

NOTES

¹ See, e.g., W. von Soden, *Herrscher im alten Orient* (Berlin etc. 1954), p. 123 ("Orakelfragen"); M. Weippert, *ARINH* (1981), p. 99 ("Orakelanfragen"); M. deJong Ellis, *JCS* 41 (1989) 171 ("oracular queries"); and A. K. Grayson, *CAH*, 2nd ed., III/2 (1991), p. 129 ("oracle requests"), all referring to the extispicy queries edited in SAA 4. Elsewhere, Grayson uses the term "oracle" to refer the Assyrian prophecy corpus (e.g., *BHLT* [1975], p. 13f).

² See E. Weidner, "Babylonische Prophezeiungen," *AfO* 13 (1939/41) 234-7; A. K. Grayson and W. G. Lambert, "Akkadian Prophecies," *JCS* 18 (1964) 7-30; W. W. Hallo, "Akkadian Apocalypses," *IEJ* 16 (1966) 231-42; R. D. Biggs, "More Babylonian 'Prophecies,'" *Iraq* 29 (1967) 117-32; R. Borger, "Gott Marduk und Gott-König Šulgi als Propheten: Zwei prophetische Texte," *BiOr* 28 (1971) 3-24; H. Hunger, "Die Tontafeln der XXVII. Kampagne," *UVB* 26/27 (1972), pp. 82 (W 22307/7 "Prophezeiungen"), 87 and Taf. 25g, and idem, *SpTU I* (1976) pp. 21-3 and 124; H. Hunger and S. Kaufman, "A New Akkadian Prophecy Text," *JAOS* 95 (1973) 371-5; A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical Literary Texts* (Toronto 1975), pp. 11-37 ("Akkadian Prophecies"); R. D. Biggs, "The Babylonian Prophecies and the Astrological Traditions of Mesopotamia," *JCS* 37 (1985) 86-90; idem, "Babylonian Prophecies, Astrology, and a New Source from 'Prophecy Text B,'" *Festschrift Reiner* (1987), pp. 1-14; see further W. G. Lambert, "History and the Gods: A Review Article," *Or.* 39 (1970) 170-7, esp. 175ff, and idem, "The Background of Jewish Apocalyptic" (The Ethel M. Wood Lecture ... 22 February 1977, London: The Athlone Press 1978), pp. 1-20. For a detailed exposition of the reasons why the term "prophecy" should not be applied to this type of text see Ellis, *JCS* 41 (1989) 146ff; cf. also S. Kaufman, "Prediction, Prophecy, and Apocalypse in the Light of New Akkadian Texts," *Proceedings of the 6th World Congress of Jewish Studies I* (Jerusalem 1977), pp. 225f.

³ See, e.g., A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago 1964), p. 221: "Ecstasis as a means of communication between god and man did not occupy the important position in Mesopotamia that it did in Syria and Palestine ... The Western concept (Mari—and, of course, the Old Testament) [is] deeply alien to the eastern, Mesopotamian, attitude toward the god-man relationship"; note also A. K. Grayson, *BHLT* (1975) 14: "Akkadian prophecies are also quite different from biblical prophecy," R. D. Biggs, *Iraq* 29 (1967) 117: "The [prophetic] practices attested in Mari ... are probably of Western origin and not from Mesopotamia"; and cf. J. Bottéro in J.-P. Vernant et al. (eds.), *Divination et rationalité* (Paris 1974), p. 94f.

⁴ See H. Tadmor, "The Aramaization of Assyria: Aspects of Western Impact," *CRRAI* 25 (1982), p. 458, and "Monarchy and the Elite in Assyria and Babylonia: The Question of Royal Accountability," in S. N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (New York 1986), p. 223f; M. Weippert, "Assyrische Propheten der Zeit Asarhaddons und Assurbanipals," *ARINH* (1981), p. 104, and "Die Bildsprache der neassyrischen Prophetie," *OBO* 64 (1985), p. 86. A. R. Millard, *RHR* 202 (1985) 133f, rejects the alleged Western origin of Mari and NA prophecy and regards them as purely Mesopotamian phenomena.

⁵ Note also the alternation of Ištar and Mullissu in the epistolary formula "may Aššur and Ištar/Mullissu bless the king" (for Aššur + Ištar see *ABL* 152, 209, 217, 533, 1249, 1415, and *CT* 53 18 and 500; for Aššur + Mullissu see *ABL* 87-98, 213, 330, 396-398, 480-483, 547, 562, 577, 1015, 1433 and *GPA* 240). Cf. also *CT* 53 235 [Aššur Ištar Bel Nabû] as against *ABL* 149 = *LAS* 317 [Aššur Mullissu Nabû Marduk].

⁶ See, e.g., the hymn to Nanaya/Ištar published by Reiner, *JNES* 33 (1974) 224ff, and nn. 10, 130, 183 and 189f below. Both Banitu ("Creatrix") and Urkittu (the "Urukite") are appellatives of Ištar extremely common in Neo-Assyrian personal names but rare in official cultic texts. On Banitu see K. Deller, *Assur* 3 (1983) 142f; in *STT* 88 iii 6, she is listed (after Mušabšitu "Creatress") as one of the images of Ištar worshiped in the Aššur temple of Nineveh. For Urkittu cf. *Cypris* ("the Cyprian"), a frequent appellative of Aphrodite.

