

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

be read right through, as it ought to be, the arrangement in chapters is better, perhaps, than an alphabetical arrangement would have been. The author is Miss Amy B. Barnard, L.L.A.

After long waiting, an editor has been found for Isaac Taylor's *Words and Places*, an editor thoroughly competent and sufficiently enthusiastic. It is the Rev. A. Smythe Palmer, D.D. The new edition (Routledge; 6s.) is a new book. Dr. Smythe Palmer could have written from the foundation. But this is a vast subject, and for once it is better that one learned man should edit another man's work. Even since Isaac Taylor wrote there have appeared so many works on the etymology of proper names that it must have taken the most of a man's lifetime to master them and incorporate their results. Dr. Smythe Palmer might have claimed the glory of a great comprehensive work of his own on the subject. He has been content to edit Isaac Taylor, and he has done it thoroughly.

To the old puzzle why God had respect to Abel's offering and not to Cain's, there is an answer in a new volume of sermons, entitled *The Writing on the Sky* (Skeffingtons; 3s. 6d.). The volume, of which the author is the Rev. D. R. Fotheringham, M.A., has more than one surprise of exposition in it, though the sermons have not been prepared as surprises. They have too much to do with the duty of the day for that. Mr. Fotheringham says that 'there is something a little

more precious in Abel's offering than in Cain's. The fruit will grow again, and the ground will yield its increase once more in the coming year: but a life that has been taken—ah, that is an irreparable deed. Something has been *given* to the Lord, and it can never be the giver's again. Cain's is the loan on deposit: Abel's is the real sacrifice: and thus it is to Abel's offering that the Lord has respect, and not unto Cain's.'

Messrs. Williams & Norgate have published the ninth volume of the new series of the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (10s. 6d. net). It contains the papers read before the Society during the thirtieth session, 1908-9. What are the papers? They are (1) Mental Activity in Willing and in Ideas, by Professor S. Alexander; (2) Bergson's Theory of Knowledge, by Mr. H. Wildon Carr; (3) The Place of Experts in Democracy, a Symposium, by Professor B. Bosanquet, Mrs. Sophie Bryant, and Professor G. R. T. Ross; (4) The Rationalistic Conception of Truth, by Dr. F. C. S. Schiller; (5) The Mutual Symbolism of Intelligence and Activity, by Dr. Hubert Foston; (6) The Satisfaction of Thinking, by Professor G. R. T. Ross; (7) Natural Realism and Present Tendencies in Philosophy, by Dr. A. Wolf; (8) Why Pluralism? a Symposium, by Professor J. H. Muirhead, Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, and Professor A. E. Taylor; (9) Are Presentations Mental or Physical? a reply to Professor S. Alexander, by Professor Stout.

## What was the Scene of Abraham's Sacrifice?

BY A. H. SAYCE, LITT.D., LL.D., PROFESSOR OF ASSYRIOLOGY, OXFORD.

IN the time of the Chronicler (2 Ch 3<sup>1</sup>) the temple-hill at Jerusalem was known as Mount Moriah, and it was believed to have been the scene of Abraham's sacrifice. According to Gn 22<sup>2</sup>, this took place on 'one of the mountains' in 'the land of Moriah,' where instead of 'Moriah,' or rather 'the Moriah' (*Ham-moriyyâh*), the Septuagint reads *ψηλῶν*, 'high(-lands).' Like Môreh (Gn 12<sup>6</sup>), which is a transliteration of the cuneiform Martu—the Brathy, probably, of

Sanchuniathon—Ham-moriyyâh would correspond with the cuneiform Amurru, 'Amorite'; the variant reading points in this direction, and the termination would have been Hebraized as in Aranyah (2 S 24<sup>18</sup>), for Araunah. Indeed, the Septuagint presupposes a reading Ham-mârôm, an accurate reproduction so far as the Kethibh is concerned of the Babylonian Amurru.

That the temple-mount was really meant by the writer of Genesis is, however, pretty clear.

Abraham was ordered to go from Beer-sheba to the highlands, and on the third day after starting saw 'the place afar off.'<sup>1</sup> This would exactly agree with the distance between Beer-sheba and Jerusalem at the ordinary rate of travelling in the south of Palestine. To make the matter clearer, the writer quotes a saying current in his own time: 'In the mount of the Lord ירהא.'

