

screamed as she was struck on the bone; then she took the trembling hand of the young gladiator and guided it to her throat. It was as though so great a woman . . . could not be killed unless she herself was willing (21.8–10).

Here the concepts of suicide and martyrdom merge: they are but two sides of the same coin. In spite of its legendary features, this account brings to light an important aspect of one form of religious suicide in antiquity. Perpetua's death is not simply an attempt to escape from the trials and hardships of her present life, it is rather a statement about or judgment on life itself, both here and in the hereafter. That the dates of the deaths of the martyrs were celebrated annually in the church calendar as "birthdays" speaks volumes.

F. The Augustinian Reversal

In considering this cluster—martyrdom, suicide, murder—Jacques Bels (1975) has shown that up until the time of Augustine antiquity generally considered suicide as a form of voluntary martyrdom and clearly distinguished it from murder. Beginning with Augustine, however, the division was altered. Suicide came to be separated from martyrdom and identified instead with murder, more specifically, self-murder. Bels has further shown that the reasons for this change in attitude were largely polemical. In confrontation with the Donatists, Augustine sought to redefine the terms "martyrdom" and "suicide," and in so doing claimed, in a manner similar to Clement two centuries earlier, that the Donatist "martyrs" were in fact merely "suicides"—that is to say, self-murderers. (The relevant texts are *Against Gaudentius* [a Donatist bishop] and *City of God* 1.17–27. Though purely polemical in the former treatise, Augustine's opposition becomes more theoretical in the latter, when the Donatists appealed to the "Old Testament" example of Razis in order to justify their position.)

As is well known, Augustine's case against suicide was based on Plato, not the Bible. Aside from his appeal to the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," Augustine took over the Pythagorean argument of Plato in the *Phaedo*, that to sever the bonds of body and soul prematurely is to usurp a privilege which belongs only to God. To commit suicide therefore meant that the individual had acted, in his last moment of life, in direct opposition to the divine will—had, in a strict sense, murdered himself. However "un-Christian" the sources of his argument, in the centuries between Augustine and the Renaissance suicide was condemned by Christianity as an act of murder and was considered unredeemable along with the sins of adultery and apostasy. Indeed, Aquinas buttressed the argument by raising self-preservation to the status of a universal natural law. Thus in the early 13th century, when the Albigensians sought out martyrdom with a Donatist zeal, the church condemned them for this and their *other* heresies, and then granted them their wish (Fedden 1972: 146–47). For further discussion see *EncRel* 14: 125–31.

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A. J. DROGE

SUKKOTH [Heb *sūkkôt*]. The Feast of Succoth is equal to the Feast of Booths. See CALENDARS (ANCIENT ISRAELITE AND EARLY JEWISH).

SUMER, SUMERIANS. Sumerians were speakers of the Sumerian language. The Sumerian language is first attested in the earliest written records at the beginning of the 3d millennium B.C., and became extinct by the early 2d millennium, at the latest (Cooper 1973, Heimpel 1974, Lieberman 1977: 20–21), but preserved as a language of scholarship and cult through the end of the pre-Christian era. See LANGUAGES (INTRODUCTORY SURVEY).

Sumer(ian) is the anglicized Akk *šumeru*. The term and the language were first known from the Sumerian-Akkadian bilingual compositions and lexical lists found on tablets from Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh, excavated in the middle of the 19th century. Controversy as to whether Sumerian was a real language or only an invented sacred language of the Babylonian and Assyrian clergy (Jones 1969) was resolved in the last decades of that century when large numbers of unilingual Sumerian texts and inscriptions of the Sumerians themselves were discovered during the French excavations at Girsu (Tello) and the American excavations at Nippur.

