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fördern und zu wirken. Die Torah will nicht Last und Fessel sein, sondern wie Ps 119 sagt, Licht, Weg, Wahrheit und Leben. Ein dtr Autor hat die Zusammenhänge, von denen in dieser Vorlesung die Rede sein sollte, gespürt, wenn er ins Buch des Propheten Micha (6,8) ein Wort Jahwes schrieb und dabei den Akzent auf das Verhalten gegenüber den Mitmenschen setzte: »Es ist dir gesagt, o Mensch, was gut ist und was der Herr von dir erwartet: Recht tun, Treue und Güte lieben, in Ehrfurcht den Weg gehen mit deinem Gott.«  


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Despite efforts made to understand the Mesopotamian and Genesis flood narratives as cosmogonies, the architecture and religious symbolism of the arks remain a scholarly embarrassment. Comparisons of the design of the arks described in Gilgamesh XI and Genesis 6 – 8 traditionally have focused on the sharp incompatibility of their dimensions. I shall attempt to demonstrate by a close


1 Forms of this paper were presented in a seminar held at the Institute for the Advanced Study of Religion in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, November 9th, 1988 and at the 1988 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Chicago, Illinois, November 21st. I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Professor Walter Farber for numerous helpful observations and criticisms.
reading of the cuneiform texts and use of parallel materials that the ark in *Gilgamesh* was conceptualized along the lines of a ziggurat, while that in Genesis was patterned on an idealized Solomonic temple. Both ark narratives are best seen as products of ancient Near Eastern temple ideology, expressing both general and acculturated ideals of design, function and mythology.

In the ancient Near East the customary location for a theophany or hierophany was the temple. A »language« rich in symbolic nuance evolved in the course of time to give voice to the experience of the divine. This fluid of imagery, ideas and traditions, manifested in temple iconography, ritual, and mythology is gathered under the rubric »temple ideology.«

In the course of this paper I shall set forth six interrelated but distinguishable abstract propositions which will serve to define those aspects of temple ideology that are strikingly apparent in the Akkadian and Hebrew narratives under consideration. The reader who expects to encounter an exhaustive set of propositions covering every conceivable approach to the semiotics of the ancient temple will be disappointed: only those symbols diagnostic on the temple which I believe to be present in the two Deluge accounts will figure in this paper. On the other hand, the reader equipped with a history of religions background will probably find most if not all these propositions familiar: the novelty lies not in the concepts, but the application. Each narrative will be analyzed in turn by means of philology, literary criticism, and archaeology; finally, I will compare the two traditions and endeavor to refine our understanding of certain cultural and theological values revealed by the nature of the Hebrew Bible’s appropriation of the Mesopotamian flood legends.

Proposition 1. »The temple is the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain.« The equating of the temple with mountains and their attributes is a ubiquitous feature of ancient Near Eastern texts, iconography and architecture. The Sumerian names given to ziggurats frequently express this. In the Keš Temple hymn the author extols the temple as

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2 Translations of Hebrew and Akkadian texts in this paper are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

3 John M. Lundquist, What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology, in H. B. Huffmon, F. A. Spina, and A. R. Green (eds.) The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Essays in Honor of G. E. Mendenhall, 1983, 207. I am indebted to Lundquist’s highly suggestive article for the idea of setting forth facets of temple ideology in propositional form, as well as for certain propositions themselves and examples.

4 On the names of ziggurats and their significance, see Geo Widengren, Aspetti simbolici dei templi e luoghi di culto del Vicino Oriente Antico, Numen 7 (1960), 1 – 3; for
great crown reaching the sky, temple, rainbow reaching the sky, temple whose platform is suspended from heaven's midst, whose foundation fills the Abzu, whose shadow covers all lands⁵.

Ugaritic mythology situates the <em>palace</em> (read temple) of the god Baal atop Mount Zaphon⁶. Much of the imagery and language used to describe Baal's mountain dwelling was translated into the idioms of the Hebrew Bible in the context of Yahweh/El and Zion, the mountain of the temple⁷.

Great is Yahweh and greatly to be praised in the city of our God/ his holy mountain, beautiful in elevation, joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, on the utmost peak of Zaphon, the city of the great king (Ps 48,2 – 3 [Hebrew]).

Physically the ziggurat consisted of an immense solid structure comprised of a core of sun-dried mudbrick surrounded by a water-resistant shell of fired mudbrick and bitumen for mortar. The foundation was either square or rectangular; its conspicuous elevation was achieved by means of a series of graduated stages, usually 3, 5, or 7 in number. Constructed upon the flat alluvial floodplains between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the ziggurat symbolized and functioned as an artificial mountain. It is known from textual sources that a shrine or cella of sorts occupied the summit, where sacrifice and various rituals were performed, in addition to routine astronomical observations⁸. Visual, graphic mountain symbolism in the Jerusalem temple would seem to

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⁷ See the treatment in Jon D. Levenson, Sinai and Zion, New Voices in Biblical Studies, 1985, 89 – 184. The Jerusalem temple mount itself is probably referred to in Mi 3,19 as «the mountain of the house» [הָרָה הַבַּבָּיִית]; the historiography behind the Chronicler’s account of the Josianic reform included the destruction of sanctuaries in the Northern Kingdom, using the same rubric (II Chr 34,6). RSV translates «ruins» with a critical note that the Hebrew is uncertain; unpointed MT דָּרוּת בְּבֵיתָם, «in the mountain of their houses» was acceptable to the Massoretes, and in light of Mi 3,19 and similar passages poses no difficulty.
⁸ Édouard Dhorme, Les religions de Babylone et d’Assyrie, Les anciennes religions orientales, 2, 1949, 178 – 182, 194 f. See also Walter Andrae, Das wiedererstandene Assur, 1938, 88 – 93; the second edition of Andrae’s work, ed. Barthel Hrouda, 1977, 129 – 137 updates the translations and bibliography and alters the statistics somewhat; more detailed studies include Th. A. Busink, De Babylonische Tempeltorens, Lectiones Orientales, 2, 1949; Th. Dombart, Alte und neue Ziqqurat-Darstellungen zum Babel-
account for the description of the altar of burnt-offering in Ez 43,13–17. Built in three stages, with its lowermost stage identified by a Hebrew expression which is possibly analogous to an Akkadian term used to describe ziggurat construction, the altar, if not intended to represent a ziggurat in miniature, surely participated in the imagery of the smoking mountain of God.

**Proposition 2.** »The cosmic mountain represents the primordial hillock, the place which first emerged from the waters that covered the earth during the creative process.« This idea is articulated most clearly in Egyptian sources. In Mesopotamian sources temples and ziggurats are repeatedly described as having their foundations in the *apsû*, which was, among other things, the cosmic subterranean waters that existed prior to the creation of the habitable world. »I grounded its base in the *apsû* and raised its top mountain high <...> its top reached up to heaven; below, its roots stretched down to the *apsû*.«

9 The resemblance between the Ezekiel altar and the ziggurat was pointed out by Paul Haupt almost a century ago; the linguistic correlation between the Hebrew נֵבְיָמָן, »bosom of the earth,« the lowest level of the altar of burnt-offering in Ezekiel, and Akk. *irat kigalli*, »bosom of the underworld,« drawn by W. F. Albright, The Babylonian Temple-Tower and the Altar of Burnt-Offering, JBL 39 (1920), 139–140, remains cogent, despite the criticisms of Clifford, Cosmic Mountain, 179 and Walther Zimmerli, Ezekiel 2, trans. by James D. Martin, Hermeneia, 1983, 425, 427 f. Albright’s association of the term for the altar top, נֵבְיָמָן/הָאֲרָלַל, with Akk. *arallu* or *arallû*, meaning, in his opinion, both »underworld« and »mountain of the gods,« is improbable; Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, 4th ed., 1946, 151 f.


11 The three major cosmologies in ancient Egyptian texts begin with the assumption of a pre-existent, omnipresent abyss of water. In Heliopolitan theology the sun god Atum emerged from the pre-existent waters in the guise of a hill, and the site of creation was located in the temple of Heliopolis. »The early formalizing of the Hill into an eminence with sloping sides or a platform surrounded by steps is probably what the Step Pyramid at Sakkar, and possibly the later pyramids with unbroken sloping sides, were supposed to represent.« J. M. Plumley, The Cosmology of Ancient Egypt, in Ancient Cosmologies, ed. by Carmen Blacker and Michael Loewe, 1975, 28. Later, the holy of holies in every temple, by dint of the creative principle embodied in their particular deity, could be identified with the primordial hillock. H. Frankfort and H. A. Frankfort, Myth and Reality in The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man, ed. H. Frankfort et al, 1946, 21. For representations of the idea of the primeval hill in Egyptian hieroglyphics, see Othmar Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms, trans. by Timothy J. Hallet, 1985, 114, and Plumley, The Cosmology of Ancient Egypt, 29.

