT*. VI, *Congrès, Strasbourg*, 1956, Leiden 1957, pp. 138 ff.; reprinted in *Kleine Schriften*. IV, Tübingen 1966, p. 138 ff.; H. G. JUDGE, "Aaron, Zadok and Abiathar", *JTS*. VII, 1956, pp. 70 ff.; R. W. CORNEY, "Zadok the Priest", *IDB*. IV, pp. 928 f.; W. SCHOTTROFF, "Zadok", *RGG*. VI, 1962, col. 1860; J. MAUCLINE, "Aaronite and Zadokite Priests: Some Reflections on an Old Problem", *TGUOS*. XXI, 1965-66, pp. 1 ff.; R. E. CLEMENTS, *Prophecy and Covenant*, London 1965, pp. 59 f; 91 f.

<sup>1)</sup> W. W. Graf von BAUDISSIN, *Studien zur semitische Religionsgeschichte* I, Leipzig 1878, pp. 255 f.; E. ROHDE, *Psyche*, pp. 99, 111, note 33; J. E. HARRISON, "Delphika", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* XIX, 1899, pp. 216 f.; fig. 2 ff.; E. KÜSTER, *Die Schlange in der griechischen Kunst und Religion*, Giessen 1913, pp. 69 ff., 85 ff., 124. W. H. ROSCHER, *Neue Omphalosstudien*, Leipzig 1915, p. 60; A. J. WENSINCK, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth*, Amsterdam 1916, pp. 60, 63, 65; W. F. ALBRIGHT, "The Goddess of Life and Wisdom", *AJSL*. XXXVI, 1919-20, pp. 271 ff.; A. BROCK-UTNE, *Der Gottesgarten*, Oslo 1936, pp. 39 ff.; E. NEUMANN, *The Great Mother*, tr. by R. MANHEIM, New York 1955, pp. 143 ff.; figs. 27 ff.; M. ELIADE, "Mother Earth and the Cosmic Hierogamies", *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, tr. by P. MAIRET, New York 1960 f.; J. COPPENS, "Le serpent, symbole des divinités chtoniennes", *La connaissance. . .*, pp. 99 ff., 111; U. CASSUTO, *Genesis* I, pp. 138 ff.

<sup>2)</sup> J. PEDERSEN, *Israel, Its Life and Culture*, III-IV, London-Copenhagen 1940), pp. 711 f., note on p. 452; J. GRAY, *I & II Kings*, pp. 608, 9.

<sup>3)</sup> Is. vi 2; cf. xiv 29; xxx 6; Deut. viii 15.

<sup>4)</sup> K. R. JOINES, "Winged Serpents in Isaiah's Inaugural Vision", *JBL* LXXXVI, 1967, pp. 410 ff.; cf. J. MORGENSTERN, "On Gilgamesh-Epic, XI, 274-320: A Contribution to the Study of the Role of the Serpent in Semitic Mythology", *ZA*. XXIX, 1915, pp. 284 ff.; W. C. GRAHAM and H. G. MAY, *Culture and Conscience*, Chicago 1936, pp. 81 ff.

<sup>5)</sup> K. R. JOINES "Winged Serpents. . ." pp. 409, 415.



or symbols of the serpent <sup>1)</sup>. The Earth Goddess of the Eastern Mediterranean cultures is a Snake Deity, from the early Creto-Minoan times, down to the Ophite sects in pre-Christian and Christian gnosticism <sup>2)</sup>. It is therefore likely that the presence of Nehushtan in the Jerusalem temple indicates that the omphalos myth was alive among the Jebusites before the Davidic and Solomonic era.

2. In the *second* place, the meaning of the word *debir*, used in the early sources of Kings to designate the innermost room of Solomon's temple (I Kgs. vi 5), probably derives from an Egyptian word for "back room," which is also found in Arabic, rather than from the West-Semitic root *d.b.r.*, "to speak, to act," a traditional derivation from which arose the rendering „oracle" <sup>3)</sup>. Hence, it is not possible to affirm that the most sacred spot in Solomon's temple was specifically designed for chthonian divination. Nevertheless, if one admits with H. SCHMIDT and R. de VAUX <sup>4)</sup> that this innermost room, rather than the outside altar, rested on the original sacred rock, we are able to discern how this dark place could be directly related to the belief of „the foundation stone," which already in the time of Isaiah connoted the idea of the underworld <sup>5)</sup>, and indeed came to symbolize the

<sup>1)</sup> J. HARRISON, *Themis*, pp. 384, 399 f., 402 f.; P. AMANDRY, "L'oracle de la terre", *La mantique apollinienne à Delphes*, Paris 1950, pp. 200 ff.; J. DEFRADAS, *L'oracle de Delphes*, Paris 1955, pp. 89, 130, 137 ff.; M. ELIADE, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, p. 169, cf. A. DIETERICH, *Mutter Erde: ein Versuch über Volksreligion*, Leipzig 1925, p. 160; the warnings of O. PETERSON, *Mother Earth. An Analysis of the Mother Earth Concepts According to Albrecht Dieterich*, Lund 1967, *passim*, apply to later cults in the Mediterranean world rather than to the Semitic religions of the Near East.

<sup>2)</sup> E. O. JAMES, *The Cult of the Mother-Goddess*, London 1959, pp. 129 ff.; cf. 193 f.; H. LEISEGANG, "The Mystery of the Serpent", *The Mysteries: Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, xi: 1944, (Bollingen Series, XXX, 2, New York 1955, pp. 195, 208 f., 248.

<sup>3)</sup> Cf. K. GALLING, "Das Allerheiligste in Salomos Tempel", *JPOS.* 1932, pp. 43 ff.; J. MONTGOMERY, *The Book of Kings*, New York 1951, pp. 141 f., 154; G. E. WRIGHT, *Biblical Archaeology*, Philadelphia 1957, p. 138; W. F. STINESPRING, "Temple, Jerusalem", *IDB.* IV, 1962, p. 536; H. RINGGREN, *Israelite Religion*, p. 159; J. GRAY, *I & II Kings*, pp. 159 f.; J. BARR, *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, London 1961, pp. 136 f.; H. SCHULT, "Der *Debir* im solomonischen Tempel", *ZDPV.* LXXX, 1964, pp. 46-54; M. NOTH, *Könige*, I, pp. 99 f.

<sup>4)</sup> H. SCHMIDT, *Der heilige Fels in Jerusalem*, Tübingen 1933, pp. 40 f.; cf. 101 R. de VAUX, *Ancient Israel, Its Life and Institutions*, tr. by J. McHUGH, New York 1961, pp. 318 ff.; "Notes sur le temple de Salomon", *Bible et Orient*, Paris 1967, pp. 207 f.

<sup>5)</sup> Isa. xxviii 16; cf. vss. 15 and 18; cf. also xxix 1-4 in which the city is called "Ariel". This name is derived probably from a West-Semitic word related to the Akkadian *Arallu* or *Arallu*, connecting the mountain of the gods and the underworld: W. F. ALBRIGHT, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, pp. 151-2; N.

lid which covers the mythical access to the subterranean abyss<sup>1</sup>). The Sea of Bronze, outside the edifice, was considerable in its size and weight, as well as extremely complex and expensive in its manufacturing and installation<sup>2</sup>). We have therefore the right to assume that Solomon shared with his Canaanite architects and technicians a belief in the urgency of its cultic function. The cosmic significance of the Sea of Bronze and especially its mythical association with the *tehom* are now generally recognized<sup>3</sup>). Similar considerations apply probably to the great altar<sup>4</sup>).

Now, one of the chief characteristics of the omphalos myth is precisely that it points not only to the sacred space which unites earth to heaven, but also and especially that it recalls hieratically the

RHODOKANAKIS, "Omphalos und Ewen Sepia", *Wörter und Sachen* V, 1913, p. 198 ff.; E. BURROWS, "Some Cosmological Patterns in Babylonian Religion", *The Labyrinth*, ed. by S. H. HOOKE, London 1935, p. 45; J. LINDBLOM, "Der Eckstein in Jes. 28, 16", *Interpretationes ad V.T.*, *Festschrift S. Mcwinckel*, 1955, p. 23 ff.