A. Usage and Etymology

The Sumerian term for Sumer is KI-EN-GI(R), and for the language EME-G17(R). Current scholarship has rejected the theory put forward by Poebel and elaborated by Jacob-

sen, which would link both KI-EN-GI and *šumeru* to the Sum word KALAM (Emesal dialect KA-NA-ĀG) "nation, homeland," and derive all from variant forms of the name of the city Nippur, the religious capital of ancient Babylonia (Krecher 1966: 108, Kraus 1970: 48–51). The adjective GI₇(R) means "noble" or the like and has a known variant orthography GI(R), as in the royal name Shulgi(r), "noble young man." Sum EME is "tongue," hence EME-GI₇ is "noble tongue," and the GI(R) in KI-EN-GI should function adjectivally like the GI₇(R) in EME-GI₇. Since Sum KI is "place," one would ideally like KI-EN-GI to be "noble place," but since the /g/ in GI₇ is not the nasalized Sum /ḡ/, this leaves the EN unexplained. The best suggestion is Wilcke's (1974: 229–30), that by analogy with known forms KI+toponym = "place GN" (attributive, not genitive), ki-en-gi be understood as "place, noble en." Sum EN normally means "lord" or "high priest," but the meaning intended when the term KI-EN-GI was coined (mid-3d millennium at the latest) is uncertain. The etymology of Akk *šumeru* and its relationship to KI-EN-GI and EME-GI₇ are unknown.

As a geographical term, KI-EN-GI "Sumer" is used in a narrow sense for Babylonia S of Nippur, and in this sense can contrast with KI-URI "Akkad," Babylonia N of Nippur. In a broader sense it is used for all of Babylonia, parallel to MA-DA "land", KALAM "nation," UN and SAG-GI₆-GA, both "(native) people," and in contrast to KUR(-KUR) "foreign land(s)" or specific extra-Babylonian toponyms.

As attributives, KI-EN-GI and EME-GI are used to qualify domestic animals in the Ur III period (Wilcke 1974: 218–19), and there is a "Sumerian" (EME-GI₇) quart measure in the Sargonic period, but the terms rarely qualify human beings. One Sargonic administrative text possibly refers to "Akkadians" (LÚ A URI²-ME) alongside Sumerians, and Shulgi of Ur (ca. 2050 B.C.) is said to have referred to his predecessors as Akkadians (DUMU URI), Sumerians (DUMU KI-EN-GI), and Gutians (Wilcke 1974: 205, 216, 225–26). When the last king of Ur, Ibbisin (ca. 2000 B.C.) is said to have called his rival, Ishbi'erra, "not of Sumerian seed" (NUMUN KI-EN-GI NU-ME-A), it is because he comes from Mari, i.e. outside of Babylonia proper. In humorous scribal dialogues of the early 2d millennium, scribes boast of their "Sumerian" origins to bolster their claim to mastery of the Sumerian language, already a dead language that had to be learned in long years of study in the scribal academy (Wilcke 1974: 226).

The term DUMU-GI₇(R) contains the same GI₇(R) as in KI-EN-GI(R) and EME-GI₇(R) and should mean "Sumerian" (DUMU = "child," and by extension, "citizen, member"), but in nearly all references seems to refer to either a fully free citizen, or an aristocrat, with no ethnic implications (Wilcke 1974: 230; Cooper 1983: 240).

B. Sumerian Origins

The vexing question of Sumerian origins has two parts: when did the Sumerians arrive in Mesopotamia, and whence? Most scholars accept the fact that a good number of the earliest place names in Babylonia are not Sumerian (but see, to the contrary, CAH 1/1: 122–55; Jacobsen 1969), and therefore the early populations who named those places did not speak Sumerian (e.g., Gelb 1960). Based on perceived phonetic similarities, Landsberger (1974) associated a subgroup of these early place names

with certain Sumerian words, dealing primarily with agriculture and crafts, which he saw as loanwords from the pre-Sumerian language of the place names, called by him Proto-Euphratic. Proto-Euphratic was, according to Landsberger, the language of the indigenous population of Babylonia, as distinct from the language of northern Mesopotamian, Proto-Tigridian, postulated on the basis of phonetic similarities in another subgroup of non-Sumerian, non-Semitic toponyms. Both Proto-Euphratic and Proto-Tigridian were themselves dialects of an original proto-language (*Ursprache*; Landsberger 1974: 178 n. 2). Whether one accepts the notion of a Proto-Euphratic substratum in Sumerian or not (see the criticisms, e.g., of Powell 1972: 167–68 and Lieberman 1977: 18), the evidence of the non-Sumerian toponyms would make it quite difficult to posit the Sumerians as *the* indigenous population of (southern) Babylonia.