12 Margaret Green, Eridu in Sumerian Literature (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1975), 167. For a general overview of the possible meanings of this term in Akkadian literature, see the CAD s. v. *apsû.*
Proposition 2a. »The temple is often associated with the waters of life which flow forth from a spring within the building itself — or rather the temple is viewed as incorporating within itself or as having been built upon such a spring.«¹³ Conversely, the temple is founded upon the chaos waters, which have the potential for overwhelming the world with death and destruction; the temple and its ritual guard against the eruption of these waters. The abzu in Sumerian thought was the fount from which organic life received its animating principle. »While living creatures do not dwell there ... [t]he clay of the abzu is the stuff from which life is created.«¹⁴ The image of super-fecundating waters originating in the Jerusalem temple is strikingly expressed in Ezekiel:

Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; waters were running from below the threshold of the temple eastward (for the temple faced east); and the waters were flowing down from under the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar ... Then he led me back along the bank of the river. As I was going back (I saw) on the river bank very many trees on either side. Then he said to me, »These waters flow toward the eastern region and descend into the Arabah; and when they enter the stagnant waters of the sea, the waters will be healed. and wherever the rivers go every living creature which swarms will live ...« (Ez 47,1.6b – 9a)¹⁵.

Lucian, the author of De dea syria, recounts the legend that the temple of Hierapolis on the Euphrates was built over the flood waters by Deucalion, the Greek counterpart to Ziusudra, Atrahasis, Utnapishtim and Noah¹⁶. Yahweh's combat with the monsters who inhabited the

¹³ Lundquist, What Is a Temple?, 208 (proposition no. 3).
¹⁴ Greek, Eridu, 170.
¹⁵ See in this connection Joel 3,18; Sach 14,8; Ps 46,5, and P. Reymond, L'eau, sa vie, et sa signification dans l'Ancien Testament, SVT 6 (1958), 234 – 238. It has become something of a commonplace to identify temple symbolism in the Primal History of Genesis. See, for example, James E. Miller, Aetiology of the Tabernacle/Temple in Genesis, in Proceedings Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies, vol. 6, 1986, [1987] 151 – 160; Gordon J. Wenham, Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story, in: Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, 1985, Division A, 1986, 19 – 25; J.-C. Goyon, Les Dieux-Gardiens et la Genèse des temples, 2 vols., 1985 [unavailable to me]; Nicolas Wyatt, Interpreting the Creation and Fall story in Genesis 2 – 3, ZAW 93 (1981), 14 – 19; Levenson, Sinai and Zion, 131. For example, the quaternary rivers which define the sacred geography of Eden are part and parcel of the iconographic repertoire common to the ancient Near East; see the comments and illustrations in Othmar Keel, Symbolism, 116 – 118. But use of the name Gihon in Gen 2,13 is probably allusive to the Jerusalem spring of the same name which served a sacral function in the anointing of Salomon as king (I Reg 1,33.38.45).
primordial chaos waters is alluded to several places in the Hebrew Bible.\(^{17}\)

**Proposition 2b.** *The world is re-created every year by agency of the temple, whose activities serve to define the primordial and liturgical New Year.* The temple, located on the primordial hillock and capping to this day the chaos waters of creation, sacral-spatially occupies the center of the world, the *axis mundi*. The temple was founded at the time of creation: the First Year and every New Year marks the sacral-center of time.\(^{18}\)

In the visionary restoration of Ezekiel, the temple-city Jerusalem is envisioned as occupying the center of the nations (5,5), and is actually termed »the very navel of the earth« (38,12). In Ps 78 the founding of the Jerusalem temple by Yahweh is likened to his creation of heaven and earth (v. 69).\(^{19}\)

The temporal analog to the temple as center of the world is the motif of cosmogonic repetition: the New Year festival not only commemorates the creation of the world, but the ever-present principle of creation is redeemed from impending decay and re-introduced into the sacral community. The *akītu*-festival, the Babylonian New Year

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\(^{19}\) See the discussion of this concept and the philological ink spilled over the *dis legomem* *tablūr* in Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 115 – 120.

\(^{20}\) Cosmic symbolism in the Solomonic temple probably included the textually ill-defined three-tiered design of the building itself (I Reg 6,6), evocative of the three storeyed cosmology of heaven, earth and underworld, and the »bronze sea,« probably a Judean counterpart to the cosmic subterranean ocean, the *apsū*, symbolized in Mesopotamian temples by ritual basins of the same name. See Helmut Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, trans. by David E. Green, 1980, 161. »The furnishings of the temple were full of cosmic symbolism, as was in effect true also for the temple as a whole ... The decoration of the temple with palm trees and cherubim, as well as the ornamental pomegranates on the masonry all suggest the fertility of the earth, or more exactly, of the paradise garden where Yahweh dwelt.« R. E. Clements, *God and Temple*, 1965, 65. Josephus described the shape of the Holy of Holies within the Jerusalem temple as a deliberate copy of the heavens, the »holy place« represented the earth, while the court represented the Deep (*ḥôm*); the menorah symbolized the sun, moon and five planets. »Like Josephus, Philo interprets the Tabernacle and High Priest's vestments cosmologically.« A. P. Hayman, Some Observations on Sefer Yesira: (2) The Temple at the Centre of the Universe, *JJS* 37 (1986), 178; Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, trans. by H. St. J. Thackeray, *Loeb Classical Library*, 1961, III,7.7.
festival, celebrated the enthronement of the king of the gods, Marduk, and the establishment of his holy city, Babylon. The ceremony apparently involved the eclipse or «death» of Marduk by concealing the divine image in the cella atop Etemenanki, the central ziggurat of Babylon, and his re-emergence or «resurrection» wherein the king of the nation, following ritual humiliation, re-enacted the cosmogonic battle against the forces of chaos, Apsû and Tiamat. On the fourth day of the festival the officiating priest recited the Enûma eliš, the Babylonian creation story, which included an account of the divine foundation of the great ziggurat of Babylon upon the ṣupu. In the Hebrew Bible, the sanctuary in the wilderness was dedicated on the same day that the flood waters receded from the land of the new world (Ex 40,2; Gen 8,13). The Solomonic temple was said to have been dedicated at Sukkoth, the New Year festival in the autumn (I Reg 8,2.65). Certain Rabbinic legends concerning the Jerusalem temple, the New Year’s Festival, and the Deep [ṭhôm] admirably weave together the threads of our Proposition 2:

Rabbi Johanan said ... When David dug the Pits (that is, the perpendicular shafts reaching down under the Temple to the Deep), the Deep arose and threatened to submerge the world. «Is there anyone,« inquired David, «who knows whether it is permitted to inscribe the [Ineffable] Name upon a sherd, and cast it into the Deep that its waves should subside?« There was none who answered a word. Said David, «Whoever knows the answer and does not speak, may he be suffocated!« Whereupon Ahitophel ... said to


him, »It is permitted.« [David] thereupon inscribed the [Ineffable] Name upon a sherd, cast it into the Deep and it subsided sixteen thousand cubits. When he saw that it had subsided to such a great extent, he said, »The nearer it is to the (surface of the) earth, the better the earth can be kept watered,« and he uttered the fifteen Songs of Ascents [Pss 120 – 134, whose reading during the celebration of Sukkoth in the Second Temple was thought to ensure the fall of rain] and the Deep reascended fifteen thousand cubits and remained one thousand cubits (below the surface)²³.

The legend is explicitly related to the creation of the world in this version:

When God created heaven and earth He also created the stone over the Deep, and engraved on it the Ineffable Name consisting of forty-two letters, and fixed the stone over the Deep in order to keep down its water ... But when the generation of the deluge sinned, He removed the stone and immediately all the sources of the great Deep sprang up. And when David dug the shafts, the stone rolled aside and the waters came out and filled the whole world ... David took the stone and threw it back on the Deep whereupon the waters returned²⁴.