<sup>1</sup>) R. PATAI, *op. cit.*, p. 57 f.

<sup>2</sup>) Although the significance of the Molten Sea is not indicated in 1 Kgs. vii 23 ff., one finds it hard to believe that its purpose was merely "for the priests to wash in" (2 Chr. iv 6). In all probability, the manufacture, transportation, installation, and cost of a cultic object of such dimensions pointed to more than a utilitarian usage. Its very name, *Hayyam*, "the Sea", could not fail to elicit in the mind of those who heard or pronounced the word an association with the myth of the cosmic waters. See A. JEREMIAS, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients*, 1906; 4th ed., Leipzig 1930, pp. 494 ff.; W. F. ALBRIGHT, "Gilgames and Engidu, Mesopotamian Genii of Fecundity", *JAOS.* XL, 1920, pp. 316 f.; C. C. WYLIE, "On King Solomon's Molten Sea", *B.A.* XII, 1949, pp. 86 f.; G. BAGNANI, "The Molten Sea of Solomon's Temple", in W. S. McCULLOUGH, ed., *The Seed of Wisdom*, [*Festschrift T. J. Meeke*], Toronto 1964, pp. 116 ff.; J. GRAY, *I & II Kings*, Philadelphia 1963, pp. 176 f.; M. NOTH *Könige I*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1967, pp. 161 f.; cf. Ph. REYMOND, *L'eau, sa vie, et sa signification dans l'Ancien Testament*, *Suppl. to VT.*, Leiden 1958, p. 226.

<sup>3</sup>) G. E. WRIGHT, "Solomon's Temple Resurrected", *B.A.* IV, 1941, p. 24; *Biblical Archaeology*, Philadelphia 1957, pp. 139 f.; W. F. ALBRIGHT, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, pp. 148 ff.; E. L. EHRLICH, *Kultsymbolik im Alten Testament und im nachbiblischen Judentum*, Stuttgart 1959, p. 24. Attention has been especially called to the reservoirs or tanks called *apsu* in Mesopotamian shrines. See G. WIDENGREN, "Aspetti simbolici dei templi e luoghi di culto del vicino Oriente antico", *Numen* VII, 1960, pp. 15 ff.; R. de VAUX, *Ancient Israel*, p. 319; H. Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, p. 161.

<sup>4</sup>) The *ktyôr*, "platform" (2 Chr. vi 12 f.) on which the officiating priest or king stood in front of the altar may have been associated to the Sumerian *ki-ur*, "foundation of the earth" (W. F. ALBRIGHT, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, pp. 150 ff.). Cf. "the bosom of the earth" (Ezek. xliii 13-17; W. F. ALBRIGHT, "The Babylonian Temple-Tower and the Altar of Burnt-Offering", *JBL.* XXXIX, 1920, pp. 137 ff. A rabbinic tradition links the altar to the *Tehom* (Sukka 49, 53a; cf. A. J. WENSINCK, *The Navel of the Earth*, pp. 25 ff.

proximity of the primeval rivers. Without referring to the belief in the navel of the earth, W. F. ALBRIGHT has shown years ago the several affinities which relate the mythical picture of the mouth of the rivers with the Semitic Earth Mother <sup>1)</sup>. The connection of the Delphic omphalos with the snake on the one hand and with chthonian oracular practices on the other <sup>2)</sup>, offers a striking parallel to the association of the Jerusalem temple with the underworld, the abyss and the myth of the Edenic rivers.

3. In the *third* place, traces of sun worship in the temple of Jerusalem have been detected and presented in detail, especially by J. MORGENSTERN, H. G. MAY, and others <sup>3)</sup>. Without going as far as F. J. HOLLIS <sup>4)</sup>, we may discern the main elements of solar worship in the architectural plan of Solomon's temple, its structure, its orientation, its topographic relation to the Mount of Olives, its decoration, its cultic objects, and also, although indirectly, in the polemic form of the dedication formula <sup>5)</sup>. It was not through a perversion of original intent but in conformity to conscious and avowed purpose that the "horses of the sun" stood in the sanctuary precincts at the time of Josiah <sup>6)</sup> and that rituals of the solar cultus were performed in the

<sup>1)</sup> W. F. ALBRIGHT, "The Mouth of the Rivers", *AJSL*. XXXV, 1918-19, pp. 161 ff.; especially p. 167, note 2.

<sup>2)</sup> J. HARRISON, *Themis*, pp. 384, 399 ff., 402, fig. 113, 403, fig. 114; A. J. WENSINCK, *The Navel of the Earth*, pp. 60 ff.; P. AMANDRY, *La mantique apollinienne* . . . , pp. 201 f.; J. DEFRADES, *Les thèmes de la propagande delphique*, pp. 90, 96 f., 106, 114; M. DELCOURT, *L'oracle de Delphes*, p. 139; H. W. PARKE and D. E. W. WORMELL, *The Delphic Oracle I*, pp. 7 f.; G. W. ELDERKIN, *Related Religious Ideas of Delphi, Tara and Jerusalem: A Study of the Dionysiac Tradition*, Springfield, Mass., 1961, p. 29.

<sup>3)</sup> J. MORGENSTERN, "The Gates of Righteousness", *HUCA*. VI, 1929, pp. 17 ff.; "The King-God Among the Western Semites and the Meaning of Epiphanes", *VT*. X, 1960, pp. 165 ff.; 176 ff.; H. G. MAY, "Some Aspects of Solar Worship at Jerusalem", *ZAW*. LV, 1937, pp. 269 ff.; cf. A. R. JOHNSON, "The Role of the King in the Jerusalem Cultus", *The Labyrinth* . . . , pp. 83, 96, 100, who suggests a relation between El Elyon, the Canaanite deity of Jebus, and sun-worship.

<sup>4)</sup> F. J. HOLLIS, "The Sun-Cult and the Temple at Jerusalem", *Myth and Ritual*, ed. by S. H. HOOKE, Oxford 1933, pp. 132 f.

<sup>5)</sup> 1 Kgs. viii 12-13. Cf. MONTGOMERY, *The Book of Kings*, pp. 189 ff.; GRAY, *I & II Kings*, pp. 195 f.; NOTH, *Könige I*, pp. 181 f. This poem attempts to prevent any confusion between Yahweh and the sun which is thus demythologized in typically Yahwistic fashion (cf. Ps. civ 19). The motif of the 'arappel, "thickdarkness" as well as "storm cloud" (cf. Ugaritic 'rp, Akkadian arpu, and Arabic 'arapha; Hebrew 'arabh, "to drip, to drop") attempts clearly to relate the Canaanite myth of fertility (ALBRIGHT, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, p. 231) to the Yahwistic tradition of the Sinai theophany (Exod. xx 18; cf. NOTH, *Könige I*, p. 182).

<sup>6)</sup> Kgs. xxiii 11; see MONTGOMERY, *Kings*, p. 532 f.; GRAY, *I & II Kings*, p. 670.

courtyard and inside the edifice itself at the time of Ezekiel <sup>1</sup>). Now, the worship of the sun is not as widespread as sometimes believed, but it is always related to both the cult of the *Terra Mater* and the ritual manipulation of chthonian forces <sup>2</sup>). At Delphi, the cult of Gaea, the Earth Mother, which appears to have been associated from the earliest times to the veneration of the navel stone, was transformed in the course of the centuries into the worship of the solar deity, Phoebos. The great Olympian son, Apollo, is often represented not only as riding with his fiery chariot and his elegant equine retinue, but also seated or standing on the omphalos, while holding laurel branch and a lyre <sup>3</sup>). The link between omphalos and sun appears also in many places of the Greek literature, from Euripides to Plutarch <sup>4</sup>). Moreover, the Delphic omphalos received another meaning as it came to be regarded also as the tomb of the dismembered Dionysos, the "son of Semele". Like Apollo, Dionysos appears on the omphalos, holding his thyrsos in his right hand <sup>5</sup>). The solar cycle of seasons evolves around the ancient myth of the center of the earth. We have therefore a legitimate basis for conjecturing that the solar cult, which went on in Jerusalem apparently from the time of the erection of the temple, was associated, like the ophidian worship and the ritual concern for the primeval abyss, the chthonian forces and the garden of Eden, to the myth of the omphalos and the adoration of the *Terra Mater*.