A *terminus ante quem* for Sumerian presence in Babylonia can be established by the date of the earliest texts in the Sumerian language. A respectable scholarly minority had always doubted that the Sumerians invented the writing system that bears their name (Gelb 1960: 262–63, Oppenheim 1964: 49, Hallo and Simpson 1971: 22–23), but newly published evidence of the archaic texts from Uruk (Green and Nissen 1987) makes it highly unlikely that the earliest archaic texts (Nissen's Stage IV; Nissen 1986, Green and Nissen 1987) do not represent the Sumerian language, despite Nissen's own doubts (Green and Nissen 1987: Einleitung). The phonetic uses of archaic signs documented in Green and Nissen (1987) prove that the signs represent Sumerian lexemes. For example, the alternation of the signs TAB and DAB₅ proves that the signs in question had Sumerian readings already at the time of the archaic texts, and the use of the sign EN in composing the complex sign MEN "crown" shows that the language of the archaic texts had a word "crown" containing the phonetic sequence /en/, i.e., the Sum word MEN. Vaiman (1976) has made a convincing suggestion that the sign GI was used to represent "to return" or something similar, a word written with the sign GI₄ in later Sumerian. Since the sign GI is a pictogram of a reed, the language represented would have to be one in which a reed could be used as a rebus writing for the verb "to return," i.e., "reed" and "to return" would have to be homonyms, as they are in Sumerian. The weight of the cumulative evidence is persuasive: the language of the archaic texts is Sumerian. Until the publication of the archaic texts has advanced further, it will be difficult to determine to what degree the evidence for the Sumerian character of the texts' language is present at the earliest stage (Nissen's Stage IV) as opposed to the next stage (Nissen's Stage III), to which the great majority of texts belongs. Chronologically, the difference is slight (just before 3000 B.C. or just after), and we can set the *terminus ante quem* for a Sumerian presence in Babylonia to 3100–3000 B.C.

Classically, attempts to detect the first presence of the Sumerians in prehistoric Babylonia have been made by searching the archaeological record for discontinuities that could indicate the arrival of a new population group. The premises of such an enterprise are questionable, and the results have been contradictory. There have been those who have seen continuity in the archaeological record and

would have the Sumerians in Babylonia in the 5th millennium B.C., and those who see discontinuity and date the arrival of the Sumerians to the beginning of the Uruk period (mid-4th millennium) or later (Jones 1969; Römer 1985: 7). Current consensus would deny the possibility of detecting ethno-linguistic change through change in archaeological assemblages or settlement patterns, but there continue to be archaeologists who are convinced that the Sumerians were present in the Ubaid population (5th millennium B.C.; e.g., Oates 1986: 21–22), and those who are most comfortable placing the arrival of the Sumerians in the mid-4th millennium (Nissen 1988: 68–69).

If the Sumerians were not part of the original population of Babylonia, where did they originate? Or, if they were part of the original population, where did their ancestors reside before the relatively late settlement of the Mesopotamian alluvium? Sumerian is a linguistic isolate, and the many attempts to relate it to other languages, ancient or modern, have been unsuccessful (Haldar 1965; Komoróczy 1978: 226 with notes; Römer 1985: 27–8). Because the ancient world to the W of Mesopotamia is relatively well known, and there is no evidence from toponyms, personal names or inscriptions to suggest early Sumerian presence there, the search for a Sumerian “homeland” has been to the north or east, and the Indus Valley area has been the most respectable specific suggestion (e.g., Römer 1985: 9). Because Sumerian sources usually mention the Indus region (Meluhha) together with Magan and Dilmun in the Persian Gulf region (Heimpel 1987), and because of a Babylonian tradition, preserved by Berossus, that the merman sage Oannes rose out of the Gulf to bring the arts of civilization to Babylonia, it is most often suggested that the Sumerians arrived by sea or along the Gulf shore (but, to the contrary, von Soden 1985: 15). The Gulf connection has also been used recently to suggest that the Sumerians originally inhabited areas now covered by the waters of the Gulf, which had advanced beyond Qatar only around 12,000 B.C. and didn't reach their present level until 4000 B.C. (Roux 1982). Possible support for the Indus Valley as a Sumerian homeland is the Sumerian poetic term for native Babylonians or mankind in general, *SAG GI6-GA* “black-headed.”