The present punctuation, and consequently translation, of the last word goes back at least to the age of the Septuagint, which renders the passage, 'In the mount the Lord was seen.' The identification of it, moreover, with *yir'âh*, 'reverence,' is excluded by the name 'Jehovah-jireh,' to which the saying is attached. Hence a translation: 'In the mount of the Lord is reverence,' must be put aside. On the other hand, *yêrâch*, 'he is seen,' requires a nominative, as the Septuagint translators perceived, while Jehovah-jireh, 'Jehovah sees,' is an impossible name for a place. A substantive is required after the divine name, as in other similar compounds (Jehovah-nissi, Jehovah-shalom, Jehovah-tsidkenu, Jehovah-shammah).

The difficulties vanish, however, as soon as we turn the passage into Assyrian. The cuneiform original of the proverb would be: *ina sad Yau urtu*, 'in the mount of Yahveh is the revelation,' and the name of the place would be *Yau-sa-urti*, 'Yahveh of the revelation,' or, more probably, *urrat Yau*, 'the revelation of Yahveh.'

The cases in which the Babylonian order of words is transposed in the Hebrew transcription are numerous, as may be seen from my archaeological commentary on the Book of Genesis: *Yahveh Elohim* for *ilâni Yau* is an example. Similar instances of transposition are found in Assyrian translations from Sumerian as well as in the Hittite tablets of Boghaz Keui.

Har-el, 'the mount of God,' is one of the places captured by Thothmes III. in the south of Palestine (No. 81), and the name is transferred by Ezekiel (43<sup>15</sup>) to the altar of the new Jerusalem. In Isaiah (29<sup>1-2</sup>) the word is written Ari-el, with a play upon a Moabite word of similar sound which signified 'hero' (see Moabite Stone, ll. 12, 17, and Is 33<sup>7</sup>). *Ari* as well as *ar*—a word borrowed from Sumerian—is given in a cuneiform tablet as the (West Semitic) equivalent of 'highlands.'

Ezekiel's altar corresponds with the Du-azagga

or 'Holy Hill' of the temple of Bel-Merodach at Babylon, where the god revealed himself at the feast of the New Year and delivered his oracles. It was a model of the Du-azagga in the temple of Ea at Eridu, which was itself believed to be a representation of 'the deep,' wherein Ea had his throne. Bel-Merodach, as the son of Ea, inherited not only his father's wisdom, but also 'the Holy Hill' (called *Tilu'ellu* in Semitic) whereon his revelations were made. It stood in the inner sanctuary of the temple, and there the *urtu* or 'oracle' was received by the priest.

Bel-Merodach of Babylon had dethroned the older Bel of Babylonia, Ellil of Nippur. Ellil was addressed as Sadu rabu, 'the great mountain, and his temple at Nippur was called E-Kur, 'the House of the Mountain,' of which it was regarded as a copy. His wife was Nin-Kharsag, 'the Mistress of the Mountain.' As the Sumerian *nin* was genderless, it often became the male 'Master' in Semitic Babylonian theology, and Delitzsch therefore may be right in connecting Sadu with the El-Shaddai of Genesis, Shaddai being the dual Sadâ, though it would seem more probable to make it an adjectival derivative from *sadu* in the sense of 'mountaineer.' However this may be, the El Elyon, or 'Most High God,' of Gn 14<sup>18</sup> is the equivalent of the Babylonian Sadu rabu, reminding us that the Syrians declared the gods of the Israelites to be 'gods of the hills' (I. K. 20<sup>23</sup>). Further north, on Mount Shêkh Baragât, near Aleppo, the God of the Mountain was worshipped under the name of Salamânês, the Shalman of the Assyrians, who, however, was called 'the fish' on the banks of the Khabur and Euphrates, where he was identified, not with Ellil, but with 'Ea, king of the gods.'

The messenger or 'angel' of Ellil was Nin-ip, one of whose titles was Nabu, 'the prophet,' and we can therefore now understand why in one of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets the king of Jerusalem should refer to 'the city of the mountain of Jerusalem, whose name is Bit-Nin-ip, the city of the (Egyptian) king.' Winchester translates, 'a city of the land of Jerusalem,' but this would require *estin alu* in the Assyrian text. At one time I supposed that Bit-Nin-ip was Jerusalem itself, but the context shows that this could not have been the case, and that Bit-Nin-ip was not Jerusalem but a town very close to it. Just as Nebo, the angel of Merodach, was worshipped at

<sup>1</sup> The phrase used is Assyrian; cf. *Gilgames-Epic*, x. 24.

