

ADAM IN ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIAN TRADITIONS

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Since the recovery and publication of texts from the Ancient Near East is a continuing endeavor, the materials already published need to be reexamined from time to time in the light of more recent information. The case in point for reexamination here is the Mesopotamian story of Adapa, which is noted for its parallel with the early chapters in Genesis as a reference to man's squandered opportunity for gaining immortality. Two new minor—but interesting—pieces of information relating to this parallel have come to light recently, one from linguistics and the other from further references to Adapa. Before turning to these additional details, however, I shall turn to the principal previously known sources utilized in the discussion that follows.

Four fragmentary cuneiform texts published between 1894 and 1930 provided the pieces of the puzzle necessary to put Adapa's story together. The longest of the four (B) was recovered from the only deposit of cuneiform tablets ever found in Egypt, the land of hieroglyphic writing. The unique archaeological context in which this tablet was found dates the form in which this portion of the story appears to the 14th century B.C. Three other fragments of the story (A, C, and D) were discovered during the excavations of Ashurbanipal's famous library at Nineveh, these copies thus dating to the 7th century B.C. or slightly earlier. The first of these three is the only fragment of the story preserved in poetry, and the last two were copied by the same scribe, according to the writing on the tablets. The most recent and readily available translation of the narrative reconstructed from these texts is found in J. B. Pritchard's standard reference work, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*.¹ An excellent summary of the story

¹ See *ANET*, 3d ed. (Princeton, 1969), pp. 101-103 for the story of Adapa.

by an Assyriologist appears in A. Heidel's paperback, *The Babylonian Genesis*.²

As the outline and details of this ancient hero's story have been clarified, comparisons with the Biblical story of Adam—both similarities and contrasts—have become evident. The literary category to which these two works belong is a general and convenient point of comparison from which to start. Not infrequently the story of Adapa is referred to as a myth. Like the epic of Gilgamesh, however, this narrative centers upon a human hero and his actions; hence it comes closer in character to epic than it does to myth, even though it contains mythological elements.³ The narratives in Genesis that deal with Adam have also been referred to as myths—sometimes in the pejorative sense, sometimes not. They too can be characterized more correctly as epic. As far as content is concerned, therefore, these two works belong to a similar literary genre, in the broader sense of the term. The difference between form and function should not be minimized, however, and that difference is one of the contrasts discussed below.

The principal parallels between the Adapa epic and the account of Adam's actions in Genesis are readily apparent. They are threefold in nature: (1) Both subjects underwent a test before the deity, and the test was based upon something they were to consume. (2) Both failed the test and thereby forfeited their opportunity for immortality. (3) As a result of their failure certain consequences passed upon mankind.

Even in such broadly similar features, though, there are elements that differ between the two stories. For example, the commodities for consumption in the two tests are different. Adapa was tested with bread and water while Adam and Eve were tested with the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

² The first Phoenix paperback ed. was published by the U. of Chicago Press in 1963. The first hardcover ed. of this work was published by the same press in 1942. See pp. 122-124 for Heidel's comments on the story of Adapa.

³ For a recent definition of these terms, see F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, 1973), p. viii.

Although this difference in detail is not striking, it is significant. Bread was a staple in the ancient world, and the grain from which it was produced was the principal crop of the Mesopotamian plain. In the Adapa epic this end-product of man's agricultural endeavor has been transferred to the realm of the gods where it was served, fittingly enough, to their earthly visitor. In Genesis, on the other hand, the food that served as the object of the test was a product of the garden of God in its pristine and primeval state as it came from the hand of the Creator.

The final sentence upon both subjects was the same: death. This sentence is even given in rather similar terms, but those terms have quite different meanings in their respective contexts. Anu told Adapa, "You shall not have life," and then commanded, "Take him away and return him to his earth." He obviously meant that Adapa had to descend from heaven to earth, his former residence. Adam was also told that he would return to his earth, but this referred to his interment in the earth and the consequences of such an interment. The different function this formal similarity serves in these sources could be called a functional shift by a student of comparative religion. Different conceptions of man's fate after death might account for such a shift; but this is merely a suggestion, and other explanations are possible.