See also the possibility of the solar character of the two pillars (ALBRIGHT, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, pp. 148, 216, note 62; H. G. MAY, "The Two Pillars Before the Temple of Solomon," *BASOR.* 88, Dec. 1942, p. 27.

<sup>1</sup>) Ezek. viii 16 ff.; cf. H. G. MAY, "The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh," *JBL.* LVI, 1937, pp. 314 ff.; W. ZIMMERLI, *Ezekiel*, Neukirchen 1956, pp. 220 ff.

<sup>2</sup>) M. ELIADE, "Solar Cults in the Classical East and the Mediterranean," *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, pp. 141 ff. According to Ezekiel's memory or vision, the rites which were practiced in the Jerusalem temple brought together solar worship with "creeping things" (viii 10, 16 ff.). On the sun and the serpent motifs in general, see H. R. ENGLER, *Die Sonne als Symbol*, Künznacht-Zürich 1962, pp. 135 f., 178.

<sup>3</sup>) J. HARRISON, *Themis*, pp. 99, fig. 16; cf. pp. 406, 409, fig. 122, 428, fig. 128. There seems to have been a natural attraction of the Apollonian cult to the Delphic omphalos, originally related to the worship of the *Terra Mater*. See Ch. PICARD, *Ephèse et Claros*, pp. 110, 463, 494 f.; WENSINCK, *Tree and Bird*, p. 36 f. It is well known that the mantic bird is often represented as a symbol of the sun. See also J. DEPRADAS, "L'installation d'Apollon à Delphes," *Les thèmes de la propagande delphique*, pp. 19 ff.; H. W. PARKE and D. E. W. WORMELL, *The Delphic Oracle I*, pp. 3 ff.; M. DELCOURT, *L'oracle de Delphes*, pp. 31 ff., 144 ff.

<sup>4</sup>) Euripides, *Ion* 5; Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 39; Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 1; Varro, *De lingua latina* vii, 17.

<sup>5</sup>) See a IVth-cent. polychrome vase, Tyskiewicky Collection, Lyons Museum, in HARRISON, *Themis*, pp. 556, fig. 175; cf. p. 557.

4. In the *fourth* place, the presence of male prostitutes, the *qedbeshim*, among the cultic officials of the Jerusalem temple has never been satisfactorily explained, if indeed it is mentioned at all <sup>1)</sup>. The northern kingdom of Israel had apparently its female prostitutes, whether these were cultic or secular, depending on the exact meaning of the words *qedbeshab* and *zonah* in the course of the ages <sup>2)</sup>, but only the *qedbeshim* are mentioned in connection with the cultic personnel of the kingdom of Judah <sup>3)</sup>. The reference to both male and female prostitutes which is found in the Deuteronomic code (xxiii 18) tends merely to confirm the validity of the generally accepted thesis of the northern provenance of such a legislation.

As Joh. PEDERSEN, R. DUSSAUD, W. F. ALBRIGHT, G. W. AHLSTRÖM, A. SOGGIN, and many others have pointed out <sup>4)</sup>, the fertility rites in the Jerusalem temple should be understood not as the

<sup>1)</sup> See R. de VAUX, *Ancient Israel*, p. 384; H. RINGGREN, *Israelite Religion*, pp. 58, 198; but compare H.-J. KRAUS, "The cultic officials," *Worship in Israel*, pp. 93 ff.; H. H. ROWLEY, *Worship in Ancient Israel*, pp. 95 ff.

<sup>2)</sup> H. G. MAY, "The Fertility Cult in Hosca," *AJSL*. XLVIII, 1931, pp. 73 ff.; W. F. GRAHAM and H. G. MAY, *Culture and Conscience*, pp. 94 ff.; B. A. BROOKS, "Fertility Cult Functionaries in the Old Testament," *JBL*. LX, 1941, pp. 236 ff.; cf. the Ugaritian *qdsm*; C. H. GORDON, *Ugaritic Manual*, pp. 113; cf. p. 72 f.; J. GRAY, *The Legacy of Canaan*, p. 44, note 1; J. P. ASMUSSEN, "Bemerkungen zur sakralen Prostitution im Alten Testament," *Studia Theologica* XI, 1957, pp. 176 ff.

<sup>3)</sup> See 1 Kgs. xiv 23 f.; xv 12; xxii 46; 2 Kgs. xxiii 7; also the *me'abebbtm* in Hos. ii 7 ff.; Jer. xxii 20, 22; xxx 14; Ezek. xvi 37 ff.; xxiii 9; Zech. xiii 16; possibly the *nethinim*, "dedicated ones" (1 Chr. ix 2; Ezra ii 58; etc.; cf. the Ugaritian *ytnm* (C. H. GORDON, *Ugaritic Manual*, pp. 301 and 237; J. GRAY, *The Legacy of Canaan*, p. 158; 2nd ed., 1965, p. 215).

To be sure, the name did not designate male prostitutes in the second temple, but it is probable that the origin of such functionaries went back to Solomon and to the sexual aspect of the Jerusalem temple cultus before the exile. It is significant that Josephus translated the word by *ιερόδουλοι*. Cf. B. A. BROOKS, "Fertility Cult Functionaries . . .," p. 233; G. HENTON DAVIES, "Nethinim," *IDB*. III, p. 541; O. BAAB, "Prostitution," *IDB*. III, p. 931 f.; M. HARAN, "The Gibeonites, the Nethinim and the Sons of Solomon's Servants," *VT*. XI, 1961, p. 165, note 1; 167, notes 1, 3. At Delphi, youths could be dedicated or "tithed" to the Pythian Apollo; H. W. PARKE, "Consecration to Apollo," *Hermathena*, LXXII 1948, 87 f.

<sup>4)</sup> J. PEDERSEN, *Israel* . . ., IV-IV, pp. 166, 418 ff.; 471 ff.; 572, 577, 583, 742 ff.; R. DUSSAUD, *Les origines cananéennes du sacrifice israélite*, Paris, 1941, pp. 15 f.; W. F. ALBRIGHT, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, pp. 158 ff., 165; J. A. SOGGIN, "Der Offizial geförderte Synkretismus des 10. Jahrhunderts," *ZAW*. LXXVIII, 1966, pp. 179 ff., 188 ff.; *Das Königtum in Israel*, Berlin, 1967. See also, *inter al.*, M. BURROWS, "Syncretism in the Old Testament," *JBR*. IX, 1941, pp. 11 ff.; H. S. NYBERG, "Studien zum Religionskampf im Alten Testament," *ARW*. XXXV-XXXVIII, 1938, pp. 367 ff.; J. GRAY, "Cultic Affinities Between Israel and Ras Shamra," *ZAW*. LXII, 1949-50, pp. 207 ff.; *The Legacy of Canaan*, Leiden 1957, pp. 18 ff.; T. WORDEN, "The Influence of the Ugaritic Fertility Myth on the Old Testament," *VT*. III, 1953, pp. 273 ff.; S. YEIVIN, "Social, Religious and

result of a popular corruption that was brought about by pressure of the masses, but rather as part and parcel of the official religion of the kingdom. The ceremonial of the temple must have been initiated, or at least endorsed and maintained by the near unanimity of the Davidic monarchs for more than three hundred years. If Asa, perhaps Hezekiah, and Josiah, in three widely separated periods of time, succeeded in expelling the *qedeshim* from the Jerusalem sanctuary<sup>1)</sup>, their respective successors, probably in each case their own sons, hastened to return to the cultic *status quo*. We may affirm that normative ceremonial, in the temple of Solomon, ascribed to the male prostitutes a prominent place in the ritual. We have to admit, however, that the theology of male prostitution is far from clear. At Ugarit, in about 1400 B. C., male prostitutes were important enough to be listed in second place before other temple officials and singers<sup>2)</sup>. On the basis of the numerous but elliptical allusions to the *qadshesh* and his cultic confrères in the ancient neareastern literature, such as the *kelebb* or "dog"<sup>3)</sup>, possibly the *garim*, a singular noun meaning *castratus*, according to the suggestion of S. I. FEIGIN<sup>4)</sup>, also the *kulu*, the *kurgaru*, the *assinnu* of the Mesopotamian shrines<sup>5)</sup>, and — at a later

Cultural Trends in Jerusalem under the Davidic Dynasty," *VT.* III, 1953, pp. 150 ff.; J. P. ASMUSSEN, "Bemerkungen zur Sakralen Prostitution im Alten Testament," *Studia Theologica*, X 1957, pp. 117 ff.; S. H. HOOKE, "Myth and Ritual: Past and Present," in *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, pp. 16 ff.; E. O. JAMES, "The Fertility Cults," *Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East*, London, 1958, pp. 63 ff.; *The Cult of the Mother-Goddess*, London 1959, pp. 81 ff.; E. EAKIN, Jr., "Yahwism and Baalism Before the Exile," *JBL.* LXXXIV, 1965, pp. 412; R. RENDTORFF, "El, Ba'al und Jahwe: Erwägungen zum Verhältnis von kanaanäischer und israelitischer Religion," *ZAW.* LXXVIII, 1966, pp. 277 ff.; J. GRAY, "Social Aspects of Canaanite Religion," *Suppl. VT.* XV, Congrès, Genève, 1965; Leiden 1966, pp. 170 ff.