⁷ See in more detail *JNES* 52 (1993) 204f. *AOAT* 240 (1995) 398ff, and p. 6, commentary on oracle I.4. The notion of Nabû as judge over life and death also surfaces in no. 9:20f, to be compared with *SAA* 3 13:19ff ("Please Nabû, do not abandon me! My life is written before you"). See also below, nn. 41 and 196f on the archangel Michael, the Jewish equivalent of Nabû, and his equation with Christ. References to "the book of life" in the Bible and later Jewish literature are collected in S. Paul, "Heavenly Tablets and the Book of Life," *JANES* 5 (1973) 345-354. In *SAA* 3 12 r.9, Nabû is addressed with his name Šiddukišarra (lit., "the accountant of the entire cosmos") in a telling context: "My life is finished; Šiddukišarra, where can I go? I have reached the gate of death; Nabû, why have you forsaken me?"). On this passage see also n. 268 below.

⁸ In Jewish mysticism, divine names and cognomens are viewed as garments in which God dresses "in accordance with what is appropriate for the moment" (*Gikatilla, Gates of Light*, p. 224; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 170, 177, 209f, 223 and 226, and see nn. 47, 112 and 114 below). It is important to realize that these "names" and "garments" functionally correspond to Assyrian "gods," foreign gods being explicitly defined in this same text as names and garments of YHWH, just as in *Enûma eliš*. Tablets VI and VII, Mesopotamian gods are presented as "names" of Marduk. Cf. the gnostic text *Trimorphic Protennoia*, where the Logos tells of herself: "I revealed myself in the likeness of their (= the Powers') shape. And I wore everyone's garment and I hid myself within them, and [they] did not know the one who empowers me. For I dwell within all the Sovereignities and Powers and within the Angels ... And none of them knew me, [although] it is I who work in them" (*NHC XIII* 1, 47, 15ff = *Robinson NHL* p. 520). Compare the term *prosôpon/persona* (actually, "[factor's] mask") introduced by Hippolytus to refer to the Trinitarian God in his three aspects or manifestations (*Kelly Doctrines*, p. 114f). See also nn. 9, 19, 23, 189, 192 and 248 below.

⁹ The affinities of oracle I.4 with the Trinitarian doctrine cannot be brushed off as merely accidental. The final formulation of the latter ("one substance — three persons") has as its point of departure the Neoplatonic hypostases doctrine, which was inspired by the Chaldaean Oracles' triadic view of the universe, particularly their description of the "Father" as a trinity-in-unity (cf. R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism* [London 1972], p. 106). A trinitarian concept of God is implicit in the Assyrian doctrine of kingship as a divine institution materialized in the "consubstantial" trinity of the king, the queen, and the crown prince (i.e., father, mother and son), each of the three functioning in different ways as God's representatives upon earth. See nn. 123, 158 and 196f below for the king and the crown prince as images of Enlil/Marduk and Ninurta/Nabû, and n. 159 for the queen as the image of Mullissu/Ištar (the divine mother of the king); see also n. 197 for the consubstantiality of the king and the crown prince, and nn. 25, 179 and 205 for the complementarity of the heavenly and mundane realms. For Mullissu/Ištar as the "Holy Spirit" see pp. XXVff and XL.

Note that the iconographic representations of Aššur in Assyrian glyptics (the winged disk) occasionally include an anthropomorphic triad of gods: a central figure depicted inside the disk, and two minor accompanying figures riding

on its wings, see fig. 1 above and Appendix B in JNES 52 (1993) 201f. The central figure (raising its hand in a gesture of blessing) can be identified as Enlil/Marduk, the figure on the right wing (receiving the blessing) as Ninurta/Nabû, and the figure on the left wing (likewise raising its hand in blessing) as Mullissu/Ištar of Babylon (Zarpanitu), see JNES 52 185 n. 93; for the beard of the female figure, see n. 97 below, and for the scene itself, SAA 3 37 r.24ff. In some representations, the accompanying figures are reduced to mere volutes emerging from the central figure; often a single volute stands for all three figures (see JNES 52 165 n. 25 and App. B). This implies not only that the accompanying figures were conceived as essentially one with the central figure, but that all three together constituted an indivisible, homogenous whole. Hence the configuration Enlil/Marduk–Mullissu/Ištar–Ninurta/Nabû does not just represent a triad of gods but a true “trinity-in-unity” in the Christian and Neoplatonic/Chaldean sense of the concept. Cf. St. John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images* (transl. D. Anderson, Crestwood, NY, 1980), p. 20: “When we speak of the holy and eternal Trinity, we use the images of the sun, light, and burning rays; or a running fountain; ... or a rose tree.”

Also note that the Assyrian version of the trinity underlying oracle 1.4 (Father–Mother–Son) is explicitly attested in Gnosticism, e.g. in the treatise Trimorphic Protennoia, where we read: “Now the Voice that originated from my Thought exists as three personences: the Father, the Mother, the Son” (NHC XIII 1, 37, 20ff = Robinson NHL p. 514); see also The Apocryphon of John, NHC II 1, 9, 10f = Robinson NHL p. 109, and n. 77 below.