The different consequences involved in the third major parallel emphasize the matter of function even more strongly than the elements of difference in the two preceding parallels. Adapa's failure resulted in the "ill he has brought upon mankind, and the disease he brought upon the bodies of men." This consequence is also implicit in the account of Adam's fall, but it is not explicitly stated in Gen 3. The emphasis there is rather upon difficulty in labor, both in the field and in childbirth, followed eventually by death. One would expect Adam's resistance to the inroads of disease might still be quite high so soon after he lost the freshness and vigor of eternal youth. This could be one reason why disease is less prominent as a consequence in the story

of his fall than it is in Adapa's, but the principal reason for the emphasis upon the ills of mankind as the specific consequence of Adapa's failure appears in the epilog to his epic.

The last five lines on the fourth and final tablet of the Adapa epic contain an incantation of Ninkarrak, the goddess of healing. In her exercise of this function Ninkarrak could either induce disease or bring about healing from disease. The negative side of her activity appears in the next-to-the-last curse upon those who disregard the stipulations of Hammurabi's famous code of laws.⁴ Here, a more favorable response from her was invoked on behalf of one already stricken, at least in the late Assyrian form of the text. Thus the ultimate origin of the sufferer's ailment in Adapa's failure is magically connected with the incantation by which it was to be removed. The explanation served to strengthen the efficacy of the spell. A similar connection can be found in the use of the creation myth in which the mother goddess was active to insure safe childbirth.⁵ Modern practitioners might limit the usefulness of such techniques to psychosomatic medicine, but the ancients considered them applicable to the whole gamut of human afflictions.

These examples illustrate the problem of functional shift the student of the religious thought of ancient Mesopotamia soon encounters in his search for parallels with Gen 1-11. Such episodes almost always appear in contexts quite distinct from those in which they occur in the Bible, a point too little emphasized in the discussion of such parallels.⁶ The flood story in the epic of Gilgamesh is related in connection with the search by Gilgamesh for an answer to the problem of death.⁷ The purpose of the present form of the creation myth known as *Enuma Elish* was not

⁴ *ANET*, p. 180.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

⁶ A possible exception to this general rule is the flood story in the Atrahasis epic, which deserves a detailed examination that cannot be performed here. The primary sources necessary for such an examination are presented by W. G. Lambert in *Atra-hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford, 1969).

⁷ *ANET*, pp. 72-73.

primarily to describe the creation of man but to explain and extol the supremacy of Marduk, the god of Babylon.⁸ The supposed parallel with the Tower of Babel, Enlil's corruption of the language of mankind, appears in connection with a political discussion of suzerainty between the king of Uruk and the lord of Aratta [Ararat].⁹ Functional shift occurs not only across cultures but also linearly within a single culture; i.e., the creation myth was used in different ways at different times within the same Mesopotamian culture continuum.

Gen 1-11 contrasts sharply with both the structure and function of such themes as they appear elsewhere in the Ancient Near East: in structure, because in Genesis they were collected and organized into one brief, coherent, and composite picture, whereas elsewhere they appear only as disparate pieces in different places at different times; in function, because this portion of the Bible was purposefully organized as the protohistory of mankind containing essentially all the major explanations of origins. In rather concrete and nonphilosophic terminology, Gen 1-11 describes the origin of the world of plants, animals, and man (chaps. 1-2); the entrance of sin and death (chap. 3); the flood that brought about the physical world as it now is (chaps. 6-8); the continuity of man before and after the flood (chaps. 4-5, 9-11); and the distribution of man (chap. 10), his languages (chap. 11a), and the faithful (chap. 11b) over the surface of the earth after the flood. Further discussion of the structure and function of Gen 1-11 would take us too far afield into literary criticism and the idea of history in the ancient world.¹⁰ Suffice

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

⁹ S. N. Kramer, "The 'Babel of Tongues': A Sumerian Version," *JAOS* 88 (1968): 108-110.

¹⁰ The reader who may wish to pursue these subjects further is referred to W. G. Lambert, "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," *JTS*, n.s., 16 (1965): 288-289; W. C. Kaiser, "The Literary Form of Genesis 1-11," in J. B. Payne, ed., *New Perspectives on the Old Testament* (Waco, Texas, 1970), pp. 48-49; R. C. Denton, ed., *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, Conn., 1966), and H. Frankfort, et al., *Before Philosophy*, Penguin paperback ed. (Baltimore, 1966).

it to say simply that Gen 1-11 constitutes a truly remarkable literary, religious, and historiographic achievement in the context of the prephilosophic thought of the ancient world.