Proposition 3. »The plan and measurements of the temple are revealed by God to the king, and the plan must be carefully carried out.«²⁵

The Neo-Babylonian king Nabopolassar reconstructed Etemenanki, the central ziggurat of Babylon, according to the guidance of Shamash, Adad and Marduk²⁶. Moses, who is depicted in the Hebrew Bible using the idioms of royalty, was commanded by Yahweh to build a temple (the wilderness sanctuary): »According to everything that I dictate to you, the plans [tabnit] of the tabernacle and the plans of all its utensils, thus

²³ Quoted and translated in Raphael Patai, Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual, 1947, 56.
²⁴ Ibid, 57 f. »In the talmudic period this complex of ideas [the location of the Jerusalem temple at the center of the universe] was developed by the myth of the 'even shetiyya, the stone beneath the Temple site which sealed off the abysses below ... There is some dispute over the precise meaning of the phrase, but whatever the correct translation, this concept attests the belief that the site of the Jerusalem Temple was the centre of the world and the point from which creation began.« Hayman, Observations on Sefer Yesira, 178; see also Peter Schäfer, Tempel und Schöpfung; zur Interpretation einiger Heiligtumstraditionen in der rabbinischen Literatur, Kairos 16 (1974), 125 – 128. Adam S. van der Woude attempts to explain the occurrence of 'even in Sach 3,9, 4,7,10 in terms of the rabbinic legends of the 'even sh'tiyya; Zion as Primeval Stone in Sach 3 and 4, in: Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F. C. Fensham, ed. W. Claassen, JSOTS 48 (1988), 237 – 248. Lundquist, What Is a Temple?, 211 (proposition no. seven).
shall you [pl.] make« (Ex 25,9). In Chronicles the synoptic account of the construction of the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem has David tell Solomon at the time he entrusts him with the plans for the temple that «everything, all the details of the plans [hattabnit] in writing did Yahweh cause me to comprehend by his Hand upon me« (I Chr 28,19).

**Proposition 4.** «The temple is associated with abundance and prosperity, indeed is perceived as the giver of these.»

It follows that the temple is a sanctuary, a haven from the powers of chaos that threaten from without. The theme of the temple as the sacral source of fecundity and place of refuge is a stock trope in ancient Near Eastern literature. A polychromatic fresco from the palace of Zimri-Lim at Mari, the so-called Court of the Palms, has been interpreted as representing a temple complex or sanctuary within the palace itself. In the bottom registers, bulls stand atop stylized mountains located at the base of the tree of life from whose fruits cherubim feed, flanked by date-bearing palms. In the temple forecourt goddesses hold pitchers from which the four superfecundating rivers of the world flow; the tree of life sprouts at their source. In what has been construed as a representation of Area 66 (a sanctuary) located within Area 65 (a throne room), the king receives the traditional emblems of rulership from a goddess surrounded by divine attendants: divinely sanctioned kingship and proper cultus guarantee the blessings of the gods on the nation. Virtually all of these motifs were given iconographic expression in the temple of Solomon: bulls, palm trees, cherubim, fruits, the waters of life (the Bronze Sea).

The Book of Haggai clearly articulates the consequences for failing to rebuild the ruined temple in Jerusalem:

> For that reason above you the heavens have imprisoned their dew, and the earth has imprisoned its yield. I have summoned a drought upon the land and upon the mountains; upon grain, wine and oil, upon that which the soil brings forth, upon human and beast, and upon all the works of (their) hands. (1,10 f.)

The rewards for completing repairs are equally sweeping.

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28 Lundquist, What Is a Temple?, 212 (proposition no. 8a).
30 Ibid., 69.
31 «And I will shake all nations, so that the treasure-trove of all nations shall arrive here, and I will fill this house with glory, says Yahweh of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine — an oracle of Yahweh of hosts. The future glory of this house shall be
The temple as a locus of refuge is a common theme in the Hebrew Bible; see Jes 31,4 f.; 56,6–8; I Reg 8,27–61; Ps 48,63,1–4. The attitude that the temple of Yahweh *per se* could offer sanctuary to morally corrupt worshippers is polemicized against in Jer (7,1–15).

**Proposition 5.** »The destruction or loss of the temple is seen as calamitous and fatal to the community in which the temple stood.«

The calamity subsequent to the destruction of the temple is understood as the sentence of divine judgment.

In that curious historiographic work on Naram-Sin, »The Curse of Agade,« the king, having received unfavorable oracles from the shrine Ekur, turned his troops against it and levelled it to its foundations. For this act of sacrilege, the offended god Enlil brought the Gutians (Elamites) against the city and turned it into uninhabitable desert. Sennacherib’s celebrated destruction of Babylon, which included the razing of the national sanctuary of Esagila and the deportation of the golden statue of Marduk, was theologized by the Babylonian king Nabonidus as divine punishment of the city willed by Marduk himself (the wicked Assyrian emperor fell victim to an act of parricide instigated by the same god).

The Hebrew Bible gives eloquent testimony to the catastrophic loss of the national shrine in Jerusalem:

Why, O God, do you continually spurn us? Why does your wrath smoke against the sheep of your pasture? ... Direct your steps to the everlasting ruins; the enemy has destroyed everything in the sanctuary! ... They set your sanctuary on fire; to the ground they desecrated the tabernacle of your name ... Do not give the life of your dove to the wild beasts; the life of your poor ones do not forget for ever. (Ps 74,1.3.7.19)

According to the Chronicler, Yahweh brought about the destruction of the Jerusalem temple by the Babylonians because of the priests’ and peoples’ »desecrating« of the temple and their rejection of his message (II Chr 36,14–17). In Lamentations, a series of artistically greater than the former, says Yahweh of hosts; and in this place I will grant *shalom* – an oracle of Yahweh of hosts (Hag 2,7–9).«

"... Joab fled to the tent of Yahweh and grabbed hold of the horns of the altar. When it was told King Solomon, Joab has fled to the tent of Yahweh; he is beside the altar,« Solomon sent Benaiah ben-Jehoiada, saying »Go, strike him down.« (I Reg 2,28b f.).

Lundquist, What Is a Temple?, 212 (proposition no. 88).

See the introduction and translation of this text by S. N. Kramer in: Pritchard, ANET, 646–651, and Jerrold S. Cooper, The Curse of Agade, 1983.

According to the stela of Nabonidus translated by A. Leo Oppenheim in Pritchard, ANET, 309, par. i. Nabonidus’ own defeat by Cyrus the Great was given a similar theological rationale (op. cit., 312–315).
refined laments working out the theme of the suffering of the inhabitants of Jerusalem after its fall to the Babylonians, Yahweh has licensed the ruin of his temple: «Adonai has scorned his altar and rejected his shrine» (2,7a). Why? »Jerusalem sinned mightily« (1,8a).

**Proposition 6.** *The temple is a place where human beings relate themselves to the divine by means of sacrifice*. The presence of the sacrificial cult in the regular operation of the temple in the ancient Near East is ubiquitous. Comparative studies of the phenomenon in ancient Israel and Mesopotamia highlight the similarity in practice and ideology between the two cultures.

**Temple Ideology in the Flood Narrative of the Gilgamesh Epic**

It is the contention of this paper that the mythological ark of Utnapishtim was intended to symbolically represent a ziggurat or, to paraphrase *Proposition 1*, the ark is the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain, that is to say, a ziggurat. Paul Haupt was the first commentator, to my knowledge, to perceive a link between the ark in the Gilgamesh epic and a ziggurat: «[t]he huge ship of the Babylonian Noah, 525 feet long and 210 feet wide and deep, with seven stories, may have been suggested by the colossal Babylonian temple-towers in seven stories.» The noted British archaeologist M. E. L. Mallowan, in a literalistic reading of the Deluge, independently equated the ark in the Gilgamesh epic with a seven stage ziggurat:

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36 Similar to proposition 14 in Lundquist, What Is a Temple?, 217 f.
37 For an assessment of current anthropological and history of religions approaches to sacrifice in antiquity, see Cristiano Grottanelli, Uccidere, donare, mangiare: problemati-
38 The Ship of the Babylonian Noah, BASS 10/2 (1927), 10.
It [the ark] was described in the Gilgamesh epic as rising in seven stages which were sub-divided vertically into nine sections with sixty-three compartments: in one passage it was referred to as \textit{ekallu}, a noun meaning temple or palace, and I therefore venture to suggest that the narrator had in mind a floating Ziggurat and that he imagined one — always a refuge in time of flood — as sailing over the vast inland sea.\footnote{Noah's Flood Reconsidered, Iraq 26 (1964), 65.}

It is probable that commentators have ignored this equation for two reasons: (1) it is not obvious (to specialists in the twentieth century, at least) that the boat described in Gilg XI was intended to represent a ziggurat, and (2) taken in isolation, the idea that the ark was intended to represent not a giant seafaring cube, but a giant seafaring ziggurat, is both trivial and absurd.\footnote{Unfortunately, much of Haupt's article is an exercise in triviality and absurdity: «The Babylonian temple-tower was originally, it may be supposed, not an artificial mountain but an inverted three-decker which may have represented the vessel which brought the Sumerian invaders to the northern shore of the Persian Gulf or the vessel in which a number of men and beasts were saved during the terrific cyclone which flooded Southern Babylonia in times of yore ... the Babylonian deluge is a historical fact no matter how much it was subsequently embroidered.» (11)} It is my intention in the following paragraphs to demonstrate that the text of Gilg XI sports numerous clues as to the ziggurat identity of the ark, and that the description itself is in keeping with those of other ziggurats found in cuneiform literature. More importantly, I wish to show that the curious design of the ark, far from being the random escapade of a creative imagination, depicted a symbol that was fluent and integral to the religious language of ancient Mesopotamia.