Borsippa which adjoined Babylon, so Nin-ip would have been worshipped in a city which adjoined the seat of the cult of Ellil.

In Gn 22<sup>11</sup> 'the angel of Yahveh' takes the place of the Elohim of the previous verses. The following verse, however, shows that 'Elohim' must have originally stood here also. Translating this into the terms of Babylonian theology, we should say that Nin-ip has been substituted for Ellil.

That the sanctity of the Sakhra rock at Jerusalem goes back to neolithic times has been pointed out by Mr. Clarkson Wallis (*P.E.F. Quarterly Statement*, 1905, p. 164), who was the first to notice its resemblance to the neolithic sanctuary-cave at Gezer. That it should have continued to be a sacred place in the bronze age would be in accordance with the immemorial custom of the East. When David captured first the fortress of the Jebusites on Zion, and then Jerusalem itself, the dwelling-place of the Jebusites, there must have still been a temple there; hence the proverb, 'The blind and the lame shall not enter the temple' (2 S 5<sup>8</sup>). As in Egypt, so in Western Asia, it must be remembered that the temple was also a fortress, and the capture of the outpost on Zion would have been merely the prelude to the capture of the city itself. After the capture of the city, though the Jebusites were left in possession of the temple-hill, it would seem that the sanctuary was destroyed; otherwise it is difficult to understand how Araunah could have had his threshing-floor on the spot.

To sum up. We may conclude that the temple-hill was already a sacred spot in the neolithic age. When Uru-Salim, 'the city of

Salim,' was founded by the Babylonians in 'the land of the Amorites,' its sanctity was still respected, and it became a seat of the worship of Ellil, the Sadu rabu or 'great mountain,' whom the Amorites called Elyon, 'the Most High.' Here, therefore, rose a high-place, formed of monoliths like that discovered by Mr. Macalister at Gezer, and here in its sacred grove Abraham found the ram (*elim* in Sumerian) which was the symbol of Ellil (*S<sup>c</sup> 312*),—not, be it noticed, the lamb of vv. 7-8, which was not consecrated to the Babylonian god. Before the age of David, the monoliths had made way for a 'temple,' perhaps under Hittite influence. In the reign of Solomon the old 'mountain of God' became a 'mountain of Yahveh,' and the ancient proverb, 'In the mountain of God is the revelation,' or 'oracle,' received a new application, aided by the substitution of the Phœnician alphabet and the Canaanitish language for the Babylonian script and language, which had hitherto been in use.

The history of the temple-hill thus offers a curious parallel to that of a rock-shrine I once discovered near Dirr in Nubia. This was originally dedicated to the *Ka* of an Egyptian of the eighteenth dynasty, to whom offerings were accordingly made. With the introduction of Christianity the Egyptian became Isu, or Jesus, to whom the old offerings continued to be presented, and after the triumph of Mohammedanism Isu passed into the Moslem Shêkh Isu. The offerings and cult, however, remained unchanged, and to this day the cup of water, or beer, and the bowl filled with corn are duly laid on the ancient altar for the Mohammedan saint.

## Contributions and Comments.

### The Name Abraham in Babylonian.

In the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 1894, p. 212, Professor Hommel announced that he had discovered the proper name *A-bi-e-ra-mu* on a contract published by Professor Meissner in his indispensable book *Beiträge zum Altbabylonischen Privatrecht*, No. 111. The original is in the Royal Museum of Berlin, catalogued VAT 1473, and has the contract in

duplicate, that is, the contract on the tablet is copied on to the outer case, and both copies are intact. Hommel repeated his discovery in several books, and it misled Professor Sayce in his *Early History of the Hebrews*, and Dr. Pinches in his *Old Testament in the Light of Assyrian and Babylonian Research*, but the latter has corrected the matter in his third edition, 1908. As a matter of fact the name does not stand on the tablet, but both inner and outer copies have *A-bi-e-ra-ah*, as