On the more mundane level of similarities between the stories of Adapa and Adam, two additional minor parallels might be mentioned before turning to the contrasts between the materials. The first of these is the matter of clothing, for both sources specifically mention two sets of garments. Before going up to heaven Adapa was told by Ea, the god of wisdom and of his city Eridu, to put on mourning clothes. These were for the purpose of ingratiating himself with the gods who served as the gatekeepers of heaven so they would intercede for him later. Then upon being ushered into the presence of the high god Anu, Adapa was offered not only bread and water but also new garments and oil with which to anoint himself. Following Ea's instructions Adapa accepted the new garments and the oil but rejected the bread and water of life. In the biblical account, Adam and Eve first made garments for themselves from fig leaves (Gen 3:7), but God subsequently clothed them with animal skins (Gen 3:21).

The gatekeeper gods who admitted Adapa to heaven are identified as Tammuz and Gizzida. Adapa appeared in mourning before them because they were no longer on earth, and in this way he gained their sympathy and support. In Gen 3:22 the gatekeepers of Eden on earth, not heaven, are identified as cherubim. The vowels added to the original consonants of this word by much later scribes make it into a simple plural. A slightly different vocalization would turn this word into a dual. This reading would yield a pair of cherubim guarding the garden gate. The Biblical view of the cherubim as servants of God, whether dual or plural, assigns them to a class of angels. Pairs of Assyrian *karibi* were also stationed at gates (of cities or temples), but Egyptian representations of such beings appear closer in form and function to the cherubim of the Bible than do the Assyrian ones.¹¹ Adapa's pair aided his cause by interceding

¹¹ For illustrations and discussion, see the entry on "Cherubim" in S. H.

with Anu on his behalf, while in Adam's case the cherubim served as guardians to prevent him from entering his Edenic home from which he had been expelled. The cherubim could also have served as a medium of communication between God and man, but it is difficult to see them interceding with God on man's behalf as the divine pair did in the case of Adapa.

The gatekeeper gods bring us to the most basic and obvious contrast between the two stories under consideration: the difference between the monotheism of the Bible and the polytheism of Mesopotamia. In Adapa's case the gods operate on four levels. Ea was one of the high gods, but in the Adapa epic he appears principally in his position as the god of Eridu and Adapa's patron. The gatekeeper gods function on an intermediate stage of action; then there is Ilabrat, the vizier of Anu, and finally the great high god himself. Each of these is characterized by different thoughts and actions in the case of Adapa, while the God of the Bible was the sole and sovereign ruler who dealt with Adam and Eve.

The polytheistic problem is most acute with Ea. He told Adapa to refuse the bread and water he would be offered when he got to heaven, because it was the bread and water of death, when actually it was the bread and water of life. Adapa followed his advice faithfully and lost his opportunity for a place among the gods and for immortality. The common evaluation of Ea's advice is that he deliberately deceived Adapa. This seems paradoxical, since Ea is commonly depicted as man's best friend. An alternative interpretation offered by a noted Sumerologist, S. N. Kramer, is that he deceived Adapa unwittingly.¹² The difficulty with this proposal is that Ea was the god of wisdom and that at the very juncture of the text where Ea gives Adapa his instructions, Ea is referred to as "he who knows what pertains to

Horn, ed. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* (Washington, 1960), pp. 188-190.

¹²S. N. Kramer, "Mythology of Sumer and Akkad," in S. N. Kramer, ed., *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, Anchor paperback ed. (Garden City, 1961), p. 125.

heaven." In either case, Adapa was obedient and was deceived by his god. This contrasts with Adam's situation: Adam's God made the choices and their consequences quite clear.

According to the text, it seems more likely that Ea deceived Adapa deliberately rather than unwittingly. The reason for this deception is not clear. Ea may have been loathe to lose such a devoted worshiper who provided for him so abundantly. The idea of friction in the pantheon may also be involved here, since Anu concluded, "Of the gods of heaven and earth, as many as there be, whoever gave such a command [as Ea to Adapa], so as to make his own command exceed the command of Anu?" If there is any Biblical parallel to Ea's actions, it would have to be with respect to the serpent's, not God's, activity. Knowledge (wisdom), or the lack of it, played a prominent part in the serpent's proposal to Eve. By inducing man to disobey God, the serpent also attempted "to make his own command exceed the command" of God. At any rate, the responsibility for the consequences issuing from Adapa's choice lay with Ea since he deceived Adapa while in the biblical account man bears that burden since he made his own free choice contrary to correct instructions.