Let us first examine the interrelationship of its dimensions.\footnote{My study and translation of tablet XI of the Gilgamesh epic is based on the cuneiform hand-copies prepared by R. Campbell Thompson, The Epic of Gilgamish: Text, Transliteration and Notes, 1930, which in fact are conflated from numerous British Museum fragments. Other texts (and copies) consulted are in W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, CT XLVI, 1965. The transliteration in Rykle Borger, Babylonisch-Assyrische Lesestücke 2, AnOR 54, NA, 1979 served as a reference for textual interpretation. Translations consulted were those of Alexander Heidel, The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels, 1949; René Labat, Les religions du Proche-Orient asiatique, Le trésor spirituel de l'Humanité, 1970; E. A. Speiser, The Epic of Gilgamesh, in ANET, 514 — 515; Albert Schott and Wolfram von Soden, Das Gilgamesch-Epos, 1984. The text by N. K. Sandars, The Epic of Gilgamesh, rev. ed., 1984, is not an independent translation, but represents a felicitous harmonization of various English translations (49 — 54). It is also a conflate of Sumerian and Akkadian sources, tinctured with the author's urgency to create a highly readable English version, which she often accomplishes by spanning vast textual and semantic chasms with beautiful but essentially foreign textual interpolations.} The text and implications of Gilg XI,29 f.57 f. are straightforward enough:
It is not strange that modern commentators, nurtured on the principles of Euclidean geometry, understand the design of the ark to have been that of a mammoth cube, no impossible shape for a boat in a religious tall tale. However, the dimensions are further defined: the ark has six roofs and is divided into seven vertical components, Gilg XI,60f. In order to accommodate a cubic notion of the ark it has usually been necessary to explain the six «roofs» as six storeys or, in nautical jargon, six decks within its vertical walls.

The Esagila tablet, a Seleucid era cuneiform text specified that the height, length and breadth of Etemenanki, the great ziggurat of Babylon, were equal. A tablet published by D. J. Wiseman depicts the design of a seven stage ziggurat, whose width = length = height. Each stage rises the same height as the others; Wiseman speculates that «[i]t is possible that our plan does represent an actual or proposed building, but it is more likely that the šubat anšar [the title of the ziggurat] is a cosmologi-
cal abstraction or »ideal form«. Modern excavations have revealed several ziggurat foundations which are square in form; the original elevation could have matched its width or length.

Accordingly, it is suggested that the ark in the Gilgamesh epic was conceived along the lines of an »ideal« ziggurat of seven stages, whose width = length = height. Imagine a text in which a pyramid is described in terms of the length and width of its base. The vertical dimension, its height, is measured by a plumb-line, but no reference is made to the angle of the receding upward slope. This is how Ut-napishtim's ark/ ziggurat is described, using the same conceptual schema employed to describe other ziggurats in cuneiform literature.

Further evidence for the ziggurat-identity of the ark: in an elaborate multiple entendre, the story-teller has the trickster god Ea coach Ut-napishtim to inform the inquisitive folk of Shuruppak that, having been

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47 A Babylonian Architect?, AnSt 22 (1972), 145. He plausibly dates the tablet to the 7th century BCE. At 21 meters to the side, this ziggurat was considerably smaller than the Etemenanki, which measured 90 × 90 × 90 meters.

48 For examples see Walter Andrae, Das Gotteshaus und die Urformen des Bauens im alten Orient, Studien zur Bauforrschung 2, 1930, 2–4.

49 H. Gressmann, reflecting on the cosmic symbolism of the holy of holies in Jerusalem which Josephus described as cuboid in shape, reminds us that »Equal length, breadth and height do not necessarily compel us to think of a cube. A pyramid would be just as possible.« The Tower of Babel, 1928, 59. O. Neugebauer, The Exact Sciences in Antiquity, 1952, expresses the opinion that geometry in Babylonian mathematics was largely limited to the extension of arithmetical procedures to practical problem-solving. »The mathematics of a problem is its arithmetical solution ... »geometry« is no special mathematical discipline but is treated on an equal level with any other form of numerical relation between practical objects« (44). The planning and construction of ziggurats, canals and other forms of monumental architecture undoubtedly required the exercise of the concept of »slope« or »batter«. O. A. W. Dilke cites an example from an Egyptian text which specifies the vertical height and length of a pyramid and calls upon the student to compute the gradient of its slope (iskd), and holds that coiled land-measuring cord and compasses were the requisite instruments used for the construction of canals and ziggurats (specifically that of Ur); Mathematics and Measurement, Reading the Past, 1987, 9.25. NBC 7934 is an example of a cuneiform problem-text that attempts to determine the volume of a figure whose partial cross-section is (possibly) similar to that of a ziggurat; the descriptive parameters consist of length, width and depth. Neugebauer and Sachs, Mathematical Cuneiform Texts, Problem-Text Ea, 55 f., Pl. 2. That the mathematical concept of »slope« (kú i-ku) could be calculated on the basis of an object's known length, width and height is demonstrated by a set of problem texts concerned with canal construction (YBC 4666, Problem-Text K, 77–81, Pls. 9, 34). The author of Gilg XI might have described Ut-napishtim's seafaring ziggurat in terms of its batter (or, in nautical jargon, its »tumble home«) if he had been so moved; instead, he chose to follow scribal precedent that expressed the dimensions of a ziggurat in terms of width, length, and vertical height.
The Sumerian Hymn to Enlil is described as a place of inflexible moral rectitude, where "improper speech, hostile words, hostility, unseemliness, evil, oppression, looking askance, the breaking of spells ... these abominations the city does not permit," Daniel David Reisman, Two Neo-Sumerian Royal Hymns (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1970), 60. Enlil, the cause of this severe justice, naturally decrees that his temple be a place of abundance and feasting (for the righteous), II.35–92, pp. 60–63. Samuel Noah Kramer, The Temple in Sumerian Literature, in Temple in Society, ed. Michael V. Fox, 1988, speaks of "Enlil's dreaded Ekur with its emphasis on judgment and punishment," 12.

The Nungal text presents us with a picture of the role of Nippur and the Ekur in the judicial and penal system. The temple, the sight of the great judgement, also served as a prison which both held those awaiting trial and confined those already convicted until the time of their release ... There does not seem to be any doubt that these hymns reflect an actual juridical situation: That in Sumer of the late Neo-Sumerian period the temple of Nippur played an important role in the judicial system, serving as a site for the river-ordeal, and providing prison facilities for those convicted by such (and probably other) trials.


Regarding the Sumerian emesal literature it has been observed that Enlil is the god most frequently cited as instigator of the political, cultic and personal calamities which form the staple complaints of the genre. "The lord of the nation, Enlil, has turned the faithful houses into reed huts. Enlil has stretched out (his) hand against the son of a faithful man ... The lord Enlil has killed the suppliant in the shrine at the house." Mark E. Cohen, The Canonical Lamentations of Ancient Mesopotamia, I,
unwitting populace would understand the _apsû_ of Ea to mean the great temple of his by that name in the city of Eridu; the informed reader would comprehend Utnapishtim’s »going down« into the _apsû_ as an allusion to his boat ride on the flood waters. I would suggest an additional level of subterfuge: the ark, built to the specifications of the god Ea to sail over the _apsû_, the chaos waters, met the criteria for the sacral locus of all ziggurats, i.e., it was founded upon the _apsû_.