¹⁰ See notes on oracles 1.6 iii 23-27, 24, iv 14-17; 2.4 iii 16; 3.3 ii 14 and 21; and 9:5. In SAA 3 13, three Ištar figures (Mullissu, Urkittu, Queen of Nineveh) coalesce with Nabû, who in this text (line 15) appears as the progenitor of the king, a role elsewhere ascribed to Ištar. Note the affinities of the passage to the “trinitarian” oracle (1.4) just discussed: “My life is written before you (Nabû), my soul is deposited in the lap of Mullissu.” For this passage see also nn. 106 and 268 below.

¹¹ Oracles 3.4-5 are explicitly defined as “words of Ištar of Arbela,” the Goddess speaking, as usual, in the first person singular. In the second oracle (3.2), defined as “well-being” in the text, the oracular deity is not identified by name, but the content of the text as well as parallel oracles leave no doubt that Ištar of Arbela is in question (cf. nos. 1.4:30ff and 2.4, and note also 1.9 referring to a “well-being” sent by Ištar to the king). The first oracle (3.1) is very fragmentary but refers to Aššur in the third person and thus parallels no. 3.2.

¹² Note, however, that in no. 5:3 the king’s cry for help is heard by Ištar, not Aššur, as in the passage Streck Ash p. 78:79ff cited in the note on no. 3 ii 21. Cf. also no. 1 iv 29ff.

¹³ Note also the interchange of Aššur, Ištar and *ilu* “God” in Assyrian personal names discussed in JNES 52 [1993] 187 n. 187 (see also n. 272 below), and the designation of Ištar of Arbela as *Aššur-Ištar* in the Takultu god-list 3 R 66 r. vii 18 (Frankena Takultu p. 7, cf. discussion *ibid.* p. 79). The “composite deity” Aššur-Ištar occurs also in line v 24 of the same text between *Aššur-Aššur* “Aššur as Aššur” and *Aššur-Ilil* “Aššur as Enlil,” on which see n. 59 below.

¹⁴ The same problem is of course also inherent in Christianity, whose Trinitarian doctrine has been criticized since antiquity for introducing “a new, more sublime form of polytheism” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 16 [1974], p. 282, under “different manifestations of God”). On the history of the Trinitarian doctrine see Kelly *Doctrines*, *passim*. Note esp. *ibid.* p. 111ff on God’s “immanent plurality” (Hippolytus) and p. 113 on the idea of “distinction” not “division” or “separation” inherent in the concept of the Trinity (Tertullian, quoting “the unity between the root and its shoot, the source and the river, and the sun and its light as illustrations”). See also *ibid.* p. 265f, and cf. J. Taylor, JSOT 66 (1995) 32 n. 18 on the relationship between Yahweh and “his Asherah” (see n. 199ff below), and G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York 1969), pp. 105-8, on the relationship between God and “his Shekhinah” (see nn. 98 and 146 below).

¹⁵ See the analysis of the name Aššur and its variant spellings in JNES 52 (1993) 205ff.

¹⁶ Cf. the name Gabbu-ilani-Aššur “Aššur is the totality of gods” in BaM 24 (1993) 262 no. 18:7 and 18, dated 744/3 BC. See also the discussion in JNES 52 (1993) 187 n. 97 of names like Gabbu-ilani-ereš (“The totality of gods requested”) and its abbreviation, Ilani-ereš (“God [lit. “gods”] requested”), alternating with Aššur/Ilu/Ištar-ereš (“Aššur/God/Ištar requested”). As a designation of God, *gabbī ilāni* and its abbreviation *ilāni* “gods” (wr. DINGIR.MEŠ) constitutes a perfect parallel to the biblical *elōhīm* “God” (lit. “gods”), on which see nn. 30f below.

¹⁷ E.g., Assurbanipal’s hymn to Aššur, SAA 3 1, lines 26-29: “(Even) a god does not comprehend [...] your majesty, O Aššur; the meaning of your [majestic designs] is not understood,” and see my discussion in JNES 52 (1993) 185f.

¹⁸ See Craig ABRT 1 83 // SAA 12 86:7-11, where Aššur is called “creator of himself, father of the gods, who grew up in the Abyss; king of heaven and earth, lord of all the gods, who ‘poured out’ the supernal and infernal gods and fashioned the vaults of heaven and earth, the maker of all the regions, who lives in the [pur]ic starlit heave[ns]”; SAA 3 1:15f, “creator of the creatures of heaven and earth, fashioner of the mountains, [...] creator of the gods, begetter of Ištar”; and Sg 8 314ff, “Aššur, the father of the gods, the lord of all lands, the king over the totality of heaven and earth.” Note also En. el. I 14f, where Anšar (= Aššur) is said to have “reflected” Anu as his “heir,” and see the discussion in JNES 52 (1993) 191. Cf. also n. 22 below.

¹⁹ Note, e.g., the prayer of Tukulti-Ninurta I, KAR 128 (13th century BC), where Šamaš and Adad are respectively invoked as the “radiance” and the “voice” of Aššur. See further n. 23 below.

²⁰ See n. 8 above, and cf. Gikatilla, *Gates of Light*, p. 13f: “There are Names in charge of prayer, mercy and forgiveness, while others are in charge of tears and sadness, injury and tribulations, sustenance and income, or heroism, loving-kindness and grace... When [one] needs to request something from God he should concentrate on the Name designated to handle that question”; cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 166f and 190f.