<sup>1)</sup> 1 Kgs. xxii 46; 2 Kgs. xxiii 7; cf. 2 Kgs. xviii 4, which is silent on male prostitutes but mentions the eradication of objects related to the worship of the Mother-Goddess.

<sup>2)</sup> Ch. VIROLLEAUD, "États nominatifs et pièces comptables," *Syria* XVIII, 1937, p. 164; ALBRIGHT, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, p. 159.

<sup>3)</sup> Deut. xxiii 19; Job xxxvi 14; Cf. D. WINTON THOMAS, "Kelebb, 'Dog': Its Origin and Some Usages of It in the Old Testament," *VT.* X, 1960, pp. 410 ff.

<sup>4)</sup> S. I. FEIGIN, K. C. "'Ḥamôr Gârîm', Castrated Ass," *JNES.* VI, 1946, pp. 230-33; "HAGGARÎM, 'The Castrated One'," *HUCA.* XXI, 1948, pp. 355 ff.

<sup>5)</sup> The distinction between the *qedeshim* and the *kemarim* or other *castrati* is not clear. See W. F. ALBRIGHT, "Historical and Mythical Elements in the Story of Joseph: 'The Galli'," *JBL.* XXXVII, 1918, p. 116; "Some Cruces in the Langdon Epic," *JAOS.* XXXIX, 1919, pp. 88 f.; G. DOSSIN, *Archives royales de Mari*, X, Paris 1967, no. 7; *La divination en Mésopotamie et dans les régions voisines*, Paris 1966, p. 82; H. B. HUFFMON, "Prophecy in the Mari Letters," *BA.* XXXI,

age — the *gallus* and the *cinaedus* of Asia Minor and Phoenicia, it may be affirmed that the ritual of male prostitution was one of the most characteristic manifestations of devotion to the *Magna Mater*, the *Earth Mother*<sup>1)</sup>. It is perhaps worth noting that modern psychoanalytical research tends to confirm that male homosexuality appears to be related either to maternal fixation or to the castration fear-and-fascination complex. Conceivably, the function of the male prostitutes in the Jerusalem temple as well as in the other shrines of the Ancient Near East was related to an ecstatic form of divination technique<sup>2)</sup>. One may even go a step farther and suggest that the cherubim, whose precise identification and symbolism have eluded the searching inquiries of such scholars as P. DHORME, W. F. ALBRIGHT, M. HARAN, and R. de VAUX<sup>3)</sup>, may have been sculpted representations of the

---

1968, pp. 111 f.; W. L. MORAN, "New Evidence from Mari on the History of Prophecy," *Biblica* L, 1969, p. 30 and note 2. The *assinnu* may well have obtained his oracular function through sophisticated techniques of sexual trance.

<sup>1)</sup> The association of male prostitution with sun worship on the one hand and with devotion to the *Terra Mater* on the other may be related to the bisexuality of the sun among the various Semitic religions. The female aspect of the solar deity is attested at Ugarit as well as in South Arabia. See A. CAQUOT, "La divinité solaire ougaritique," *Syria* XXXVI, 1959, p. 90, note 1.

<sup>2)</sup> The correspondence of the Hebrew word *Qedeshim* in Jerusalem and of the Greek word *Hosioi* at Delphi may be more than coincidental. It is probable that the Gallois practiced the art of divination through physio-psychological trance, which in turn was related to telluric rites. See H. GRAILLOT, *Le culte de Cybèle*, pp. 307 ff.; Ch. PICARD, *Ephèse and Claros*, pp. 226, 233 f., 555, note 5. While the character and function of the Gallois remain mysterious, those of the *Hosioi* are clearly associated with oracular procedure. The *Hosioi* are, however, distinct from both the *Prophetai* and the *Hieris*: E. W. PARKE, "A Note on the Delphic Priesthood," *Classical Quarterly*, XXXIV 1940, p. 87; M. DELCOURT, *L'oracle de Delphes*, pp. 46 f., 155 f.

<sup>3)</sup> H. SCHMIDT, "Kerubenthron und Lade," *Eucharisterion: Festschrift H. Gunkel*, Göttingen 1923, I, pp. 131 ff., 143 ff.; P. DHORME and H. L. VINCENT, "Les chérubins," *RB.* XXXIII, 1926, pp. 320 ff., 340 ff., 481 ff.; W. F. GRAHAM and H. G. MAY, *Culture and Conscience*, pp. 195 f.; W. F. ALBRIGHT, "What Were the Cherubim?" *BA.* I, 1, Feb. 1938; A. S. KAPLRUD, "The Gates of Hell and the Guardian Angels of Paradise," *JAOS.* LXX, 1950, pp. 151 ff.; M. HARAN, "The Ark and the Cherubim: Their Symbolic Significance in Biblical Ritual," *IEJ.* IX, 1959, pp. 32 ff. 89 ff.; R. de VAUX, "Les chérubins et l'arche d'alliance, les sphinx gardiens et les trônes divins dans l'Ancien Orient," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph*, Beyrouth, XXXVII 1961, pp. 93 ff.; cf. *Bible et Orient* (Paris, 1967), pp. 231 ff.; J. MAIER, *Vom Kultus zur Gnosis*, Salzburg 1964, pp. 69 f.

On several representations found in Syria, animals appear as guardians of the sacred tree. E. de PORADA, "Treize cylindres-sceaux. . ." *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* XXXV, 1938, p. 188, fig. 5.; 189 ff.; A. DESSENE, *Le sphinx, étude iconographique*, I, Paris 1951, p. 181; In Greece, the sphinx appears helmeted and harnessed to a carriage; cf. *id.*, "Le sphinx, d'après l'iconographie jusqu'à

riomorphic and anthropomorphic hybrid creatures which were borrowed from the Phoenician-Canaanite cultus<sup>1)</sup> and were presumably related both to the belief in the omphalos myth with its association to the Magna Mater and to the ritual of cultic male prostitution<sup>2)</sup>. There is no compelling evidence to the effect that the cherubim should be viewed as sphinxes endowed with wings. The representations of the omphalos in Greece, on the one hand, and of the Earth Goddess in the Eastern Mediterranean world, on the other, include again and again the images of pairs or couples of birds, lions, goats, rams, etc., including hybrid combinations of features which are derived from various animal species. The cherubim may well be the attributes of the bisexual character of the type of worship which was associated to the myth of the earth navel<sup>3)</sup>. As it is well known, the

l'archaïsme grec," Colloque de Strasbourg, *Éléments orientaux dans la religion grecque ancienne*, Paris, 1960, pp. 155, 160.