However, the most sensible approach to the problem of Sumerian origins is to abandon both the attempts to detect something in the archaeological record that signals their presence or arrival, and the search for an original homeland. A very sober and refreshing assessment of the problem by Komoróczy (1978) points out that *all* non-Indo-European, non-Semitic languages of the ANE are isolates, and that it was typical for very different languages to coexist and form convergence groups, as did Sumerian and Akkadian. He would see both Semites and Sumerians among the peoples who first settled the alluvium. The ancestors of the Sumerians may have originated on the eastern fringes of Babylonia, but all of the qualities that we might want to call “Sumerian” emerged and developed only after they were settled in Babylonia and in close contact with other ethno-linguistic groups. Similar views, conceptualizing Sumer and Sumerians as an evolving process within Babylonia have been expressed by, for example, Haldar (1965), Gibson (1976), Roux (1982) and Oates (1986). On current evidence, it is the best view, but new

evidence could easily tilt the question toward quite different answers (Jones 1969: 139–40).

C. Sumer in the Hebrew Bible

It has been generally accepted that OT Shinar, used for Babylonia, derives from Akk *šumeru*. See SHINAR. This etymology has been challenged by Zadok (1984), who suggests, rather, that Shinar derives from *šanhar(r)a*, a word used for Babylonia in 14th-century B.C. Hittite and Syrian sources, deriving, perhaps, from the name of a Kassite tribe. The toponym appears in Egyptian sources as *sng̃r*.

Zadok argues that phonologically *Shinar/šanhar(r)alsng̃r* cannot derive from *šumeru*, and that furthermore, the term only appears in the second half of the 2d millennium B.C., long after the Sumerians had disappeared. The argument holds only if one insists that the biblical Shinar derives in the first instance from *šanhar(r)a*, which could then be shown *not* to derive from *šumeru*. But if Shinar derives more directly from *šumeru* (the term was preserved and understood in cuneiform tradition throughout the 1st millennium B.C.), then Zadok's phonological objections are not compelling. One might well ask why the biblical authors would choose to designate Babylonia by a name known primarily from 14th-century Hittite texts.

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JERROLD S. COOPER

SUMERIAN LITERATURE. Cuneiform texts in the Sumerian language which were edited in the scribal schools of ancient Mesopotamia and the surrounding Near East, with the exception of lexical lists, mathematical exercises, and other purely scholastic genres. Together, the literary and scholastic genres constitute the “canonical” category of Sumerian texts, and are distinguished from the sometimes equally eloquent monumental category (including law “codes”) on the one hand and from the far more abundant archival category on the other.

- A. Scope and Language
- B. Genres First Attested in the Old Sumerian Phase
- C. Genres Presumably Originating in the Neo-Sumerian Phase
- D. Genres First Attested in the Old Babylonian Phase
- E. The Post-Sumerian Phase

A. Scope and Language

Sumerian literature is comparable in sheer size to biblical literature. A recent survey estimates the number of

lines so far recovered at approximately 40,000; bearing in mind that most Sumerian literature is poetic in form and that the typical Sumerian verse may be somewhat shorter than the typical biblical verse, this already compares favorably with the total of biblical verses in the Masoretic count, recently calculated at 23,097 (Hallo 1988). Much of Sumerian literature still remains to be recovered.

Most of Sumerian literature is composed in the main dialect (Sum *eme-gir*₁₅) but lamentations recited by certain types of singers and the speeches of women or goddesses in myths and erotic poetry are in a different dialect (Sum *eme-sal*). This dialect becomes more and more prevalent in the liturgical compositions of the post-Sumerian periods.