²¹ On the problematics of the traditional classification of religions into monotheistic and polytheistic ones see G. Ahn, “Monotheismus’ - ‘Polytheismus’: Grenzen und Möglichkeiten einer Klassifikation von Gottesvorstellungen,” AOT 232 (1993) 1-24; see also N. Lohfink, “Gott und die Götter im Alten Testament,” in K. Rahner et al. (eds.), *Theologische Akademie* 6 (Frankfurt a.M. 1969), pp. 50-71, esp. p. 65. The whole problem disappears as soon as “monotheism” and “polytheism” cease to be viewed as mutually exclusive concepts, in other words, as soon as it is realized that God can be at the same time both “one” and “many.”

²² Cf. the concept of God of Eastern Christian mysticism, which distinguishes between the “essence of God” and “divine attributes,” the latter being regarded as energies that penetrate the universe (see n. 60 below, and cf. nn. 9 and 41). It is good to keep in mind that there is a direct historical link between Christian and Assyrian concepts of God through Neoplatonic philosophy and the Chaldaean Oracles (see nn. 9, 105, 126 and 130ff). Note that Origen’s

trinitarian scheme admits the existence of "spiritual beings ... coeternal with the Father [and] in their degree equally entitled to be called gods" (Kelly *Doctrines*, p. 131).

Assyrian "monotheism" was, of course, rooted in earlier Mesopotamian religion, whose concept of God has close parallels in Hinduism and Egyptian religion (see n. 30 below). There is an important difference, however. Whereas in India and Egypt the single transcendent source of the multiplicity of gods could only be defined in negative terms as "non-existence," Assyrian imperial monotheism introduced Aššur as an intermediate entity between non-existence and existence: the infinite metaphysical universe (AN.ŠAR) engulfing and pervading the physical universe (see JNES 52 [1993] 191). This innovation made Aššur, a "God that created himself," the source of all manifest divine powers (i.e., gods) worshipped in the world, and thus the omnipresent, universal God of the empire (cf. SAA 2 6:393f. "To the future and forever Aššur will be your god, and Assurbanipal ... will be your lord"). Theologically, Aššur corresponds to the *En Sof Or* ("boundless light") of Jewish mysticism, see JNES 52 (1993) 185f and 208, and to the concept of "God beyond the gods" or "greater God" introduced by 20th-century Christian apologists as a reaction to Nietzsche's "death of God."

²³ See JNES 52 (1993) 185 nn. 93f for a discussion of the winged disk symbol of Aššur, which unifies several "great gods" (represented symbolically) into a single composite divine being. Note also the text CT 24 50 edited in AOAT 240 (1995) 398ff, which presents 14 "great gods" of the Babylonian pantheon as functions, tools, and qualities of Marduk (the Babylonian national god), as well as KAR 25 ii 3-15, a prayer to Marduk defining various "great gods" as qualities, powers and attributes of Marduk (his "kingship, might, wisdom, victory, strength, counsel, judgment," etc.). The latter text recalls a well-known Talmudic passage (TB *Hagigah* 12a) attributed to the early third-century scholar Rav: "By ten 'words' was the world created: by wisdom, by understanding, by reason, by strength, by rebuke, by might, by righteousness, by judgment, by compassion, and by loving kindness." On this list, which brings to mind the classic kabbalistic decad of divine powers, see JNES 52 (1993) 186 Fig. 10 and 171 n. 49, and nn. 55, 63 and 112 below.

²⁴ See JNES 52 (1993) 185 n. 94 and 187 n. 97, and n. 13 above.

²⁵ This analogy is not accidental, for the empire was conceived of as the counterpart (*tamšīlu*) of the divine world, referred to as the "kingdom of heaven" in oracle 2.5. See nn. 179 and 205 below and my article "The Assyrian Cabinet" (AOAT 240, 1995), *passim*, and cf. Gikatilla, *Gates of Light*, p. 12: "Our Sages aroused us with the rule: 'The Kingdom of earth is the same as the Kingdom of heaven.'" Note that in the Byzantine empire "imperial ceremonial was the image of the heavenly order" (ODB [1991], p. 1981). Note also Lowell K. Handy, *Among the Host of Heaven* (Winona Lake 1994), who argues that the ANE pantheons functioned as "bureaucracies" and mirrored the social structures of the city states. On the king as God's representative on the earth, see JNES 52 (1993) 167; SAA 10 (1993), p. XVff; and p. XL with n. 193 below.

²⁶ See in detail my article "The Assyrian Cabinet," AOAT 240 (1995) 379-401.

²⁷ Cf. n. 28 and see E. Cassin, "Note sur le *puhrum* des dieux," in A. Finet (ed.), *La voix d'opposition en Mesopotamie* (Bryssels 1975), p. 113; M. deJong Ellis, "Mesopotamian Oracles and Prophetic Texts," JCS 41 (1989) 127-186, esp. p. 139, and A. Malamat, "The Secret Council and Prophetic Involvement in Mari and Israel," in R. Liwak and S. Wagner (eds.), *Prophetie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel: Festschrift für Siegfried Herrmann zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart 1991), 231-236, on the divine council in the Old Babylonian prophecies from Eshnunna and Mari; and I. Starr, *The Rituals of the Diviner* (Malibu 1983), pp. 51ff, on the council in OB extispicy texts. The OB Diviners's Prayer (Starr's Text A) portrays the giving of omens as a sitting in judgment of the council of gods; on p. 57f, Starr points out that "there is a marked interplay between celestial and terrestrial judicial roles in ritual of the diviner" (cf. n. 25 above). In the Sumerian Deluge story (Lambert-Millard *Atra-hasis* p. 142 iv 158), the resolution of the divine council to destroy mankind is referred to as *di-til-la*, "final sentence," the terminus technicus of Sumerian court decisions.