<sup>1)</sup> O. EISSFELDT, "Silo und Jerusalem," *Suppl. to VT.*, IV, Leiden 1957, pp. 15 ff.; R. de VAUX, "Les chérubins. . .," p. 113; G. E. WRIGHT, "Solomon's Temple Resurrected," *BA.* IV, 2, May 1941, p. 26; *Biblical Archaeology*, 138 ff., 147 ff.; J. A. MONTGOMERY, *The Book of Kings*, pp. 155 f., 177 ff.; W. KORNFELD, "Der Symbolismus der Tempelsäulen," *ZAW.* LXXIV, 1962, pp. 50 ff.; R. L. CLEVELAND, "Cherubs and the 'Tree of Life' in Ancient South Arabia," *BASOR.* 172, Dec. 1963, p. 56, fig. 1; NOTH, *Könige*, I, p. 122 f.; R. PATAI, "The Cherubim," *The Hebrew Goddess*, New York 1967, pp. 101 ff., also pp. 88 ff., plates 26 ff., which reproduce ivory sculptures of female winged guardians or possibly androgynous beings. Cf. A. DESSENE, *Le sphinx, étude iconographique*, plates.

<sup>2)</sup> The cherubim were not only the sculpted figures of olive wood which stood in close proximity to the ark (1 Sam. iv 4; 2 Sam. vi 2; 1 Kgs. vi 23 f.; viii 6 f.) but also the carved representations which appeared on the gold-plated (?) cedar wood panelling on the innerwalls of the *bekhal* and on the olive wood doors (1 Kgs. vi 29 f.; 2 Chr. iii 7). They alternated with palm-trees and open flower-calyxes (1 Kgs. vii 29, 31-35; cf. Ezek. xli 18 ff.), symbols which suggested, as much as the bronze pomegranates (1 Kgs. vii 18), the fertility of the *Terra Mater*. The relation of the temple cherubim to those of the garden of Eden (Gen. iii 24) and to the storm-clouds (2 Sam. xxii 11; Ps. viii 11) points to the same aspect of the Canaanite myth and ritual.

<sup>3)</sup> The representations of the Delphic omphalos often included figures of winged humans, youths or boys, flying above a recoiling serpent. Cf. H.-V. HERRMANN, *Omphalos*, Münster, 1959, p. 39, fig. 2; 40, note 106; R. PATAI, "The Cherubim," *The Hebrew Goddess*, pp. 101 ff., 301 ff. The early Sumerians and the Semites tended to conceive the divine power of vegetation as a being of rather indefinite sex, often androgynous; W. F. ALBRIGHT, *JAOS.* XXXIX, 1919, p. 86. The bisexual character of the myth of the union of heaven and earth may help to throw a light on the presence of male prostitutes in the shrines of the Mother Goddess. They wore female dress; W. F. ALBRIGHT, "Historical and Mythical Elements in the Story of Joseph," *JBL.* XXXVII, 1918, p. 116. Cf. the story of Omphale (feminine of Omphalos?), queen of Lydia, who compelled Herakles to dress as a woman; M. DELCOURT, *L'oracle de Delphes*, p. 149; *Hermaphrodite, Mythes et rites de la bisexualité dans l'Antiquité classique*, Paris 1958, pp. 36 ff.;



rabbinical literature has preserved traditions which link the cherubim with the fertility of the earth, and one strange text in the Babylonian Talmud (*Yoma* 54a-b) reads: "Resh Laqish said, When the heathens entered the Temple and saw the cherubim whose bodies were intertwined with one another, they carried them out and said: These Israelites, whose blessing is a blessing and whose curse is a curse, occupy themselves with such things. And immediately they despised them . . ." <sup>1)</sup>

At any rate, we shall observe that the mention of the *qedbeshim* is restricted to the kingdom of Judah, and may well have been related to the ceremonial of Maacah's cultic object, the mysterious *miphleseth* (1 Kings xv 13), which JEROME rendered as *simulacrum Priapi* <sup>2)</sup>. A similar ritual, perhaps performed for the sake of a similar object, may have been meant by Ezekiel when he attacked the practices which were still performed in the temple at the beginning of the sixth century B. C. (Ezek. viii 7-13; cf. xvi 17). In the light of the foregoing discussion, it will not be surprising to note that Ezekiel is associating such ceremonials with ophidian worship (vs. 10) and the rites of the solar cult (vss. 16-18).

In all probability, the office of the *Gebhirah*, or "Queen Mother," which appeared to be peculiar to the kingdom of Judah, had a cultic function which is no longer clear from the present documents. Thanks to the studies of G. MOLIN, H. DONNER, G. W. AHLSTRÖM, and others <sup>3)</sup>, one might suggest that such a function had a role to play

M. ELIADE, "The Divine Androgyny," *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne*, tr. J. M. COHEN, New York 1965, pp. 108 ff. E. WILL, "Aspects du culte et de la légende de la Grande Mère dans le monde grec," Colloque de Strasbourg, *Éléments orientaux dans la religion grecque ancienne*, Paris 1960, pp. 101, 104 f. See also H. A. HOFFNER, Jr., "Symbols for Masculinity and Femininity, their Use in Ancient Near Eastern Sympathetic Magic Rituals," *JBL*. LXXXV, 1966, p. 333, and note 54. Bisexual elements in the ophidian cults may account for the part played in Egypt by the falcon-god, Seth, defeating the snake. See relief from the temple of Amon at Hibris, H. TE VELDE, *Seth, God of Confusion*, Leiden 1967, pp. 115 ff., plate ix, cf. pp. 54-55.

<sup>1)</sup> R. PATAI, *Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual*, New York 1967, p. 103, note 128. The sexual aspect of the tradition was spiritualized to signify the love of God for Israel (pp. 91 f.).

<sup>2)</sup> This cultic object played a part in the worship of the Mother Goddess G. AHLSTRÖM, *Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite Religion*, pp. 57 f.; W. L. REED, *The Asherah in the Old Testament*, Fort Worth, Texas, 1949, pp. 69 ff.; K.-H. BERNARDT, "Aschera in Ugarit und im Alten Testament," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung*, XIII 1967, p. 163; R. PATAI, "The Goddess Asherah," *The Hebrew Goddess*, pp. 29 ff., 292 ff.

<sup>3)</sup> S. YEIVIN, "Social, Religious and Cultural Trends in Jerusalem and the Davidic Dynasty," *VT*. III, 1953, pp. 162 ff.; H. DONNER, "Art und Herkunft

in the mystical or sacramental aspect of the principle of monarchic succession. With only two exceptions, those of Joram (2 Kgs. viii 10 ff.) and of Ahaz (2 Kgs. xvi 1), the names of the mothers of all the kings of Judah are carefully mentioned in the archives that were apparently used by the editor of Kings<sup>1)</sup>. The worship of Ashera at the court of Judah<sup>2)</sup>, by most of the Davidic kings and queens, thus brings together in remarkable fashion a number of cultic elements which are superficially heterogeneous but may appear to revolve, in the Ancient Near East, in Asia Minor, and in Greece at a later age, as revolving around the myth of the omphalos — chthonian forces, sacred snake, solar ritual, male prostitution, bisexuality.

By using due caution, and cognizant of the paucity of the available information, are we not permitted to conjecture that the construction of the Solomonic temple introduced at the heart of Yahwism the pre-Davidic belief in the myth of the omphalos, and that this myth, in turn, was deemed to be useful, with all the ritual it entailed, as a support for the concept of hereditary monarchy?

One may even ask whether Abimelech's aborted attempt at creating a dynasty had not already been associated to the myth of the earth navel at Shechem. In addition to the belief that Shechem was called the *tabbur ha'ares* (Judg. ix 27), the mysterious *seri'ah* in the temple of El-Berith (Judg. ix 46, 49), which the LXX<sup>B</sup> translates *συνέλευσις*, "coming together," probably in a sexual sense<sup>3)</sup>, may well have been a holy crypt dedicated to the worship of the Earth Mother<sup>4)</sup>.

des Amtes der Königenmutter im Alten Testament," *Festschrift J. Friedrich*, ed. by R. von KIENLE, *et. al.*, Heidelberg 1959, pp. 125 f.; G. MOLIN, "Die Stellung der Gebira im Staate Juda," *TZ*, X, 1954, pp. 165 f.; G. AHLSTRÖM, *Aspects of Syncretism* . . . , pp. 57, 61 ff. The status and function of the queen mother in Canaanite religion may be illustrated by the letter of a Ugaritic king expressing veneration to his mother. See Ch. VIROLLEAUD, "Lettres et documents provenant des archives d'Ugarit," *Syria* XXI, 1940, pp. 247 ff.; H. N. RICHARDSON, "A Ugaritic Letter of a King to his Mother," *JBL*, LXVI, 1947, pp. 321 ff.