The modern rediscovery of Sumerian literature has passed through several stages, each reflected in contemporary biblical scholarship. The first stage began in 1873, with the first full editions of substantial numbers of bilingual Sumero-Akkadian texts by François Lenormant (1873–79). Such texts, mostly of late (i.e., 1st millennium B.C.) date, translated each Sumerian line literally into Akkadian. Consisting largely of religious poetry, they had particular influence on Psalms research. The second stage dates from about 65 years later, when S. N. Kramer (1937), A. Falkenstein (1938), and T. Jacobsen (1939) began to edit unilingual Sumerian literary compositions dating from the early 2d millennium B.C. These included many different genres and influenced the study of corresponding biblical genres, including historiography, narrative, love poetry, and proverbs. A third stage may be said to have begun a century after Lenormant with the publication by R. D. Biggs (1974) of the texts from Tell Abu Salabikh. Together with texts previously known from Šuruppak and other southern sites, and texts subsequently discovered at Ebla in Syria, the Abu Salabikh texts expanded the chronological horizon of Sumerian literature back almost to the beginnings of writing. The significance of these early Sumerian texts for biblical scholarship remains to be seen.

Given the chronological extent and generic diversity of the corpus, each genre will here be considered in the approximate order in which it first appeared in the corpus. Within each phase, the genres will be treated by focus, which is typically god, king, or (common) man, though some few genres focus on two or all three. (For a general attempt at the history of the corpus, see Hallo 1976; for a detailed typology and bibliography, see Edzard *RLA* 7: 35–48; for biblical analogies, see Hallo 1988.)

B. Genres First Attested in the Old Sumerian Phase (ca. 2500–2200 B.C.)

Incantations are already attested at Šuruppak (modern Fara) and Ebla (Krebernik 1984) and continue to occur on individual tablets throughout the Old and Neo-Sumerian phases (e.g., Hallo 1985; Jacobsen 1985; Michalowski 1985). By Old Babylonian times, some were being collected and grouped by subject, e.g., those against “evil spirits” (Geller 1985). In post-Sumerian times, they were often provided with interlinear translations into Akkadian and generally served to ward off the evils feared from hostile magic or from unfavorable omens. Biblical literature has no comparable genres, preferring to deal with such ominous symptoms by the Levitical laws of purification. But

the incantation bowls of the 6th century A.D. show that post-biblical Judaism was not immune to the approach in a Mesopotamian environment.

Hymns to deities and their temples are also attested from a very early date. Some of the finest are attributed to Enheduanna, daughter of Sargon of Akkad and the first non-anonymous author in history (Hallo and van Dijk 1968; Kramer *ANET*, 573–83). Another high point is represented by the temple hymns of Gudea of Lagaš (Jacobsen 1987, part 7). Like other religious poetry, these genres are reflected in the biblical psalter.

Sumerian myths and epics are generically also hymns, but confine praise of their divine or royal protagonist to their concluding doxology, while the body of the poem is narrative in character. The great gods (Enlil, Enki) and goddesses (Ninhursag, Inanna) figure prominently in these myths (cf. Kramer 1937; *ANET*, 37–57), but so do lesser deities, especially those worshipped at the religious capital of Nippur, such as Ninurta (cf. Cooper 1978; van Dijk 1983; Jacobsen 1987, part 4). The epics concentrate on the legendary rulers of Uruk (biblical Erech): Enmerkar, Lugalbanda, and especially Gilgamesh (cf. Kramer *ANET*, 44–52; Jacobsen 1987, part 5). In bilingual form, or in Akkadian adaptations, some of these epics survived into the late periods; an Akkadian fragment of Gilgamesh was found at 14th c.(?) Megiddo, and virtual quotations from the epic have been identified in Ecclesiastes (Tigay 1982: 165–67).