²⁸ See p. XXV with n. 60ff. R. Gikatilla, in whose *Gates of Light* the divine assembly figures prominently, elaborates on the issue as follows (p. 212f): "One finds that all the Holy Names and their Cognomens ... are intermingled and sustain each other. Irrespective of whether they are from the right or left, each one has the same intention and that is to cleave to the name YHVH... You should not think that the groups to the right and left quarrel with each other, or hate each other, or contradict each other, God forbid. It is only that when you see them disagreeing, they are merely negotiating a judgment to bring the justice of the world's creatures to the light of true justice... All the factions of right and left love each other... All agree on the unification of the Name." Note that the council metaphor was also used in early Christianity to illustrate God's essential unity behind his seeming (trinitarian) plurality: "Tertullian exerted himself to show that the threeness was in no way incompatible with God's essential unity, ... noting that on the analogy of the imperial government one and the same sovereignty could be exercised by coordinated agencies" (Kelly *Doctrines*, p. 113; see also n. 40 below).

²⁹ See AOAT 240 (1995) 385 with n. 17, and Fig. 2 *ibid*. Note that the Assyrian copies of the Mesopotamian god list An-Anum (Lambert, *RIA* 3, pp. 275f), which presents the Mesopotamian pantheon as a heavenly royal court, does not include Aššur either but begins with Anu, the "mirror image" of Aššur. Cf. n. 18 above, and see AOAT 240 (1995) 386 and JNES 52 (1993) 179f, 185 and 191.

³⁰ For Iran see S. A. Nigosian, *The Zoroastrian Faith: Tradition and Modern Research* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 1993), pp. 70-89; for Egypt see J. Baines in B. E. Shafer (ed.), *Religion in Ancient Egypt* (London 1991), p. 188f, and E. Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many* (London 1983), and "Die Anfänge von Monotheismus und Trinität in Ägypten," in K. Rahner (ed.), *Der eine Gott und der dreieine Gott* (Munich and Zurich 1983), pp. 48-66; for Ugarit and ANE "Heno/Cosmotheismus" (*hén kai pán*) see O. Loretz, "Die Einzigkeit Jahwes (Dtn 6, 4) im Licht des ugaritischen Baal-Mythos," AOAT 240 (1995) 215-304, esp. 231ff; for classical Greece and Hellenism see O. Kern, *Die Religion der Griechen* II (2nd ed. Berlin 1963), esp. p. 158 with reference to the Orphic logos, "Zeus was the first, Zeus the last... Zeus is the head, Zeus is the middle, everything is Zeus. Zeus is the ground of the earth and the stary heaven," whose antiquity is ascertained by an allusion to it in Plato's *Laws* (785E); cf. R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism* (London 1972), p. 104: "Educated pagans were insistent that the supreme deity's glory is best revealed in the multiplicity of subordinate gods he had produced (cf. *Enn.* II 9.9, 26-42, Porphyry C. Chr. frs. 75-8)." Rudolph *Gnosis*, p. 287, points out that the "monotheistic idea [of God as the summing up of all divinities and divine powers which shape and control the universe] is already found in early Hellenism, as the hymn to Zeus by Cleanthes (about 300 BC) impressively demonstrates." For (Vedic) India, see R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* (2nd ed., London 1931), p. 23ff.

The cuneiform spelling of Iran. *Baga* "God" with the logogram DINGIR.MEŠ "gods" in a LB document from Ecbatana dated 491 BC (^mDINGIR.MEŠ—*da-a-ta*, JCS 28 40 no. 28, rendering *Baga-data* "Given by God," see M. Dandamayev, *Iranians in Achaemenid Babylonia* [Costa Mesa 1992], p. 50) implies that Ahura Mazda was understood in the early Achaemenid period as "the sum total of gods," exactly as Aššur centuries earlier (see n. 16 and note Ahura Mazda's takeover of Aššur's winged disk icon in Achaemenid imperial art). The same spelling is also attested for Yahweh in late 5th century cuneiform documents from Nippur (cf. ^m*ba-na-a'*—DINGIR.MEŠ, BE 9 25:1 and 45:1 [434 BC], corresponding to ^m*ba-na-ia-a-ma* "Yahweh has created" in CBS 4993+2 [same person], see R. Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia* [Haifa 1979], p. 12), establishing a direct link with the equation (Ass.) *ilāni* = (Hebr.) *elōhīm* "God" discussed in the next note.