<sup>1)</sup> The names of most of the queen mothers of the Kingdom of Judah have been preserved (1 Kgs. xiv 21; xv 2, 10; etc.). The name of Nehushta, wife of Jehoiakim and mother of Jehoiachin (2 Kgs. xxiv 8) may indicate a connection between the ophidian rites (Nehushtan) and the role of the queen mother in Jerusalem worship.

<sup>2)</sup> D. NIELSEN, "Die altsemitische Muttergöttin," *ZDMG*, XCII, 1938, pp. 594 ff.; E. O. JAMES, *The Cult of the Mother-Goddess*, pp. 76 ff.; R. PATAI, *The Hebrew Goddess*, pp. 45 f.

<sup>3)</sup> Judg. ix 49, LXX<sup>B</sup>; this is the primary sense of the word in Hellenistic Greek (Vettius Valens, Ptolemaeus, Plutarch, *et. al.*). The meaning "stronghold" is not attested elsewhere (LIDDELL-SCOTT, 1707).

<sup>4)</sup> Cf. 1 Sam. xiii 6, LXX<sup>A</sup>; G. F. MOORE, *Judges*, p. 266; J. SIMONS, "Topographical and Archaeological Elements in the Story of Abimelech," *Oudt. Stud.*,

## II

The myth of the omphalos in Jerusalem passed through several interpretations as it was gradually adapted to the religion of Yahweh, and — vice versa — its incorporation within Yahwism profoundly influenced and altered Judah's faith. Religious rituals and beliefs are always mixed in subtle fashion. The conjecture which is here presented, on the basis of a remarkable conglomeration of motifs which otherwise would remain thoroughly heterogeneous — chthonian rites, snake-cult, solar worship, male cultic prostitution, the place of the queen mother, bisexuality — may help us to understand concretely the ambivalent character of the Zion theology.

The appropriation of the omphalos myth in the pre-exilic temple circles was combined with the prophetic belief in the election of Zion. The significance and the effect of this synthesis upon nascent Judaism during the exilic and post-exilic times cannot be ascertained in a demonstrable manner, in view of the reticence of the documents. Nevertheless, the following tentative suggestions may be advanced for the purpose of eliciting further discussion.

1. In spite of the Jebus-inspired syncretism which officially prevailed at the temple of Solomon for more than three-and-a-half centuries, theologians of Yahwism attempted to maintain or to revive the faith in a Covenant God, as witnessed in particular by the reforms of Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah<sup>1</sup>). Based originally on the Jebusite myth on the navel of the earth, the Zion theology became historicized into a theology of the election of David and Jerusalem<sup>2</sup>). At the same time, a complex undercurrent persisted in the court and temple circles. Originally conceived as conditional upon man's historical response to covenant obligations, David's choice of Jerusalem as an historical agency became mythicized into a motif of

---

II 1943, p. 75; E. NIELSEN, *Sbechem*, pp. 164 ff.; cf. G. E. WRIGHT, *Sbechem*, pp. 255, note 190. WRIGHT maintains that the *seriah* cannot be a crypt "because the temple had none" (*id.*, 127).

<sup>1</sup>) 1 Kgs. xiv 23 f.; xv 12; 22:46; 2 Kgs. xxiii 7.

<sup>2</sup>) A. ALT, "Jerusalems Aufstieg," *ZDMG.* LXXIX, 1925, pp. 1 ff.; *Kleine Schriften*, III, Munich 1959, pp. 243 ff.; M. NORTH, "Jerusalem and the Israelite Tradition," *The Laws in the Pentateuch and other Studies*, tr. by D. R. AP-THOMAS, Edinburgh 1966, 135; N. W. PORTEOUS, "Jerusalem-Zion. . .", pp. 236 f.; R. E. CLEMENTS, *God and Temple*, Philadelphia 1965, pp. 48 f.; *Prophecy and Covenant*, London 1965, pp. 59 f.; "Deuteronomy and the Jerusalem Cult Tradition," *VT.* XV, 1965, pp. 304. Cf. S. KRAUSS, "Zion and Jerusalem," *PEQ.* LXXVII, 1945, p. 21.

unconditional permanence <sup>1</sup>). The traditions of the Sinai covenant, the validity and continuity of which were originally dependent upon the ethical as well as cultic response of Israel in history <sup>2</sup>), ultimately coalesced with the traditions of the Davidic covenant <sup>3</sup>).

After the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B. C., it was above all the belief in the Zion-space myth which enabled the surviving Judahites to maintain their sociological identity and thus to create Judaism. It was precisely at that moment that the prophet Ezekiel explicitly referred to Jerusalem as the navel of the earth <sup>4</sup>). Other factors, of course, played a part in enabling the uprooted Judahites to resist cultural disintegration <sup>5</sup>) and thereby to become the Jews. It was, however, the belief in the myth of Zion as the cosmic um-

<sup>1</sup>) Ps. xxxix 28 f.; etc. See L. ROST, "Sinaibund und Davidsbund," *TLZ*. LXXII, 1947, col. 129; M. SEKINE, "Davidsbund und Sinaibund bei Jeremia," *VT*. IX, 1959, pp. 47 ff.; A. H. J. GUNNEWEG, "Sinaibund und Davidsbund," *VT*. X, 1960, pp. 339 f.; G. VON RAD, *Old Testament Theology*, I, pp. 308 ff.; H. GESE, "Der Davidsbund und die Zionserwählung," *ZTK*. LXI, 1964, pp. 10 ff.; especially pp. 25 f.; H. D. PREUSS, *Jahweglaube und Zukunftserwartung*, Stuttgart 1968, pp. 126 ff.

<sup>2</sup>) R. KRAETZSCHMAR, *Die Bundesvorstellung im Alten Testament* (Marburg, 1896) pp. 100 ff.; cf. pp. 183 ff.; J. BEGRICH, "Berit. Ein Beitrag zur Erfassung einer alttestamentlichen Denkform," *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, Munich, 1964, pp. 55 ff.; D. N. FREEDMAN, "Divine Commitment and Human Obligation," *Interpretation* XVIII, 1964, pp. 421, 426; E. GERSTENBERGER, "Covenant and Commandment," *JBL*. LXXXIV, 1965, pp. 38 ff.; W. EICHRODT, "Covenant and Law," *Interpretation* XX, 1966, pp. 302 ff.; F. C. FENSHAM, "Covenant, Promise and Expectation in the Bible," *TZ*. XXIII, 1967, pp. 315.

<sup>3</sup>) Isa. lv 3; etc.; J. MORGENSTERN, "Two Prophecies from 520-16 B.C.," *HUCA*. XXII, 1949, pp. 365 ff.; O. EISSFELDT, "The Promises of Grace to David in Isaiah 55:1-5," *Israel's Prophetic Heritage* [*J. Muilenburg Festschrift*], ed., by B. W. ANDERSON and W. HARRELSON, New York 1962, p. 204; A. CAQUOT, "Les 'grâces de David'; à propos d'Isaïe 55/3b," *Semítica* XV, 1965, pp. 55 ff.; W. BRUEGGEMANN, "Isaiah 55 and Deuteronomic Theology," *ZAW*. LXXX, 1968, pp. 191 ff. Cf. F. C. PRUSSNER, "The Covenant of David and the Problem of Unity in Old Testament Theology," *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship*, ed. J. C. RYLAARSDAM, Chicago 1968, pp. 17 ff., especially p. 31.

<sup>4</sup>) Ezek. v 5 f.; xxxviii 12; see N. W. PORTEOUS, "Jerusalem-Zion. . .," p. 242.

<sup>5</sup>) E.g., the relatively moderate policies of the imperial government of Babylon toward the relocated populations (M. NOTH, "The Jerusalem Catastrophe of 587 B.C., and its Significance for Israel," *The Laws in the Pentateuch*. . . , p. 266); the teaching of the prophets on national guilt; the letter of Jeremiah to the first exiles (Jer. 29:1 ff.); the community spirit of the exiles in Tell Aviv, fostered by Ezekiel's pastoral ministry; the singing of the psalms and the paracultic activity of poets like that of Job at the time of the autumn festival; the work of the keepers of the national traditions; etc. See M. NOTH, *The History of Israel*, tr. by S. GODMAN, New York 1958, pp. 288 f.; J. BRIGHT, *A History of Israel*, Philadelphia, n. d., pp. 328 f.

bilic — the eternal bond between heaven and earth — which conferred a shape to the eschatological hope of nascent Judaism <sup>1)</sup>.