The common man is notably the focus of wisdom literature, so called in imitation of the biblical category though wisdom itself is not prominently mentioned, as it often is in Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. The earliest attested wisdom genres are instructions and proverbs. The former are attributed respectively to the divine Ninurta (Aro 1968) and to the king of the last antediluvian city, Šurupak, the Sumerian Noah; both collections include much practical advice, especially about agriculture (Alster 1974; 1975). Proverbs are attested far more abundantly; by the early 2d millennium, 24 discrete collections can be identified and they survive, sometimes in bilingual form, into the late 1st millennium (Gordon 1959; Alster 1978). Though biblical proverbs are not directly related to the Sumerian collections as they are, demonstrably, to Egyptian ones, they often display a remarkable similarity of both form and substance, as for instance in the catalogue of divine abominations in Prov 6:16–19. Almost equally old is the minor wisdom genre of the riddle (Biggs 1973), called *ibilu* in Sumerian and *hittu* in Akkadian; the latter term is cognate with Hebrew *hidā*.

C. Genres Presumably Originating in the Neo-Sumerian Phase (ca. 2200–1900 B.C.)

The deification of the Sumerian king during this phase led to a certain commingling of sacred and royal literature and to the emergence of several new genres responding to the new ideology. (Though known from later copies, their composition can be dated here on internal grounds.) The king was regarded at once as of divine and human parentage, the product of a physical union in which the royal partners “represented” deities, most often Dumuzi and Inanna or their Akkadian equivalents Tammuz (cf. Ezek 8:14) and Ishtar. An extensive body of poetry celebrated

these “sacred marriage” rites and, together with more strictly secular love poetry addressed to the king or recited antiphonally by him and his bride, anticipated the Song of Songs in its explicit eroticism (Kramer *ANET*, 496, 637–45; 1969; Jacobsen 1987). Divine hymns now often concluded with a prayer for the reigning king, presumably for recitation in the temple. But the courtly ceremonial engendered a new genre of its own, the royal hymn, in which the chief events and achievements of the royal lifetime were celebrated in non-liturgical form (Kramer *ANET*, 583–86; Klein 1981).

True to their ambiguous status during this period, kings were both authors and recipients of petitionary prayers which took the form of letters. Such letter-prayers were addressed to them, or to “real” deities, by princesses, officials, and ordinary mortals, and thus provide a precedent of sorts for the “individual laments” of the Psalter (Falkenstein 1938; Kramer *ANET*, 382; Hallo 1968; 1981). New “wisdom” genres also provided vehicles for describing individual concerns, albeit most often of aristocratic circles in Nippur. The setting is authentic for this period, though the details may be fictitious. Thus we have literary records of trials (e.g., Jacobsen 1959), a letter of Ludingira, “the man of God,” to his mother at Nippur (Civil 1964; Cooper 1971), and two elegies by the same (?) Ludingira for his father and wife respectively, one described as an incantation (*tu6*), the other as a “wailing” (*i-lu*) (Kramer 1960). But perhaps most startling is the “petition (*ir-ša-ne-ša4*) to a man’s personal god” in which an unnamed individual laments his fate until finally restored to health and fortune by his personal deity (Kramer 1955; *ANET*, 589–91). The parallels between this text and the archaic prose frame of Job are striking, and the gap between the two compositions is in some part bridged by Akkadian treatments of the same “righteous sufferer” theme, some of which have turned up in the scribal schools of 14th century B.C. Ugarit (Nougayrol 1968 no. 162).

D. Genres First Attested in the Old Babylonian Phase (ca. 1900–1600 B.C.)

The collapse of the Neo-Sumerian empire of Ur (ca. 2000 B.C.) and the decline of the dynasty of Isin which succeeded it (ca. 1900 B.C.) inspired new genres to address new problems. In sacred literature, the “congregational lament” mourned the destruction of cities and especially of temples at the hands of hostile forces, often conceived as aided or abetted by a disaffected patron deity. Such laments may have served a ritual purpose: when rebuilding the ruined temple, the necessary demolition of the remaining ruins could have been punished as sacrilege had not the blame been laid squarely on enemy shoulders. The laments over the temples of Ur, Eridu, Nippur, Uruk, and over Sumer as a whole were all quite specific in recalling the historical circumstances of the disasters (*ANET*, 455–63, 611–19; Jacobsen 1987, part 8). Later laments turned into ritualized litanies which, at ever greater length, appealed to the deity to desist from visiting further calamities on his or her worshippers (Cohen 1974; 1981); they form a bridge of sorts to the comparable genre in the Psalter and to Lamentations, though far inferior to both the biblical and the Old Babylonian compositions (Gwaltney 1983). The latter themselves may have evolved from earlier

SUMERIAN LITERATURE

compositions commemorating the fall of Lagaš (Hirsch 1967) and Akkad (cf. Gen 10:10) (*ANET*, 646–51; Cooper 1983; Jacobsen 1987).