³¹ Note that not only is *elōhīm* an exact equivalent of Assyrian (*gabbi*) *ilāni* "(all) gods" as a designation of God (see n. 16), but, like Assyrian *ilāni*, it is also at the same time used in the sense of "(individual) gods, divine agents"; see Enc. Jud. 2 (1972) 956, s.v. angels, with the comment "The Bible does not always distinguish clearly between God and His messenger" (citing as examples Gen. 16:7, 13; 21:17ff; 22:1ff, 11:18; and Ex. 3:2). In the meaning "God," both *elōhīm* and its Assyrian equivalent are construed as singular nouns; the underlying plurality is, however, clearly implied by Gen. 1:26 and 3:22, which in gnostic texts are understood to refer to the divine "rulers" (*archontes*) of the universe, the equivalents of the Assyrian "great gods" (see NHC II 1, 21, 17ff and NHC II 4, 88, 25ff = Robinson NHL pp. 117 and 164f, and cf. n. 44 below). For rabbinical exegesis of Gen. 1:26 and 3:22, see Gen. Rabba VIII 9:11-31. In Ps. 82:1-2, "God takes his stand in the court of heaven to deliver judgment among the gods," and Ps. 95:3, "the LORD is a great God, a great king over all gods" (// Ps. 96:4 and 97:7ff), Yahweh is portrayed as president of the divine council (see just below).

I. Gruenwald (pers. communication) objects to interpreting *elōhīm* as "the sum total of gods," pointing out that "one should distinguish between the many 'names' and 'faces' of God and actual multiplicity. What does it really mean that the OT God had different names? A variety of local traditions, perhaps? Elohim is a plural form, but it indicates as a name the notion of majestatis pluralis." As stated above (n. 21), I do not believe that monotheism and polytheism were mutually exclusive concepts in antiquity, and consequently regard a distinction made between "names and faces of God" and "actual multiplicity" — however relevant from the modern point of view — as artificial and anachronistic when applied to antiquity. As hypostatized divine powers, Assyrian gods (like Jewish angels/gods) could at the same time be both "names and faces" and multiple manifestations of God. See further nn. 8, 20 and 28 above, and nn. 33, 41, 47, 55, 58 and 60 below.

³² See H.-J. Fabry, ThWAT V (1986) 775-82, s.v. *sōd* (with detailed bibliography); Enc. Jud. 2 (1972) 957f, sub "Angels as a Group"; H. W. Robinson, "The Council of Yahwe," JTS 45 (1944) 151-7; E. C. Kingsbury, "The Prophets and the Council of Yahwe," JBL 83 (1964) 279-286; J. Gray, *I & II Kings (OTL)*, London 1970, 443ff; E. Mullen, *The Assembly of God* (Chico 1980), p. 205ff; A. Rofé, *The Prophetic Stories* (Jerusalem 1988), pp. 142-52; M. E. Polley, "Hebrew Prophecy Within the Council of Yahwe," in C.D. Evans et al. (eds.), *Scripture in Context* (Pittsburgh 1980), pp. 141-56; A. Malamet, "The Secret Council and Prophetic Involvement in Mari and Israel" (n. 27 above), pp. 231-236; M. Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabbinischer Zeit* (Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 34, Tübingen 1992; ref. courtesy I. Gruenwald), and recently H.-D. Neef, *Gottes himmlischer Thronat: Hintergrund und Bedeutung von sōd JHWH im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart 1994; ref. courtesy M. Nissinen).

³³ 1 Kgs. 22:19-23 = 2 Chron. 18:18-22. For our argument it is immaterial whether the account is historical or "deuteronomistic" fiction. Ahab died in 853 BC according to Reade's calibrated chronology (*Mesopotamian Guidelines for Biblical Chronology*, SMS 4/1 [1981] 8).

³⁴ This verse recalls oracle 1.4 referring to "Sin (Moon), Šamaš (Sun), and sixty great gods" standing with Bel ("Lord") at the birth of Esarhaddon, and oracle 2.2, referring to "sixty gods standing at the [right] and left side" of the oracular deity. Cf. Jer. 8:2 and 2 Kgs. 23:4ff, where "the host of heaven" is similarly associated with Baal, Asherah, the sun and moon, and the planets. On the "host of heaven" see also my remarks in AOAT 240 (1995) 395f and below, nn. 41 and 53.

³⁵ See Isa. 6:1-2; 40:22-26; Jer. 23:18-24; Ezek. 1:22-26; Dan. 7:9ff; Job 1:6-7 and 15:8; note that the council members are here explicitly called "gods" (*bny h'lhym*). See also Ps. 2:4, 89:5f, 103:19 and 123:1.

³⁶ See Gruenwald *Apocalyptic*, p. 35ff (1 Enoch), 51 (2 Enoch), 56f (Apocalypse of Abraham), 60f (Ascension of Isaiah), 63ff (Revelation of John), 71f (Apocalypse of Paul), 94f (Talmud), 116 (On the Origin of the World), 128ff (Ezekiel the Tragedian), 145 (Hekhalot Zutreti), 153ff (Hekhalot Rabbati), 183 (Maasheh Merkavah), 194 (Sefer Hekhalot), 211f (Masekhet Hekhalot), and 214 (Shiur Qomah); Scholem *Origins* (1987), pp. 145-8; Enc. Jud. 2 (1972) 968ff, sub "Angels in the Talmud and Midrash" ("From the third century, the expression of God's 'familia' (*Pamalya*) or the heavenly court of justice is found in the sources. God takes no action without prior consultation with the 'familia,' *ibid.* 969); Zohar II 128a and passim; *Gates of Light*, pp. 139, 194 and passim ("the Great Heavenly Court of Seventy-One"). On the latter expression see AOAT 240 (1995) 396ff; note that this court is referred to by Gikatilla (*ibid.* p. 275) as "the heavenly court known as 'the gods' (*elōhīm*)," and cf. n. 31 above!