In Gilg XI,95 the ark is called an _ekallu_ (E.GAL), an exceedingly common word in Akkadian used to denote palace, but never, to my knowledge, used to refer to a sea-going vessel outside this passage. Finally, if the reader of the epic has not yet seized on the clues abundantly sown as to the ark’s identity, it is literally given away in Gilg XI,156, where Utnapishtim describes the propitiatory sacrifice performed after exiting the ark: »I made a regular offering atop the mountain ziggurat [áš-kun sur-qin-na ina mubhî (UGU) ziq-qur-rat šadi (KUR)]. Apparently all translators after George Smith have translated the latter half

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1988, 15; quotation from AME AMAŠANA, »The Bull in His Fold,« II.20 – 24, p. 166. While it may be true that the »Nippur tradition« was capable of putting a benign face on Enlil and his Ekur, the fact is that Enlil in _Atra-hāṣîs_ and Gilgamesh XI behaves in keeping with the inflexibly punitive air of the Ekur (in the Nungal-hymn), the psychologically withering moral code of his city Nippur (in the Hymn to Enlil), and the arbitrary violence of his character in the Sumerian _emesal_ literature.

See CAD s.v. _apsû_: »[the ziggurat] Imhursag whose peak rivals the heavens, whose foundations are laid (in) the holy _apsû_« (see other examples cited in section I.6'b).

Salonen, Die Wasserfahrzeuge, 9 finds no parallel usage in Akkadian for _ekallu_ in Gilg XI,95. Schott and von Soden interpret the _ekallu_ as Utnapishtim’s palace, a »gift« for the hapless boatman of a piece with the other dirty tricks played on the gullible folk in Shuruppak; Das Gilgamesch-Epos, 97. For the terms and principles employed in the trade of the ancient shipwright, see Marie-Christine de Graeve, The Ships of the Ancient Near East (c. 2000 – 500 B.C.), OLoAn 7, 1981. Boats, seaworthy or not, were used to transport images of the gods for certain ceremonies, among them the foundations of new temples; see F. Douglas Van Buren, Foundation Rites for a New Temple, 21 (1952), 293 – 306.

On this see E. Burrows, Problems of the abzu, Or. 1 (1932), 233 f.

»The peak of the mountain«. The Chaldean Account of Genesis, New York, 1876, 270; »auf dem Gipfel des Berges«, Alfred Jeremias, Izdubar-Nimrud, Leipzig, 1891, 35; »auf dem Gipfel«, Arthur Ungnad and Hugo Gressmann, Das Gilgamesch-Epos, 1911, 58; »upon the summit of the mountain«, Albert T. Clay, A. Hebrew Deluge Story in Cuneiform, YOS V/3, 1922, 79; »sur le sommet de la montagne«, G. Contenau, Le Déluge Babylonien, BH 1941, 98; most recently, »auf dem Gipfel des Berges«, Schott and von Soden, Das Gilgamesch-Epos, 99. On the philological assumptions undergirding this translation, Albright, The Babylonian Temple-Tower, 140 asserts that »Assyr. zikkuratu means properly mountain peak (zikkurat šadi), and refers primarily to the topmost stage, though it may be extended by mentonymy to include the entire temple-tower, whose original name was ekurru, mountain house «. Etymo-
of the verse as »upon the mountain peak«. The Chicago Assyrian Dictionary article on ziqquratu cites approx. 61 examples under the definition of temple tower, and one only under the meaning of (mountain) peak – Gilg XI,156, the passage under consideration, which is there taken as exhibiting a transferred meaning. Akkadian grammatical propriety is respected by translating the construct chain »ziggurat of the mountain« as »mountain ziggurat«. In the symbolic code of ancient Mesopotamian religion, ziggurats were mountains, embodying the principle of cosmic centrality and fraught with mythological significance. The perplexities which have arisen in the history of the translation of this verse are attributable to the history of religions presuppositions brought to the text, rather than any intrinsic stumbling block in the language.

The expression of the themes of the primordial hillock, the waters of life and death, and the re-creation of the world (Props. 2, 2a & 2b) are not difficult to see. Mount Nisir held the ark fast for six days; on the seventh, Utnapishtim dispersed its contents, every living thing, to the four winds (Gilg XI,139 – 144.155). Seven days is a figure apparently unattested for the span of creation in Mesopotamian cosmogonies per se. As commentators on Genesis have pointed out, however, the sequence of epic events in the Deluge story replays the creation account in reverse: the fountains of the Deep [tʾchôm] burst forth (Gen 7,11); the waters which brought fruitfulness to the dry land in the beginning bring extinction to all terrestrial life (7,21 f.); the habitable cosmos is reduced to the confines of the ark, »... carrying the world in the universal flood« (4 Macc 15,31). In Atra-hāsis we read that »For seven days and seven nights Came the deluge, the storm, [the flood]«; compare Gilg XI,127 – 130, »Six days and [seven(?)] nights the flood gale blows, the tempest sweeps the land. On the seventh day, the Flood gale abated (its) battle

logically, ziqquratu is probably derived from a root zqr meaning to be high, to be lofty. However, if the author of Gilg XI,156b had intended to say nothing more than a (high) mountain peak, chances are he would have chosen a common expression like šadû zaqru (see examples cited in CAD s. v. zaqru).

The classic statement of this thesis remains Hermann Gunkel, Genesis, HK, 1901, 70ff., 132; Claus Westermann, Genesis 1 – 11, translated by John S. Scullion, 1984, 50ff.; more recently see R. Luyster, Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament, ZAW 93 (1981), 4. Samuel E. Loewenstein, The Seven-Day-Unit in Ugaritic Literature, in: Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literatures, AOAT 204, 1980, emphasizes »the typological character of the number seven which was employed as a symbol of completeness in the literature of the Ancient East,« (192) and, interestingly, cites as an example CTA 4,VI,22 – 33 which describes the seven day period entailed by the construction of Baal’s palace.

which it had waged like a woman in labor." I suggest that the flood stories in *Atra-hasis* and Gilgamesh re-enact creation in a manner similar to the Genesis account\(^{57}\), and that the seven-day span of the deluge or the period prior to the opening of the ark in the Mesopotamian stories is a reverse analog to the seven days of creation in Gen 1–2. From the mountain ziggurat, rising above the receding flood waters, life is regenerated, reclaiming the land over which the forces of chaos lately held sway.

Paradoxically, the raging flood waters, which turned the peopled world to clay (Gilg XI,133) and terrified the gods themselves (Gilg XI,113), was the place where Utnapishtim and »the seed of all living« found sanctuary, within the sacred enclosure of the ark. It was not a fortuitously made simile when Utnapishtim asserted that »[I gave the] artisans (engaged in building the ark) beer, [fine] beer, oil and wine [to drink], as though river water, that they might feast as if on the day of the *akitu*-festival (i.e. New Year’s Day)« (Gilg XI,73 f.). The symbolism of the cosmic mountain in the guise of the ziggurat, the cosmogonic battle waged between the victorious gods and the entities of the chaos waters, and the celebration of the New Year’s Festival, were tightly linked aspects of Mesopotamian myth and ritual.

»The plan and measurements of the >temple< are revealed by God (Ea) to the king (Utnapishtim?)« (Prop. 3). In certain recensions of the Sumerian King List, Ubār-Tutu, an antediluvian king of the city of Shuruppak, is father to Ziusudra, the hero of the Sumerian version of the flood story in which Ziusudra is identified as king (LUGAL)\(^{58}\). Utnapishtim is addressed by the god Ea as »man of Shuruppak, son of Ubār-Tutu« (Gilg XI,23); in Old Babylonian, in context, the title »man of *place-name*« was a conventional designation for »king«.

If Utnapishtim was not explicitly depicted as a king, then, like Moses in the Hebrew Bible, he exercises several kingly prerogatives. Utnapishtim is called the servant of his god (Gilg XI,37) even as Solomon is the servant of his (I Reg 3,7). Like Gudea of Lagash, who while

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\(^{57}\) Destruction and creation, both caused in and by the very same act is the story of Gilgamesh XI and the third tablet of the Atra-hasis-epic. The end of this epic, the context, and last but not least the part played by Enki and the Mother-Goddess indicate that we are justified in using the cosmological creation-stories as relevant material in our interpretation of the floodstory.« Ruth Simoons-Vermeer, *Mesopotamian Floodstories; a comparison and Interpretation*, Numen 21 (1974), 32.