2. Such a hope was eventually transformed by the return of a few priestly families to the site of Zion and the building of a new temple (519-515 B.C.) <sup>2)</sup>. The eschatological Jerusalem which had been envisioned by Ezekiel and Second Isaiah as the center of a recreated earth in a radically transformed nature <sup>3)</sup> became a geographical *hieros topos* <sup>4)</sup>. The myth of the omphalos resulted in a spatialization of the concept of presence. The theology of the sojourning name <sup>5)</sup>, which was compatible with the freedom of God and a historical view of the Sinai covenant (conditional), was absorbed by a theology of the indwelling glory <sup>6)</sup>, which implied in turn the mythical, supra-historical view of the Davidic covenant (unconditional). It was the spatialization of presence which became the theological basis of Israel's claims to the land surrounding Zion <sup>7)</sup>.

3. The spatialization of presence in turn contributed to the dehistoricization of the covenant. The mythical view of the permanence of the Davidic bond was transferred to the people as a whole <sup>8)</sup>. Israel's mission in history became in effect immune to prophetic

<sup>1)</sup> Ez. xl 1 ff.; xlviii 1-5; Isa. xl 2; xlv 14 ff.; lii 1 ff.

<sup>2)</sup> Ezra i 55; Hag. i 2; etc.

<sup>3)</sup> Ezek. xlvii 6 ff.; cf. xvii 22 f.; xx 40; Isa. xli 17 ff.; liv 11 ff.

<sup>4)</sup> See the Deuteronomic editing of Solomon's dedicatory prayer, 1 Kgs. viii 22 ff. (cf. Dan. 6:11); MONTGOMERY, *Kings*, p. 194; GRAY, *I & II Kings*, pp. 197 f.; M. NOTH, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, I 1943, pp. 97, 110; *Könige*, I, pp. 184 f. The expectation of the new Jerusalem maintained itself in the apocalyptic myth of the heavenly city; K. L. SCHMIDT, "Jerusalem als Urbild und Abbild," *Eranos-Jahrbuch XVIII*, Zürich 1950, pp. 221 ff.

<sup>5)</sup> G. VON RAD, "Deuteronomy's 'Name' Theology and the Priestly Document's 'Kabod' Theology," *Studies in Deuteronomy*, tr. D. STALKER, London 1953, pp. 37 ff.; *Old Testament Theology*, I, 179; J. SCHREINER, *Sion-Jerusalem...*, pp. 158 ff.; R. E. CLEMENTS, *God and Temple*, p. 104.

<sup>6)</sup> B. STEIN, *Der Begriff Kebed Jahwe und seine Bedeutung für die alttestamentliche Gotteserkenntnis* (Emsdetten i. W., 1939); G. VON RAD, *Old Testament Theology*, I, pp. 239 ff.

<sup>7)</sup> K. GALLING, *Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels* (*Beib. ZAW* 48, 1928), pp. 4 ff.; M. BUBER, *Israel und Palästina*, Zürich 1950, pp. 50 ff.; H.-J. KRAUS, *Psalmen*, I, Neukirchen 1960, p. 547; N. W. PORTEOUS, "Jerusalem-Zion..." pp. 242 f.; R. E. CLEMENTS, "Temple and Land: A Significant Aspect of Israel's Worship," *TGUOS*. XIX, 1961-62, pp. 16 ff.

<sup>8)</sup> A. JEPSEN, "Berith. Ein Beitrag zur Theologie der Exilszeit," *Verbannt und Heimkehr*, W. Rudolph Festschrift, ed. A. KUSCHKE, Tübingen 1961, pp. 165 ff.; A. CAQUOT, "L'alliance avec Abraham (Gen. 15)," *Semítica XII*, 1962, pp. 51-66; W. ZIMMERLI, "Sinaibund und Abrahambund," *Gottes Offenbarung: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Munich 1963, pp. 205 ff.; R. E. CLEMENTS, *Abraham and David*, London 1967, pp. 71 ff.

judgment against national failure through social oppression or moral injustice. The sense of an "eternal" mission, which is characteristic of certain forms of Judaism, thus transcending the historical relativity of other nations, may be traced, according to this hypothesis, not to Mosaic Yahwism but to Jebusite mythology.

4. The national trauma caused by the destruction of the temple in 587 B. C. resulted in the spread of a collective consciousness of sin, for the indictment of the nation, long repeated by the prophets, appeared now to be verified by events. Awareness of the national guilt, however, seems to have been expressed more often in cultic terms of impurity and uncleanness — words which connoted the realm of sexuality<sup>1)</sup> — than in psychological terms of transgression, iniquity, rebelliousness and hardening of the heart, which the pre-exilic prophets had favored<sup>2)</sup>. To be sure, these prophets had formulated their interpretation of the Mosaic covenant quite often under the familiar metaphors of marriage and adultery<sup>3)</sup>, but they used sexual imagery almost exclusively in a moral rhetoric of trust and mistrust, loyalty and infidelity, self-giving and self-seeking love. During the exile, on the contrary, Ezekiel, a prophet who was also the son of a Jerusalem priest, employed generally the language of sexual purity and impurity no longer as a metaphorical tool of moral expression but as the speech of his sacerdotal concern for ritual cleanliness, purification and physical avoidance of ritual corruption<sup>4)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> "Jerusalem has gravely sinned; she has become an impurity" (*nidhab*, Lam. i 8; cf. vs. 17; MT *niddab*; see LXX, Aqu., Syr.); the word occurs especially in Ezekiel and the priestly legislation: Ezek. xviii 6; xxii 10; xxxvi 17; Lev. xii 2; xv 19 ff.; xx 21; Zech. xiii 1; 2 Chr. xxix 5; Ezra ix 11; etc. The growth of an oral body of legal interpretation led to rabbinic prescriptions and prohibitions (Mishnah, *Tohoroth*, "*Niddab*," *passim*; Babylonian Talmud, *Seder Tohoroth* I, "*Niddab*," *passim*).

<sup>2)</sup> G. QUELL, "Die Sünde im Alten Testament," *TWNT*. I, pp. 267 ff.; F. HESSE, *Das Verstockungsproblem im Alten Testament*, Berlin 1955, pp. 79 ff.; S. J. DE VRIES, "Sin, Sinners," *IDB*. IV, p. 365; Š. PORÚBCAN, *Sin in the Old Testament*, Rome 1963, pp. 134 ff.; W. EICHRODT, *Theology of the Old Testament*, II, tr. J. A. BAKER from 1964, fifth ed., Philadelphia 1967, pp. 386 f.; R. KNIERIM, *Die Hauptbegriffe für Sünde im Alten Testament*, Gütersloh 1965, *passim*. It may be observed that the poet of Job, like the pre-exilic prophets, used the priestly terminology of cleanness and uncleanness in the context of moral perfection and sinfulness (Job ix 30; xi 4; xiv 4; xv 14 f.; etc.), and that the whole dialogue should even be understood as an attempt to formulate dramatically a supra-moral, existential hamartiology; Job xlii 6; cf. S. TERRIEN, *Job, Commentaire*, Neuchâtel 1963, pp. 269 f.

<sup>3)</sup> Hos. ii 1 ff.; Jer. ii 2; etc. cf. G. Östborn, "Yahweh—the Husband," *Yahweh and Baal: Studies in the Book of Hosea and Related Documents*, Lund 1956, pp. 79 ff.

<sup>4)</sup> Ezek. xxiii 1 ff.; *passim*. The personification of Zion in maternal terms (N. W. PORTEOUS, "Jerusalem-Zion. . .," pp. 238 f.), which followed easily upon

From the earliest times of Semitic culture, sources of ritual pollution seem to have been especially related to sexual secretions<sup>1)</sup>. It ensued that the whole realm of sexuality entered under the suspicion of the risk of ritual impurity. Beginning with the exilic prophets, the notion of sinfulness remained concerned with social injustice, to be sure, but it also stressed ritual contacts, prohibitions, cleansing and expiation<sup>2)</sup>.