The nature of man's offense also differs considerably between the two stories. Adapa was out in his boat catching fish for Ea's temple when the south wind, evidently on the Persian Gulf, overturned his boat and cast him into the sea. For this affront Adapa cursed the south wind, and his curse was sufficiently effective that it broke the wing of the wind so that the wind did not blow on the land for seven days. For this occurrence Adapa was summoned to answer before Anu. Adam and Eve, on the other hand, directly violated an express command of God, a violation that by the very nature of things transgressed several of the Ten Commandments. Adapa's offense, in essence, was that he upset the course of nature, while Adam's offense was moral in nature.

The scene of action in the Adapa epic also differs considerably

from that in Genesis. Of 130 lines of text on four tablets, slightly over half refer to what happened in heaven and a little less than half describe the course of events on earth. In Genesis, all of Adam's actions occur on earth. Thus the picture is that of Adapa receiving the royal summons to appear in the heavenly court in contrast to God's going in search of Adam. In one case man ascends to heaven while in the other God comes down from heaven. The latter picture conveys a more solicitous interest in man's welfare. In contrast to this interest, the great high god Anu laughed at Adapa when the latter refused the bread and water of life and lost his opportunity for immortality.

More similarities and contrasts could be drawn between these two works, but this sampling gives some idea of the more readily recognizable comparisons. From the Adapa epic we can turn now to other texts that mention this ancient hero. Cuneiform texts that mention the cities before the flood have been known for quite some time. The Sumerian king-list, in particular, lists eight extremely long-lived kings from the five antediluvian cities that held sway over men.¹³ Attempts have been made to match the names of these kings with those in the Sethite genealogy of Genesis 5, but such attempts have met with little success. One reason for this lack of success is that such an approach is an oversimplification of the Mesopotamian traditions about the antediluvians.

According to those traditions there was not one line of heroes before the flood but two. These two groups appear in cuneiform sources as a line of kings and a line of wise men. The Bible concurs with such a tradition in general by placing the Cainite genealogy of Gen 4 alongside the Sethite genealogy of Gen 5. Thus there are four lines for comparison, not just two, and the alternate lines in both sources have received less than their

¹³ *ANET*, pp. 265-266. The major commentator on the Sumerian king-list, T. Jacobsen, has suggested that the antediluvian section of the list originally was a separate piece. The subsequent discovery of a text with the antediluvian list alone confirms this. J. J. Finkelstein, "The Antediluvian Kings: A University of California Tablet," *JCS* 17 (1963): 39-40.

deserved attention. A comparison of these four lines cannot be carried out here, but the line of wise men should be noted in particular because of Adapa's significant position in it. W. W. Hallo has stressed this line of wise men in some recent studies, and these studies provide convenient sources of information for discussion of the subject.¹⁴

The texts available concur unanimously that Eridu was first in the line of the five cities that ruled before the flood. The names of the two kings who ruled at Eridu appear in order as Alulim and Alalgar. The names of the wise men associated with Alulim and Alalgar are Adapa and Uanduga, respectively. This locates Adapa as contemporaneous with the first king of the first antediluvian city, according to the tradition. In some studies of the parallels between the Adapa epic and Genesis published before this information became available, the objection was raised that the parallel was imprecise because there were men on earth before Adapa and therefore his offense against the gods could not have been the first committed by man.¹⁵ Such an objection is still technically correct, but it now carries less weight.

If questioned closely, a resident of ancient Sumer probably would have admitted that people lived on earth before the generation of Alulim and Adapa. Such a question misses the point somewhat, however, as the texts appear to indicate that the Sumerians believed that Alulim and Adapa belonged to the first *significant* generation of mankind. The reason for this lies in their political theology. Regardless of how the development took place, by the end of the Early Dynastic period kingship was firmly established as an integral and indispensable part of the Mesopotamian way of life.¹⁶ Subsequent political theology

¹⁴ W. W. Hallo, "Antediluvian Cities," *JCS* 23 (1970): 57-58; and W. W. Hallo and W. K. Simpson, *The Ancient Near East: A History* (New York, 1971), pp. 29-32. Lambert, p. 17, has noted that there is some variation in the order in which the antediluvian wise men appear in the texts in which they are attested. The order followed here is that adopted by Hallo.

¹⁵ See Heidel's work cited in n. 2, above; also M. F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1960), p. 42.