\(^{58}\) Lambert and Millard, Atra-hasis, pp. 17 – 21, 142 f. In Lucian's *De dea syria* the flood hero, Deucalion, who is saved because of his wisdom and righteousness, founded the temple of Syrian Hierapolis over the spot where the flood waters receded. His full name is Δευκαλιόν Σισίθενς; the latter portion is almost certainly a corruption of the name Ziusudra, the Sumerian flood hero.
dreaming saw the plans for the temple of Eninnu inscribed on a tablet of lapis lazuli, Utnapishtim received the plans of the ark in a dream (Gilg XI,187)⁵⁹. Utnapishtim organized artisans [mārī (DUMU.MEŠ) um-ma-a-ni] and the common laborers to construct the ark, just as Nabopolassar did for the reconstruction of Etemenanki (Gilg XI,54 f. 70 – 74.85; Nabopolassar 1, II,2.24 [mārē (DUMU.MEŠ) ummānī])⁶⁰. Utnapishtim performed the first sacrifice in the new world on the first day of the primal New Year; Solomon dedicated his temple at the time of the autumnal New Year (I Reg 8,2), »the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before Yahweh« (I Reg 8,62). King or no king, I would tender the observation that, in the ancient Near East, when God commands a human being to construct a building, that building is a temple.

In examining the correlation between the conception of abundance and prosperity of the temple (Prop. 4) and the ark in the Gilgamesh epic, it is valid to consider both what entered and what exited the ark. The contents of the ark, besides the »seed of all living,« Utnapishtim, and, naturally, his family, included phenomenal quantities of edible oil (Gilg XI,68 f.), whatever silver and gold he had, and the artisans who presumably participated in its construction (Gilg XI,81 – 85). I am suspicious that, at this point, the story-teller’s yarn about a sea-going ziggurat has given way to the mundane facts of Mesopotamian temple economy. Major temple complexes in Babylonia from the early third millennium to the Roman conquest played a key role in the economy of city and nation. Most owned large estates upon which cattle, sheep, fowl and fish were raised for cultic usage or retail sales. They functioned as the hubs of artistic patronage, where skilled artisans had workshops devoted to precious metal and stone-working, weaving, sculpture and carpentry. They were immense repositories of precious metals, frequently employing their resources as banks for transacting loans and standing collateral. »The temples ... made loans of corn to small farmers or peasants to tide them over until harvest time, both in Babylonia and Assyria. In this way, they functioned as »emergency granaries« for the communities ...«⁶¹ Evidently, the ark of Utnapishtim had cargo and passengers befitting a floating ziggurat of Mesopotamian provenience.

Every living thing flowed from the ark like the super-fecundating waters flowing from the visionary temple in Ez 47, a masterful symboliza-

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⁵⁹ In a fragmentary text of Atra-ḥasis the hero apparently complains to the god Ea that he has never built a boat before, and requests that the god »draw the design on the ground, that I may see [the design] and [build] the boat« to which request the god complies; Lambert and Millard, Atra-ḥasis, 128 f.

⁶⁰ Langdon, neubabylonischen Königsinschriften, 62.

tion of the abundance and prosperity associated with the temple (Prop. 4). Following the flood, Enlil, the god who plotted extinction of the human race, bestowed the blessing of eternal life upon Utnapishtim and his wife after he had caused them to »go aboard« the ark, the cosmic ziggurat (Gilg XI,189 – 195). That the ark of Utnapishtim behaved like a temple with respect to its providing a divinely-appointed haven of safety (Prop. 4) is self-evident.

The application of Prop. 5, the theme of the temple's destruction, to the flood narratives in the Gilgamesh Epic and Genesis is problematic. On the one hand, the motif of divine judgment informs both narratives: the high god(s) determine to wipe out the human race, due perhaps to overpopulation (Gilg XI,182 – 185) or sin (Gen 6,5 – 8,11). On the other hand, in these narratives it is the cosmic temple that is saved – the secular world is destroyed. Perhaps the mythologem of the Deluge acts as an inversion of the more commonplace temple ideology, in which »the destruction or loss of the temple is seen as calamitous and fatal to the community in which the temple stood«: here, the destruction and loss of the secular world is seen as beneficial for the sacral community which alone resides in the temple. Cultic purification is conducted on a cosmic scale; the world, repristinated, is prepared to receive a created order standing in proper relationship to God: Urzeit foreshadows Endzeit.

The first act of Utnapishtim in the new world after having re-initiated the creative principle by releasing »the seed of all living« was to relate himself and, by extension, all humanity, to the divine by means of sacrifice, Gilg XI,155 f. (Prop. 6). The favorable response of the gods to this act (Gilg XI,159 – 169) underscores its propriety.

**Temple Ideology in the Flood Narrative of Genesis**

In the preceding section it was proposed that several facets of temple ideology are identifiable in tablet XI of the Gilgamesh epic, the most prominent being the depiction of the ark as a type of enormous,
sea-faring ziggurat. The aim of this section is to explore the possibility that the dimensions and design of Noah's ark correspond in a general fashion to those of the Solomonic temple, and that the story of Noah's ark is a vignette of the cosmic temple, expressing at one and the same time patterns common to the ancient Near East and traditions specific to the religion of Judah.

The dimensions of Noah's ark are baldly put at 300 cubits (length), 50 cubits (width), and 30 cubits (height) (Gen 6,15), making for an elongated rectangular structure ten times longer than it is high and six times longer than it is wide. The dimensions of the Solomonic temple are not presented in the Hebrew Bible in such a satisfactory fashion; the measurements given in I Reg 6,2, where length = 60 cubits, width = 20 cubits and height = 30 cubits, cannot account for the area covered by the side chambers which apparently extended around three sides of the building. The restoration temple described in the vision of Ez in 41,5 states that the thickness of the exterior walls was 6 cubits, and that the walls of the side chambers were 5 cubits across (41,9), yielding a composite ground plan of approx. 100 X 50 cubits. It is questionable

63 It is my working a priori in this paper that the texts forming the Hebrew Bible were composed without exception after the construction of the Solomonic temple and that, therefore, the authors in the Hebrew Bible were at liberty to transmit or transform such data regarding the Solomonic temple as was at their disposal. The Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis of the JEDP documents retains in a broad fashion its literary cogency, but the historical presuppositions are untenable, and in any event will not be dealt with in this paper. For the most recent critical assessment of the various source hypotheses which contend that the Deluge story was composed by a single author, see J. A. Emerton, An examination of some attempts to defend the unity of the flood narrative in Genesis. Part I VT 37 (1987), 401–420, and Part II, VT 38 (1988), 1–21. He concludes there is no plausible alternative to the notion that the flood narrative is a compilation based on two sources (21).

64 It is not my intention to become involved with the calculation of modern equivalents for ancient measures of extension (e.g. the cubit) or volume (e.g. the sar) while dealing with mythological texts; the curious reader will find an engaging treatment of such matters in André Parrot The Flood and Noah's Ark, translated by Edwin Hudson, SBar 1, New York 1955.

65 On the vexatious problem of the «archaeology» of the Solomonic temple (regarding which the only certain thing to be said is that the foundation could have extended no farther than the artificial platform of the Herodian temple), see the serviceable article by W. F. Stinespring, Temple, Jerusalem, in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. George Arthur Buttrick, 1962, IV, 534 – 560; the magisterial treatment remains that of Th. A. Busink, Der Tempel von Jerusalem, Bd. 1, 1970; on the methodological uncertainties inherent in a literary or archaeological approach to the Solomonic temple, or any combination of these, see the balanced discussion in Jean Ouellette, The Basic Structure of Solomon's Temple and Archaeological Research, in The Temple of Solomon, ed. Joseph Gutmann, Religion and the Arts. 3, 1976, 1 – 20. The schema of
whether more precision regarding the overall dimensions of the First Temple is either possible or desirable for the present discussion; I would tentatively suggest that the traditions of the Solomonic temple preserved in the Hebrew Bible point towards a rectangular edifice that was wider than it was high and longer than it was wide.