³⁷ E.g., Isa. 6:6, Ezek. 10:2, Dan. 7:9 (furnace at the throne of God); Ps. 89:5f, 102:25, 104:2, 148:4 (succession of heavens); Isa. 6:1, Ps. 48:3, 102:19, 104:3 (heavenly palaces); Gen. 28:12 (ladders to heaven); Gen. 28:17, Job 38:10 and 17 (heavenly gates, doors and gatekeepers); Ps. 46, 48, 93:1 and 145:11; 2 Esdras 7:26 (heavenly city and kingdom).

³⁸ See, e.g., the Revelation of John (heavenly Jerusalem), E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*, Teil II (3rd ed., Tübingen 1964), and Gruenwald *Apocalyptic*, pp. 120f, 142ff, 161f and 209; Gikatilla, *Gates of Light*, pp. 11 and 177.

³⁹ See oracle 1.6 (golden chamber in the midst of the heavens, lamp shining before God), 2.5 (kingdom of heaven), and 3.3 (gate of heaven); see also below, n. 248. For other Mesopotamian texts see Horowitz *Cosmic Geography* (1997), passim; e.g., BWL 136:182f, OECT 6 pl. 12:10, and En. el. V 9 (gates of heaven); SAA 3 39:31f (three heavens, lamp shining before Bel, who sits on a lapis-lazuli dais in a temple in the middle heaven); STT 28 v 13 = AnSt 10 122 v 13, and Starr Barū 30:9 // RA 38 87:11 ([lapis lazuli] ladders to heaven).

⁴⁰ See n. 9 above and New Catholic Encyclopedia I (1967), p. 507 ("Angels are held to spiritual intelligences created by, not emanating from, the divine substance ... A worthy man's spiritualization at the resurrection will make him the angel's equal."). Note that although the Church Fathers decidedly opposed efforts to identify angels with pagan gods, in early Christianity angels were commonly believed to have participated in the creation, to move the stars and to be placed over nations and cities, the four elements, and plants and animals (*ibid.* p. 511 with refs.).

According to Athenagoras (c. AD 176), "We affirm a crowd of angels and ministers, whom God, the maker and creator of the world, appointed to their several tasks through his Word. He gave them charge over the good order of the universe, over the elements, the heavens, the world, and all it contains" (C. C. Richardson [ed.], *Early Christian Fathers* [New York 1970], p. 309); cf. Enc. Jud. 2 (1972) 963ff and below, n. 41, for similar views in Jewish apocrypha and mysticism. Note also R. J. Hoffmann, *Porphyry's Against the Christians* (Amherst, NY, 1994), p. 84: "You say, 'The immortal angels stand before God, ... and these we speak of as gods because they are near the godhead.' Why do we argue about names? ... Whether one addresses these divine beings as gods or angels matters very little, since their nature remains the same."

⁴¹ For angels as powers of God in the Hekhalot texts see J. Dan, *The Revelation of the Secret of the World: The Beginning of Jewish Mysticism in Late Antiquity*, Brown University Program in Judaic Studies, Occasional Papers Number 2 (Providence 1992), p. 17, and idem, *Three Types of ancient Jewish Mysticism* (Cincinnati 1984), p. 17. Note that in J. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia 1913), the Mesopotamian gods Samaš, Sin, Bel, Nanaya and Nergal are invoked as "holy angels" (*ml'k'*; charm no. 36), while the angel Rahmiel (Ugaritic Rahmaya) is paired with "Dlibat the Passionate," i.e., Mesopotamian Dilibat/Venus (Mandean Libat; charm no. 28), and Metatron, Hadriel, Nuriel, Uriel, Sasgabiel, Hafkiel and Mehafkiel are defined as "the seven angels that go and turn around heaven and earth and stars and zodiac and moon and sea" (ibid. p. 97). In contemporary Greek papyri, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and other angels are invoked as "gods" (ibid., p. 99). A Hebrew magical-astrological text from Nisibis (M. Gaster, "Wisdom of the Chaldeans," PSBA 22 [1900] 329ff), equates seven angels with the seven classical planets (among others, Michael = Mercury), commenting on Anael = Venus: "This ruler is in the likeness of a woman. He is appointed on all manner of love. On her right arm serves an angel whose name is Arbiel, on the left one called Niniel." Here Anael certainly is the goddess Anat (cf. W. L. Michel, "BTWLH," "virgin" or "Virgin (Anat)" in Job 31:1?, Hebrew Studies 23 [1982] 59-66), while the names Arbiel and Niniel doubtless derive from Ištar of Arbela and Ištar of Nineveh.

The association of angels with planets is not a late phenomenon in Judaism; see above n. 34 on the "hosts of heaven," and note the passage in Ezekiel the Tragedian (2nd cent. BC) discussed by Gruenwald *Apocalyptic* p. 130, where the hosts of heavenly stars fall on their knees before Moses and then march past his throne. In the apocryphal literature angels were not only commonly associated with stars (e.g., 1 En. 18:13ff and 21:33ff; Jub. 19), but there were also angels of the elements, like of the spirit of fire, and of the seasons of the year, of the wind, the clouds, darkness, snow and hail, thunder, and lightning (see Enc. Jud. 2 [1972] 964 for refs.).