¹⁶ Hallo and Simpson, pp. 38-39. Lambert, p. 18, comments on this point:

shaped itself around that fact. Thus both in the beginning and after the flood, meaningful human activity began "when kingship was lowered from heaven . . ." ¹⁷ Kingship was one of the givens from the gods. Thus by being contemporaneous with the first earthly king, Adapa was in essence a *de facto* member of the first generation of mankind. This parallel with Adam may be added to the list of principal parallels with which this study began.

Passing reference should be made to the designation of Adapa as a wise man. The first fifteen lines of the epic extol his virtues, especially his wisdom. Such commendation of a nonroyal personage is exceptional in cuneiform literature. This emphasizes his position not only as the first but also the foremost among the antediluvian wise men. The number and nature of the references to Adapa also overshadow those of his fellow, King Alulim. While Adam is not specifically referred to as a wise man in Scripture, it would not be difficult to see how he could have acquired such a reputation. As the long-lived progenitor of mankind it seems only natural that he would also have been the first great instructor of his descendants, especially in communicating God's dealings with him to them.

Finally, there is the matter of the names, Adapa and Adam. One does not have to be a specialist in linguistics to see a basic similarity between them. The only significant difference occurs in the case of the fourth letter, the last consonant, *p* and *m* respectively. Phonologically speaking, *p* and *m*, along with *b* and *w*, fall into the same category of letters or sounds known as labials

"From Sumerian literature to Berossus it is everywhere assumed that the human race was at first and naturally barbarous. Civilization was a gift of the gods and that is the way to understand kingship coming down from heaven, as quoted above. The gods gave it as an institution for regulating society." These two stages of creation in the Mesopotamian view also provide an interesting contrast with the view of creation found in Genesis, although that difference is not prominent in comparing Adam with Adapa. While the gods of Mesopotamia first created brute man and later civilized him by giving him kingship, the creation in Genesis was "very good" from the beginning.

¹⁷ The phrase appears twice in the Sumerian king-list. *ANET*, p. 265.

in which the lips play a large part in pronunciation.¹⁸ It is clear from comparative studies of both ancient and modern languages that phonemes of the same type may interchange between languages and between dialects of the same language. The old Semitic word for the sun and the sun-god, *Shamas*'i (vocalized *Shemesh* in the Hebrew Bible), provides an excellent example of such an interchange that is directly relevant here. According to texts recovered from ancient Ugarit, this word was spelled and presumably spoken with a medial *-p-*, *Shapsh* (the vocalization is not entirely certain), in the Canaanite dialect in use at this site on the Syrian coast in the Late Bronze Age.

The interchange of labials that took place historically in the shift from *Shamash* to *Shapsh* is the same required for the development of Adapa from Adam. *B* sometimes served as an intermediate step in the development from *m* to *p*, but there is no direct evidence to indicate that it did in this case. The shift from *m* to *b* involves the loss of nasalization, and the loss of "voice" accounts for the exchange of *p* for *b*. Thus the changes necessary to go to Adapa from Adam are linguistically well known, and such a development is attested in the example cited above. Further examples could be culled from the appropriate lexicons.

The following development may be posited in the case under consideration here: Adam > Adama (> Adaba?) > Adapa. The phonological interchange could also have occurred in the opposite direction, but that possibility is less likely because nasalization is more often lost than gained. The final vowel presents no problem, as Adam appears in Hebrew with a final vowel letter as a noun meaning "ground, soil," and Adapa occurs without the final vowel in an unpublished syllabary text with the meaning of "man."¹⁹ The names Adam and Adapa can be equated with

¹⁸ For the linguistics involved here, see S. Moscati, ed., *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages* (Wiesbaden, 1964), pp. 24-26.

¹⁹ *ANET*, p. 101.

minimal difficulty along well-known linguistic pathways, and this constitutes the fifth prominent parallel between these two sources.

The principal parallels between the story of Adam in Genesis and the Adapa epic can be summarized now by incorporating those that have come to light into the list of those that were known previously: (1) Both subjects underwent a test before the deity and the test was based upon something they were to consume. (2) Both failed the test and thereby forfeited their opportunity for immortality. (3) As a result of their failure, certain consequences passed upon mankind. (4) According to their respective sources both subjects qualify as members of the first generation of mankind. (5) Their names can be equated with minimal difficulty according to well-known linguistic phenomena.