While priestly poets coped with the destruction of temples, royal historiographers wrestled with the ceaseless change of dynasties. The entire history of Sumer (and Akkad) was outlined in the Sumerian King List, a document which traced the succession of dynasties (or rather of cities) which had ruled the country from the end of the Flood to the accession of Hammurapi of Babylon (ca. 1792 B.C.) (Jacobsen 1939). Later recensions prefaced this outline with a version of antediluvian "history" probably borrowed from the Sumerian Flood Story (*ANET*, 42–44; Civil 1969; Jacobsen 1987: 145–50). The outline history of the Hammurapi dynasty and all later Babylonian dynasties was similarly enshrined in corresponding Akkadian king lists. The Dynastic Chronicle combined both Sumerian and Babylonian traditions in bilingual format (Finkel 1980). A comparable history of Lagaš was composed, probably at the court of Old Babylonian Larsa, for both these cities were omitted from the "official" king lists emanating, most likely, from Nippur (Sollberger 1967). Sumerian historiography thus has little in common with the Deuteronomic history or the Chronicler's history of Israel, though it can be said to include other products of the royal chanceries such as royal correspondence, royal hymns, and royal inscriptions (Hallo 1983).

The Old Babylonian period witnessed the heyday of the scribal school (Sum *é-dub-ba-a*), in which Sumerian was taught to Akkadian-speaking pupils. The daily life of the school is vividly portrayed in essays about the school and in diatribes between teachers and students and among the students (Sjöberg 1976; Gadd 1956). Well trained in debate, the scribes devised a genre of literary disputations for royal entertainment or religious festivals. These pitted imaginary antagonists against each other—shepherd and farmer, summer and winter, cattle and grain, pickaxe and plow, silver and copper—with the winner proclaimed at the end by king or deity. A distant parallel may be seen in the biblical fables such as 2 Kgs 14:9 and Judg 9:8–15 or in the story of Cain and Abel (*ANET*, 41–42; Alster and Vanstiphout 1987).

E. The Post-Sumerian Phase (ca. 1600–100 B.C.)

The fall of Babylon (ca. 1600 B.C.) led to the closing of the scribal schools of Babylonia and relegated Sumerian firmly and finally to the status of a learned and liturgical language. Scribal guilds replaced the schools in Babylonia, and royal libraries like those of Assur and Nineveh took their place in Assyria. Here and in the temples, Sumerian texts continued to be catalogued, copied, recited, translated into Akkadian, and even newly composed. And with the growing prestige of Babylonian learning, they were carried beyond the borders of Mesopotamia to the capital cities surrounding it in a great arc—from Susa in the southeast to Hattuša in the north and Ugarit in the west. But the scope of the Sumerian literary heritage thus passed on gradually contracted. Of the genres devoted to the common man, only proverbs and school essays survived in bilingual editions; the rest largely disappeared while a rich Akkadian wisdom literature came into its own (Lambert 1960, esp. chap. 9). The genres devoted to the king were

fundamentally altered by the new ideology, which rejected his deification; few of the epics and fewer still of the royal hymns and love songs escaped displacement or recasting in Akkadian guise. Only in the religious sphere did Sumerian continue to figure prominently. Here, a rich bilingual (and, on the periphery, even occasionally trilingual) literature continued to sing the praises of the gods or appeal for their mercy (e.g., Cooper 1971, 1972). More and more, this sacred literature employed the *emesal* dialect (Krecher 1967; Kutscher 1975). In bilingual and dialectal form, Sumerian literature survived and even revived as late as the Seleucid and Parthian periods in Babylonia (Black 1987; Cohen 1988). With a history of two-and-a-half millennia, with a geographic spread embracing most of the Asiatic Near East, and with a direct impact on Akkadian, Hurrian, and Hittite literature, Sumerian literature may well have exercised indirect influence on biblical literature. But where and when that influence made itself felt must be investigated separately for each genre.