In sum, the angels of first millennium AD Judaism in every respect corresponded to Mesopotamian gods. Keeping in mind the Christian definition of angels as creatures of God (n. 40 above), it comes as no surprise that the Church Fathers accused the Jews of "praying not to the God but to angels and practicing magic" (see Gruenwald *Apocalyptic* p. 230 n. 17, discussing the magical treatise *Sefer ha-Razim*). As pointed out by Gruenwald (ibid.), such practices are, however, not evidence of polytheistic or syncretistic beliefs: they are perfectly in line with biblical and rabbinic monotheism and have to be judged in the light of nn. 8 and 20 above.

It should be noted that the alleged author of Montgomery's charms 8, 9, 17, and 32-33, Joshua ben Perahia (early 1st cent. BC), was an early hero of the Law (cf. Pirke Aboth 1:7) and hence certainly a highly respected member of the rabbinic community. In Sanh. 107b he is associated or confused with Jesus of Nazareth, and not for the assonance of name only: his reputed ascent to heaven reveals him as an emulator of Adam Qadmon, the "perfect man," who as personification of Michael/Metatron was by definition believed to wield extraordinary magic powers (cf. SAA 10 p. XIX and n. 121 below). See further Collins *Scepter and Star*, p. 139.

⁴² For the derivation of the menorah from the ANE sacred tree see G. Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion* (Uppsala 1951), p. 64ff (with illustration of a menorah-shaped tree in Mesopotamian glyptic); L. Yarden, *The Tree of Life: A Study of the Menorah, the Seven-branched Lampstand* (Ithaca, NY, 1971; rev. ed. Uppsala 1972); C. Meyers, ThWAT IV (1984) 981-7 s.v. *mnwrh*; and recently J. Taylor, "The Asherah, the Menorah and the Sacred Tree," JSOT 66 (1995) 29-54 (ref. courtesy T. Veijola). In Ex. 25:40, the menorah is explicitly associated with "the design (*tbny*) which you were shown on the mountain," i.e., the burning bush (Ex. 3: 1f, cf. Deut. 4: 15f). According to St. John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images* (transl. D. Anderson, Crestwood, NY, 1980), p. 65, "The burning bush was an image of God's mother (Theotokos)"; cf. nn. 47, 98, 133 and 199ff below.

For the menorah as a distinctive symbol of Judaism in the post-exilic period see Widengren, loc. cit. Note that while in 1 Macc. 1:21 the lampstand occupies a position of central importance among the cult objects carried off from the temple by Antiochus in 169 BC (as 200 years later by Titus), it does not have this status in the lists of booty carried off by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC (2 Kgs. 24:13ff and Jer. 52:17ff). This suggests that the menorah was introduced as a religious symbol only in the post-exilic period, in order to distinguish clearly the "deuteronomistic" form of Judaism from its 'idolatrous' predecessor. See p. XXVI with n. 65, and cf. Job 29:2 and Ps. 132:17. See also p. XLII with n. 201f below for the association of the sacred tree with Asherah in pre-exilic Israel, corresponding to its association with Shekhinah and Tiferet in Jewish mysticism (nn. 47 and 133) and with Mullissu and Ištar in Assyria (n. 133), and note that the cherub-flanked tree (n. 98) constituted the principal decorative motif of the temple of Solomon (1 Kgs. 6f, cf. Ezek. 40f) and of the Tabernacle (Ex. 25 and 36).

⁴³ On Kabbalah as a direct continuation of apocalyptic and rabbinic mystical tradition see M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven 1988), p. 30ff and I. Gruenwald, "Reflections on the Nature and Origins of Jewish Mysticism," in P. Schaefer et al. (eds.), *Gershom Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism 50 Years After* (Tübingen 1993), pp. 25-48. Several central kabbalistic concepts and doctrines are already attested in the Babylonian Talmud (e.g., Maashe Bereshit, Maashe Merkavah, ten divine powers, God's infinite expansion at Creation, the pillars, the story of the Four Sages, Metatron, Sandalphon, the four beasts). The antiquity of the kabbalistic interpretation of the menorah (see n. 44) is confirmed by Philo (Moses 2.102-3), according to whom "the menorah is the symbol of heaven and its lights, of the planets"; cf. Zech. 4: 1-14 and Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5.6.34.9-35.2 ("the lamps symbolize the seven planets and the menorah itself is the sign of Christ"), and see further Morton Smith, *Studies in the Cult of Jahweh II* (Leiden 1996), p. 138. On the relevance of Kabbalah to the study of Assyrian religion see I. Gruenwald, "How much Qabbalah in Ancient Assyria?" *Methodological Reflections on the Study of a Cross-Cultural Phenomenon*, in S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting (eds.), *Assyria 1995* (Helsinki 1997), pp. 115-127.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., Scholem *Origins*, p. 82; Gikatilla, *Gates of Light*, pp. 15, 22, 31f, 221, and passim; Idel *Kabbalah*, p. 113f. On the technical meaning of the term sefirah in the *Sefer Yezirah* and the writings of Abraham Abulafia ("primordial/ideal number") see Scholem *Origins*, p. 26f, and Idel *Kabbalah*, p. 349 n. 323; according to I. Gruenwald