While the available documents do not explicitly indicate the awareness of a link between the omphalos myth and the sexualizing process of the notion of sinfulness, it is probable that the exilic theology of Zion, while rejecting the chthonian and ophidian rites, solar cult, male prostitution and bisexuality, which had officially accompanied the worship of the *Terra Mater* in the Jerusalem temple during most of the Divided Monarchy, over-reacted against the persistent fascination of many Judahites with the fertility cults during the exile and even afterwards<sup>3)</sup>. The priestly members of the Zadokite families who reinterpreted the early traditions of Mosaic Yahwism and the

---

the prophetic comparison of Israel with the unfaithful bride, may well be an unconscious by-product of the worship of the *Terra Mater*.

Ezekiel's prescriptions for the new cultus bring together in the same context the theology of Zion as the navel of the earth with legislation for physical isolation and a topographical *cordon sanitaire* in an effort to prevent contamination from alien impurity: Ezek. xliv 5 ff.; xlv 1 ff.; etc. Cf. G. FOHRER and K. GALLING, *Ezekiel*, pp. 228 ff.; T. CHARY, *Les prophètes et le culte à partir de l'exil*, Paris, 1955, 39; W. ZIMMERLI, *Ezekiel*, pp. 112 ff.; P. R. ACKROYD, *Exile and Restoration*, London 1968, pp. 112 f.

<sup>1)</sup> L. M. EPSTEIN, *Sex Laws and Customs*, New York 1967, pp. 5 ff.

<sup>2)</sup> R. PATAI, "Sins and Calamities," *Man and Temple* . . . , pp. 140 ff. It is of course well known that the priestly concern for purity and impurity was ancient (G. VON RAD, *Old Testament Theology*, I, p. 272), but it was during the exile, when the political and cultic structures of national life had disappeared; that the descendants of the Jerusalem priest, among whom Ezekiel assumed apparently a prominent place, convinced many Judahites of the need for outward and therefore ritual signs of distinctiveness like circumcision, sabbath, and practises related to the clean and to the unclean. This trend received official sanction with the authoritative acceptance of the Torah, in which the holiness legislation played a conspicuous role. See W. GISPEN, "The Distinction Between Clean and Unclean," *Oudt. St.* V, 1948, pp. 190 ff.; K. ELLIGER, "Das Gesetz Leviticus 18," *ZAW*. LXVII, 1955, pp. 1 ff., especially 23; L. E. ELLIOTT-BINNS, "Some Problems in the Holiness Code," *ZAW*. LXVII, 1955, pp. 26 ff.; H. Graf REVENTLOW, *Das Heiligkeitsgesetz*, Berlin 1964, pp. 192 ff.

<sup>3)</sup> Isa. lvii 3-10; lxv 3-7, 11; etc. cf. W. L. HOLLADAY, "'On every high hill and under every green tree,'" *VT*. XI, 1961, pp. 170 ff.; D. JONES, "The Cessation of Sacrifice after the Destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C.," *JTS*. XIV, 1963, pp. 18 ff.; H. RINGGREN, *Israelite Religion*, p. 298; P. R. ACKROYD, *Exile and Restoration*, pp. 26 ff.; 40 f.

Deuteronomic Kerygma in the light of their obsession with cultic purity tended irresistibly to view sinfulness in terms of sexuality rather than as moral rebellion and social irresponsibility.

The priestly legislation which now dominates the framework of the *Torah* accelerated a trend, among some purity-minded Jews, toward a devalorization of sexuality and a consequent diffidence toward womanhood <sup>1)</sup>, except as a maternal function <sup>2)</sup> and in the context of heroism in devotion to the national cause <sup>3)</sup>.

4. If the growth of the emphasis on rites of purification for sin in the second temple is ascribed to the direct influence of, and the indirect reaction against, the Jebusite myth of the omphalos as transformed into a Zion theology, one must also relate to the same myth the alteration of the notion of faith which appeared to have taken place among the ritual and legal party. Within post-exilic Judaism, faith tended to confuse the demands of an always threatening as well as comforting God with the obedient performance of ritual acts of initiation and observance <sup>4)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> The Yahwist's tradition on the ideal of marital love (Gen. ii 24) represented for early Israel the highest view of monogamy in the ancient Near East, and was echoed in some respects by the erotic simplicity of the Song of Songs. Such a view, unencumbered with cultic prohibition on sexual uncleanness, must have been sufficiently widespread among some circles of the pre-exilic period. Otherwise, the prophets could not have expected to be understood when they compared Israel to the bride of Yahweh and the covenant to a marriage of trust and of mutual obligation. The ascetic tendencies which were markedly apparent in the post-exilic period (L. M. EPSTEIN, *Sex Laws and Customs in Judaism*, New York 1948, pp. 8 ff.) were probably related to the fear of sexual pollution that was stressed by the legislation of holiness.

<sup>2)</sup> The ritual concern for racial purity in the IVth century B.C. led not only to a ban on interracial marriage but also to the repudiation of foreign wives (Ezr. x 3, 44), a measure which implies the superiority of religious collective concerns over the respect for the individual feminine personality. Cf. L. M. EPSTEIN, *Marriage Laws in the Bible and Talmud*, Cambridge, Mass., 1942, pp. 144 ff.; E. NEUFELD, "Divorce," *Ancient Hebrew Marriage Laws*, London, 1944, pp. 176 ff.

<sup>3)</sup> See the legendary figures of Esther, Judith, *et al.*

<sup>4)</sup> G. VON RAD, "Faith Reckoned as Righteousness," *The Problem of the Hexateuch* . . . , pp. 125 ff.; W. EICHRODT, *Theology of the Old Testament*, II, pp. 253 ff.; 301 ff.; H. RINGGREN, "Theocentric Religion," *Faith of the Psalmists*, Philadelphia 1963, pp. 27 ff.; cf. 112; "Man Before God," *Israelite Religion*, pp. 126 ff., cf. 319 ff.; Th. C. VRIEZEN, "Essentials of the Theology of Isaiah," *Israel's Prophetic Heritage (J. Muilenburg Festschrift)*, pp. 136 f.; H. D. PREUSS, *Jahweglaube und Zukunftserwartung*, Stuttgart 1968, pp. 205 ff. The existential quality of the prophetic and Jobian understanding of faith, of course, may be compatible with the joy of the "faithful" in Yahweh's commandments, as expressed, *e.g.*, in Ps. cxix. See H. J. KRAUS, "Freude an Gottes Gesetz," *Ev. Th.* X, 1950-51, pp. 337 ff.; H. WILDBERGER, "'Glauben' im Alten Testament," *ZTK*. LXVIII, 1968, pp. 129 ff.



The importance of the omphalos myth for Hebrew religion cannot be underestimated. The ideology of Zion, which became central to the main form of Judaism in exilic and post-exilic times, appears to have carried with it a persistent ambivalence: on the one hand, it belonged to the archaic belief in mythical geography, which is unable to dissociate the sacred from the *topos*<sup>1)</sup>, and finds therein an exceptionally powerful source of religious and sociological coherence. On the other hand, it participates, through the prophetic interpretation of the Mosaic covenant, in the possibility to absorb a mythical view of space into a dynamic theology of time, based on a teleology of election, which is therefore open to religious, moral, and political transformation according to the changing conditions of history<sup>2)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup> M. ELIADE, "Psychologie et histoire des religions—À propos du symbolisme du 'centre'," *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, XIX, Zürich 1951, p. 263.

<sup>2)</sup> B. S. CHILDS, *Myth and Reality* . . . , p. 91 f. The related topic of "the land" exceeds the limits of this essay. Cf., *inter al.*, G. VON RAD, "Verheissenes Land und Jahwes Land im Hexateuch," *ZDPV*. 1943, pp. 191-204; *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, München, 1958, pp. 87-100; H. WILDBERGER, "Israel und sein Land," *Ev. Tb.*, XVI (1956), pp. 404-22; H.-M. DION, O.P., "Yahweh, Dieu de Canaan et la terre des hommes," *CJT*. XIII, 1967, pp. 233-240.