Toy manufacturers over the years have made excellent use of the sketchy details provided for the design of Noah's ark. The ark is said to have been equipped with a šōhar, to be translated as either window or roof, an opening, and was to be made with a »lower, second and third (deck? storey? tier?)« (tahtiyim, šəniyyim, šəlišim), Gen 6,16. Judging from I Reg 6,6, the structural design of the Solomonic temple entailed a series of outer chambers in three stories, the »lower, middle and third« (tahtenā, tikonā, šəlišit), Gen 6,16. In their basic design both Noah's ark and Solomon's temple reflect the three-decker world of ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies, a feature which, for fairly obvious reasons, could not be reproduced in the wilderness sanctuary. In light of the ziggurat symbolism in the Mesopotamian Flood narrative, it is unlikely that chance could account for the correspondence in dimensional proportions and structure between Noah's ark and the Solomonic temple.

the dimensions of the wilderness sanctuary was long ago perceived to have been controlled by that of the Solomonic temple: the actual tabernacle, depending upon one's interpretation of the design, measured roughly half the size of the interior dimensions of the First Temple (30 × 9 cubits, Ex. 26,15–30), while the size of the enclosed court was apparently the same as that of the temple, 100 × 50 cubits (Ex 27,9–13).

66 E. A. Speiser gives a functional reading to this noun as »sky light«. Genesis, AB1, 1964, 47; in the description of the Solomonic temple in I Reg 6, the order runs measurements (v. 2), entrance hall (v. 3), windows with recessed jambs (Gen 6,15), and the side chambers in three storeys (vv. 5–6), very like the order and contents of the description of Noah's ark: measurements (Gen 6,15), window (probably) (v. 4), opening (v. 16b), and three »decks« (v. 16c). Scan E. McEvenue points out that the same pattern of presentation of technical terms, »three parallel nominal sentences, with the dimensions in the order of length, first, then width, then height, and each presented with number, first, then unit of measure (cubit), then the dimension in question, then the object or suffix referring to the object,« is found seven times in the description of the construction of Solomon's temple and palaces (I Reg 6,2 f.20; 7,2.15.23.27) and eight times in the description of the building of the wilderness sanctuary (Ex 25,10b.17.23; 26,2.8.16; 27,1; 28,16). The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer, AnBib 50, 1971, 45.

67 See Busink, Der Tempel, 210–218.

Blenkinsopp, who has made a careful investigation of literary formulae in "P", noted the occurrence of a »solemn execution-formula« linking the completed construction of Noah’s ark with the completion of the wilderness sanctuary:

Noah did everything that God commanded; thus did he do. (Gen 6,22)

Everything that Yahweh commanded Moses, thus did the Israelites all the work. (Ex 39,42)

Regarding Props. 2, 2 a & 2 b, in the P account the new world was revealed by the receding flood waters on the first day of the first month, that is, on the New Year (Gen 8,13); Moses was commanded by Yahweh to set up and dedicate the wilderness sanctuary on the first day of the first month (Ex 40,1–15). Solomon’s temple was dedicated at the time of the autumnal New Year Festival (I Reg 8,2). As mentioned earlier, the Deluge story in Genesis stands the creation account in chapters 1 and 2 on its head, obliterating all life beyond the walls of the ark in order to symbolically »re-create« the animate world by releasing the contents of the ark into a divinely purified habitat.

The flood waters withdraw from the land on the first day of the first month: this is the »new« primal New Year, marking the time of the »new« creation. After the land has dried, the world is repopulated and restocked by the teeming contents of the ark, which are divinely commanded to »be fruitful and multiply« (Gen 8,17), even as it was in the beginning (Gen 1,22.28).

Although there is no mention of the presentation of a divine pattern [tabnit] for the construction of Noah’s ark, its design was revealed to Noah by God (Gen 6,15 f.) (Prop. 3).

Abundance and prosperity is divinely commanded of the lifeforms leaving the ark in the words »be fruitful and multiply« (Gen 8,17) (Prop. 4). Regarding the related notion of »sanctuary« and »haven«, a number of rabbinic legends relate that the pre-existent Sanctuary in Jerusalem was not submerged by the Deluge, since it rested on the highest point on the earth.

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69 Ibid., 283; »This formula, with only minor variations of detail, occurs regularly throughout the history [of P], the first occurrence being the construction of the ark by Noah (Gen 6,22) and the last the allotment of Levitical cities (Jos 21,8).« On the basis of this formula and other considerations, Blenkinsopp identifies three major themes in P: creation, the building of the sanctuary, and the possession and settlement of the Promised Land. Prophecy and Canon, University of Notre Dame Center for the Study of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity, 3, 1977, 60.

70 A. J. Wensinck, The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth, 1916, 13 – 16; for an overview of rabbinic legends regarding the creation of the world from Mount Zion, see Schäfer, Tempel und Schöpfung, 123 f.
Steven W. Holloway, What Ship Goes There

In examining the motif of judgment and »election« which informs Prop. 5, it is reasonably clear that Noah is portrayed as behaving like a priest in his faithfulness to matters of cultic purity. He is cast as a saddiq, a righteous man, and pure [tāmīm] (Gen 6,9), both being technical terms denoting ritual acceptability in the Hebrew Bible. He distinguishes between clean and unclean animals, both in stocking the ark (Gen 7,2 f.8) and in the sacrifice that he makes (Gen 8,20). The sacrifice that Noah performs after emerging from the ark is efficacious for all humankind, Gen 8,21 (Prop. 6).

Comparison of the Temple Ideology in the Flood Narratives of the Gilgamesh Epic and Genesis

While it is almost universally recognized that the Primal History in Gen 1 – 11 is dependent in some fashion upon Mesopotamian cosmogonies and assorted myths, it is impossible to specify precisely what Mesopotamian tradition provided the inspiration for the highly original appropriation of the Deluge story in the Hebrew Bible as we now have it. »The« Deluge story is a case in point; I selected the version incorporated into the Gilgamesh epic for exposition in this paper because it is the only version known to me which preserves a recoverable description of the dimensions of the ark. In other respects Atra-basis, the Babylonian flood story, is prima facie closer to the Primal History in Genesis, insofar as the story begins with the creation of human beings from clay, describes the destruction of »sinful« humanity by a divinely wrought flood (if being too noisy and populous constitutes sin), and the subsequent restoration of the proper relationship between gods and humankind by means of, first, a sacrifice, then, the building of temples in which the gods are dutifully served. When, therefore, in the following paragraphs I make bold to suggest changes made in the Mesopotamian sources by the biblical authors, the reader will tolerantly remember my disclaimer to

71 Michael Fishbane, commenting on the linguistic recapitulation in Gen 9,1 – 7 of the creation narrative in Gen 1,26 – 9, observes that Noah is an »Adam redivivus«. Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, 1985, 318.
72 Wenham, Sanctuary Symbolism, 23; in this connection Wenham also points out that Noah keeps the covenant law by observing the sabbath.
73 W. G. Lambert asserts that the recension of the Gilgamesh epic that contains the flood narrative is the latest. Although no copies prior to 750 BCE are known, he speculates that the final form of the text might date as early as 1200 BCE. A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis, 292.
74 For a concise synopsis and comparison, see Isaac M. Kikawada, The Double Creation of Mankind in Enki and Ninmah, Atrahasis I 1 – 351, and Genesis 1 – 2, Iraq 45 (1983), 43 – 45.
exact knowledge of the sources and means of narrative diffusion of the flood story to the West.

Elements of temple ideology shared in common between the flood narratives in the Gilgamesh epic and Genesis include:

Prop. 1: «the temple is the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain.» A graphic symbol of the cosmic mountain ready to hand for author and audience in practically any major urban Mesopotamian setting was the tallest and most imposing structure on the horizon: the local ziggurat. The dominant ideology of cult centralization in the Hebrew Bible permitted the adoption of but one symbol of the cosmic mountain for an »orthodox« author: the Solomonic temple and the associated Zion traditions. The ancients were not incompetent fools; if they had wished to compose a literalistic account of a big, big boat that saved all the animals from drowning in a flood, they would have elected to describe virtually any seaworthy vessel of large draft moored at the nearest harbor, rather than either of the nautical monstrosities that appear in their respective religious texts. The theological creativity exercised by the authors of the Hebrew Bible on appropriated polytheistic sources is highlighted by the sea-change of a cosmic ziggurat, a religious symbol well-nigh universal to Mesopotamian civilization, into a cosmic Solomonic temple, a symbol as peculiar to Judah as one could hope to find.