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WILLIAM W. HALLO

SUN. In ancient Israel the sun—Heb *šemeš* (masc. though sometimes treated as fem.), less commonly *heres* (Job 9:7; Isa 19:18 [emended text]) or *hamma* (lit. "the hot one")—was usually felt to be a positive phenomenon. "Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun"

(Eccl 11:7). Night was the domain of unsavory characters (Job 38:13) and beasts of prey that hastened away as soon as the sun rose (Ps 104:22). The world "under the sun" was the proper realm of mankind (Eccl 1:3 and *passim*; cf. *KAI* 13.7–8; 24.12; 222 C 4–5). To "see the sun" filled people with a sense of being alive; the stillborn could be described as ones who had never had that experience (Ps 58:9; Eccl 6:5).

Being a symbol of life and vigor, the sun could be used as a metaphor to designate a person's vitality, happiness, and success. To have one's sun "go down" meant to experience misfortune and failure (Jer 15:9; cf. Mic 3:6). Another positive quality associated with the sun is constancy. The enduring fame one might wish for a king was like a reflection of the steady presence of the sun (Ps 72:17; cf. v 5). Because of its penetrating rays, from which nothing remains hidden (Ps 19:6), the sun also embodied the triumph of justice. At the break of day, "the wicked were shaken off the earth" (Job 38:13), as the "sun of righteousness" rose (Mal 3:20—Eng 4:2). Morning after morning, God passed judgment "like the light," as the *Tg. Jonathan* renders Zeph 3:5. In view of the sun's association with the distribution of justice, the righteous ruler could be compared to the morning light; he was "like the sun shining forth upon a cloudless morning" (2 Sam 23:3–4).

However, the sun also had its grim side. The Palestinian sun is hot (Exod 16:21); around noon it can be suffocating. This was the time when, according to popular belief, the midday demon haunted the land (Ps 91:6; cf. *Vulg.*). When the sun had reached its zenith—the time referred to as the heat of the sun in 1 Sam 11:9; Neh 7:3—one had best doze off in the shade of one's home (Gen 18:1). Prolonged exposure to the sun could lead to sunstroke (Isa 49:10; Jonah 4:8; Ps 121:6; cf. 2 Kgs 4:18–20; Jdt 8:2–3). Those who could afford to do so led an indoor life; having a skin scorched by the sun designated one as a member of the lower classes (Cant 1:6).

The OT writings do not attest to an elaborate cosmology, shared by all Israelites. Thus, the data concerning the daily course of the sun do not inform us concerning its whereabouts overnight. In most ancient cosmologies, the sun was regarded as making its way from the west to the east through a subterranean passage. *Tg. Ket.* Eccl 1:5 and Rashi suggest that this is indeed the conception underlying Eccl 1:5. The latter passage, however, gives no explicit cosmological view. Psalm 19:5–7 pictures the sun as coming out of a tent, like a groom from the nuptial chamber. Since in other texts the heavens are represented as a tent (e.g., Isa 40:22; Ps 104:2–3; Job 26:7), the psalmist is apparently suggesting that the sun spent the night in a heavenly abode. The "habitation" (*zēbūl*) of sun and moon which Hab 3:11 refers to seems to be located in heaven, too. It would be vain, however, to search in the OT for one authoritative view on this matter. Ancient Egyptian iconography represents the sun as being daily brought forth and swallowed by Nut, the goddess of heaven, but also as making a journey through the underworld in his barque. This "multiplicity of approaches" (Frankfort and Frankfort 1946: 10–26), proper to ancient Egyptian thought, is characteristic of the cosmological views of the Israelites, too. On the whole, the OT writers were less interested in establishing a unified cosmology, than in extolling God's