The more parallels that accumulate between these stories, the closer the relationship between them appears. The question is, What is that relationship? Past studies on this and other parallels between Mesopotamian traditions and Genesis have tended to concentrate on the problem of transmission of the subject matter. The solution to this problem is limited by logic to one of three possibilities: (1) The residents of Mesopotamia borrowed from the Hebrews. (2) The Hebrews borrowed from Mesopotamia. (3) Both received such materials from a common source. Since Mesopotamian civilization antedated Israelite society, and since such stories circulated in that older civilization, few have given serious consideration to the possibility that the residents of Mesopotamia borrowed from the Hebrews. Scholars have generally made their choice between the remaining two possibilities upon the basis of the assumptions with which they approached these materials. Scholars who see a considerable degree of dependence upon Mesopotamian sources in the early chapters of Genesis attribute this to direct borrowing.²⁰ Conservative scholars have generally attributed such similarities to a common source.²¹

²⁰ E. Speiser, *Genesis* (Garden City, N.Y., 1964), pp. LV-LVII.

²¹ Unger, p. 37; I. M. Price, et al., *The Monuments and the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, 1958), p. 127.

A. T. Clay, an Assyriologist who taught at Yale between 1910 and his death in 1925, nominated the Amorites as that common source.²² His proposal did not receive wide acceptance at the time he made it, but it is being examined again with renewed interest. The reasons for this renewed interest are three-fold: (1) the recognition of western elements in eastern myths, especially in *Enuma Elish* and in the flood story of the Atrahasis epic;²³ (2) increasing recognition of the widespread extent of the Amorite migrations in the earliest part of the Middle Bronze Age;²⁴ (3) the common attribution of Abraham's migration to the same period.²⁵ As a part of the same process, though not necessarily an "Amorite" himself, Abraham could well have been the vehicle through which some of the information later incorporated into the early chapters of Genesis was conveyed.²⁶

The relation which these separate stories bear to the historicity of the original person and event involved deserves discussion also. Admittedly, it is difficult to argue for such historicity on the basis of the Mesopotamian tradition in view of the mythological elements it contains. It is of interest, however, that such a story

²² In *The Empire of the Amorites* (New Haven, 1919) and *The Early Civilization of the Amurru* (London, 1925).

²³ For West-Semitic elements in the Atrahasis epic, see W. F. Albright, "From the Patriarchs to Moses: I. From Abraham to Joseph," *BA* 36 (1973): 22-26. For similar elements in the Creation myth, see T. Jacobsen, "The Battle Between Marduk and Tiamat," *JAOS* 88 (1968): 104-108.

²⁴ This is the subject of considerable historical and archaeological study at the present time, and the literature on it is extensive. For an introduction to the subject and a brief bibliography, see Hallo and Simpson, pp. 71-72.

²⁵ This date for Abraham has been popularized especially by W. F. Albright and Nelson Glueck, and a significant number of scholars have followed them in that interpretation. Albright, pp. 15-18, gives Albright's last statement on this subject. Glueck's view developed through his surface archaeological research in the Negev and Trans-Jordan. The original reports of this research appear in several of the *Annals* of the American School of Oriental Research entitled *Explorations in Eastern Palestine*. They have been condensed in more popular form in *The Other Side of the Jordan* (New Haven, 1940) and *Rivers in the Desert* (New York, 1959). The dating of Abraham in Albright's Middle Bronze Age I is much debated at the present time, but a consideration of that controversy would take us too far afield from our purpose here.

²⁶ Even accepting Moses as the author of Gen 1-11 does not imply that he received all the information for those narratives by revelation *de novo*.

stems from the cradle of civilization and the place where writing began. As with the flood story, the closest parallel is also the earliest. In other words, it is possible to view these two separate sources as independent witnesses to a common event. If that is the case, then a functional shift has occurred in one direction or the other. Presuppositions again will color the explanations given for such a shift. Those who see the parallels involved as evidence that the Hebrews borrowed from Mesopotamia generally adopt the view that the biblical account has been demythologized or historicized.

The conservative commentator, on the other hand, can suggest that such a shift occurred in the Mesopotamian direction because of (1) the mythological elements the Mesopotamian version contains, (2) the function the Mesopotamian version serves in its currently known context, and (3) linguistic considerations that suggest the name Adapa is a secondary development from Adam, as noted above. None of these arguments is particularly convincing in and of itself, but taken together they contribute some support to the claim for the originality of the biblical account. While these lines of evidence do not constitute proof for the historicity of Gen 3, they are germane to the discussion of that problem, and it is of considerable interest that the name of the first human personage in biblical history has been recovered in a similar context from an extra-biblical source.