Props. 2, 2a & 2b. Both stories »uncreate« the world by releasing the chaos waters over its surface, and then »re-create« it by re-introducing all terrestrial lifeforms in the context of cultic renewal by sacrifice. The arks, together with the mountains upon which they rest, are therefore »primordial hillocks«. The death-dealing chaos waters upon which temples are founded and arks float are »healed« by the transformative functions inherent in any vital temple center. These are transmuted into the Waters of Life, symbolized by the divinely nurtured »seed of all living« streaming away from the arks. The motif of the New Year is suggested in Gilgamesh by the allusion to the akitu-festival and the numerology of the seven days; in Genesis the calendrical reckoning of the P source leaves nothing to chance.75

Prop. 3. The gods reveal plans for the arks, that is, cosmic temples, to their respective servants, in the case of Utnapishtim, a king or one exercising kingly functions, but, in the case of Noah, one exercising

75 N. P. Lemche argues that, in the chronological scheme of the J source, the flood story begins with the autumnal New Year. »... [I]n the J version the flood only lasts for 148 days and not a whole year - which in a cultic setting would be absurd, because the flood would be coming to an end after a new »flood« had begun to be prepared in the cult!« JSOT 18 (1980), 60; cf. Lloyd M. Barré, The Riddle of the Flood Chronology, JSOT 41 (1988), 3 – 20.
priestly functions. I submit that the religio-political particularism of the Exile or post-Exilic province of Judah is in evidence here. Kings receive little press in the Pentateuch; most of it is negative. If Noah, the righteous ancestor of Abraham had in some fashion been portrayed as »king« of the Promised Land, then all nations could logically claim it as their »inheritance.« Think about it: *as a priestly figure only is Noah qualified to administer an ark patterned on the Solomonic temple*.

I fancy it is no accident that the one indubitable reference to a Mesopotamian ziggurat in the Hebrew Bible is the story of the Tower of Babel in Gen 11, which may or may not reflect historical contact with the unfinished ziggurat of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, but certainly functions as a broad polemic against Mesopotamian religion and civilization. With the fall of Babylon and the proclamation of the Edict of Cyrus, the descendants of the Exile could return to the Promised Land, not as kings, but as Jews, a kingdom of priests. Following the destruction of the Tower of Babel, Gen 12 begins the recital of Patriarchal History, in which Abraham, the ancestor of the Jewish nation, but not a king, living in »exile« in Mesopotamia, is called by the only God to »return« to the Promised Land and take possession of it for himself and his countless descendants.

It is suggested that the royal status of the flood hero in the various Mesopotamian versions was deliberately factored out of the presentation of the figure of Noah because a Jewish audience, living in the Neo-Babylonian or Persian Empire, had both religious and political scruples against finding a king in charge of the Solomonic temple, even if that temple be but mythological and insubmersible.

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76 »We may assume that P emphasizes the building of the sanctuary rather than accession to the throne as the climax of the [Deluge] myth, thus providing Israel with a highly unique and appropriate version of creation as a foundation or charter myth for the rebuilt sanctuary and the cult which was to be carried out in it.« Blenkinsopp, Prophecy and Canon, 66.

77 On the interpretation of the Patriarchal History as a midrashic reflection upon the misfortunes of the exiles in Mesopotamia and their rightful claim to the Promised Land, see T. L. Thompson, The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives, BZA 133, 1974, and, somewhat less polemical in tone, J. van Seters, Abraham in History and Tradition, 1975, and idem, The Primal Histories of Greece and Israel Compared, ZAW 100 (1988), 1 – 22.

78 Significantly, in Josephus’ retelling of the Primal History in Genesis, the survivors of the flood descend from the mountains to the plains and take up residence in Ἑβραῖκαι Σιναρ, Babylon. At the instigation of Nimrod they build the Tower of Babel, for »he [Nebrodes/Nimrod] threatened to avenge himself on God if he decided to inundate the earth again: he would construct a tower higher than the water could reach and avenge the annihilation of their ancestors.« Antiquities of the Jews 1.iv.2 (Loeb edition). For a detailed comparison of the stories of the flood and the Tower of Babel in Genesis, Gilgamesh, Berossus, Josephus, the Book of Jubilees, the Sibylline
Prop. 4. The image of the »seed of all living« issuing from the bowels of the arks is the primary expression of abundance and prosperity in the Deluge stories. A minor concretion of the same ideology in Gilgamesh is probably reflected in the cargo and skills of the individuals admitted into the ark. The »economy« of the Solomonic temple was surely very complex, yet it is not really alluded to, unlike the allusions made to temple economy in Gilgamesh. Heavy emphasis on the distinction between clean and unclean animals in the Genesis Deluge account and the family of Noah probably points to the concern with sacrificial purity and genealogy that characterizes the Pentateuch as a whole.

Prop. 5 (destruction of the temple). If this proposition has validity for the Deluge accounts, the divinely-engineered catastrophe of the Flood culminates in the purification of Nature, and the reordering of the human/divine axis. The destruction of the secular world by the flood results in the creation of a new world which, in the beginning at least, receives the unconditional blessing of God: Gen 8,17 and the Noahic covenant in ch. 9; compare the speech of Bēlet-ilī (ʿMAH) in Gilg XI,164 – 169.

Prop. 6 (sacrifice in the temple). In both Deluge accounts, the first act of humanity, following the evacuation of the ark, was the performance of a highly successful, i.e. propitiatory sacrifice. Both Utnapishtim and other Hellenistic sources, see Valentin Nikiprowetzky, La Sibylle juive et le 'Troisième Livre' des 'Pseudo-Oracles Sibyllins' depuis Charles Alexandre, in Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, 2,20,1, ed. Wolfgang Haase, 1987, 460 – 542.

Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation, 374, commenting on Jes 54,7f. finds a typological association between the flood narrative and the Judean exile. »Just as the former was an expression of wrath, but ended with a divine promise of permanence in the natural order (Gen 8,21 f.9,15 – 17), so now the wrath of exile will give way to an era of eternal divine grace. In this way the ancient covenant with Noah and his descendants will be recapitulated in the post-exilic period.«

»O gods who are present, as certainly as I shall never forget the lapis lazuli [necklace upon] my neck, I will meditate upon these days, never to forget them. Let the gods come to the regular offering; yet do not let Enlil come to the regular offering, for he witlessly brought about the Flood and doomed my people to destruction.«


On the connection between sacrifice and cosmogony, viewed from a critical history of religions perspective, see the studies of Cristiano Grottanelli, Cosmogonia e sacrificio, I: problemi delle cosmogonie »rituali« nel Rg Veda e nel Vicino Oriente Antico, Studi Storico Religiosi 4 (1980), 207 – 235; idem, Cosmogonia e sacrificio, II: death as the supreme god’s beloved son and the founding myth of human sacrifice, Studi Storico Religiosi 5 (1981), 173 – 196.
tim and Noah were paradigms of obedience to their gods, just as kings
and priests touted themselves to be. The cosmic mountain, the visible
link between heaven and earth, the center of space and time, locus of
abundance and refuge, is, like its mundane copy, the temple, the proper
place for the righteous to worship the gods or God.

The Account of the Reign of Manasseh in II Reg 21,1–18
and the Redactional History of the Book of Kings

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According to 1–2 Kings, Manasseh was the worst king of Judah;
moreover, his deeds angered the deity to the extent that God's response
to them was an irrevocable sentence of punishment against Judah.
Consequently, the account of his reign is one of the most important
pieces in 1–2 Kings and one of the most important test cases for any
comprehensive theory about the redactional history of the Book of
Kings¹.

Does this account support or contradict the idea that there was a
basic and comprehensive historiographico/theological work (dtr-H) that
was reinterpreted and partially reshaped by two redactional traditions,
one »prophetic« oriented (dtr-P) and the other »Torah« (Deuteronomy)
oriented (dtr-N)²?

¹ The importance of this account for any theory about the redactional history of 1–2
Kings has been recognized. For instance, both Nelson and Provan have studied the
account from the point of view of different double redactional proposals. See, R. D.
Nelson, The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History, JSOTSup 18, 1981,
Provan is certainly right when he claims that »if there once existed a pre-exilic version
of the books of Kings which extended as far as Josiah, then some version of 2 Kings
21 must have been present in this edition« (Provan, Hezekiah and the Book of Kings,
145). Provan finds no evidence of this pre-exilic account of Manasseh. On the other
hand, Nelson, who proposes a Josianic version of the Book of Kings, concludes that
some verses in the account of Manasseh (v. 1–3*, 16–18) belong to the pre-exilic
edition.

² Obviously, this hypothesis does not rule out the existence of interpretative notes, as
well as entire additional units, that do not belong to either dtr-H or any of the two
proposed redactional traditions (dtr-P and dtr-N). For the proposal that the dtr. history
is the work of one historian dtr-H and two subsequent redactors or circle of redactors
(dtr-P and dtr-N) see, R. Smend, »Das Gesetz und die Völker. Ein Beitrag zur