XI

THE BABYLONIAN CONCEPTION OF THE LOGOS

By S. LANGDON

IN Greek philosophy the word λόγος, which by derivation and usage meant speech, discourse, spoken word, assumed at an early period in the history of Greek thought the meaning reason, thought, mind. It is so employed, apparently, first by Heraclitus of the Ionian school at Ephesus. There seems to be in the region of purely Greek thought and religion no conception of λόγος or uttered word of the gods which could have suggested its identification with universal reason, first principle and cause of all things as variously employed in Greek philosophy. Rumour was called Ὅσσα Διὸς ἄγγελος, "Rumour the messenger of Zeus,"¹ who goes about stirring up strife. And she is the messenger or dame rumour, Ὅσσα δ' ἄρ' ἄγγελος, who hastens swiftly with evil news,² the Fama of Roman mythology. We must suppose, if the Ionian philosophers identified Word with cosmic reason and first principle, that they were induced and influenced by some well-known semi-philosophical use of the term "Word of the gods" as the personification of divine agency. It is wholly inconceivable that the Greek language permitted a sudden transformation of one of its most ancient and perfectly understood words without adequate cause. The etymology and ordinary meaning of λόγος afford no remote suggestion of a divine agent, a first principle. The philosophers certainly did not seize upon it arbitrarily for the most important term in the expression of their thought. Many words for reason, mind, wisdom already existed. Moreover, the transformation first occurs on Asiatic soil apparently

¹ Iliad, 2. 93.

² Odyssey, 24. 413.

about the second half of the sixth century. In this period the Assyrian empire quickly descended from its position as a world power and disappeared with the fall of Nineveh. The Neo-Babylonian empire, still in more or less uncertain control of Western Asia, now becomes the great cultural influence in this region. The world's first cosmopolitan age now arrived, and I think we may assume that the Greeks were fairly well acquainted with the principles of Babylonian science and speculation in the seventh century. Thales, an Asiatic Greek, generally regarded as the founder of the Ionian school, clearly owed much to Babylonian astronomy. He is said to have predicted the sun's eclipse in 585 B.C., which indicates that he had learned the principle of the eighteen year cycle discovered by the Babylonians probably before that time. The moon's node crosses the sun's orbit at about the same position regularly in eighteen years, a discovery which it seems impossible to attribute to Greece in that period in view of the backward state of their astronomy. Moreover, Thales assumed water as the first principle from which all things were generated, and there is much in Babylonian cosmology to lead us to suppose that they regarded water as the uncreated first principle. Heraclitus, a younger contemporary of Thales, assumed fire as the first principle and identified it with the cosmic logos or cosmic reason. Undoubtedly Thales made the same identification with water. Thales is said to have derived his first principle from an old Aryan myth that the earth floats upon an infinite ocean, but it is most probable that the Babylonians held a sort of materialistic pantheism based on water. According to Berossus Oannes was god of the sea, the Sumerian Ea, or *Ἄδης* of Damascius, and he rose from the waters of the Indian Ocean to reveal all knowledge unto men. And as to first principles, Oannes taught that "There was a time in which there existed nothing but darkness and an abyss

of waters". On the other hand, Damascius states that the Babylonians pass over the first principle like all the rest of the Barbarians and begin with two, Tauthe and Apason. These two primordial deities, Tiamat, mother of the salt sea, and Apsū¹ the father, the lower ocean of sweet water, both represent water; according to the Babylonian Epic of Creation they existed before heaven and earth and their waters were confounded in one. And the opening lines of this epic state that Tauthe or Tiamat was the form or first principle² which gave birth to all.

A Sumerian version of Creation, accompanied by a Semitic translation, is even more explicit in deriving all things from water, or at any rate in assuming water as the uncreated first principle—

"The *apsū* was not made, Eridu was not built.

The pure house, house of the gods, its temple³ was not made.

All the lands were sea."⁴

Here the vast primordial mother ocean precedes the *apsū* or nether world sea of fresh water.⁵ The theory of Thales may have come from Babylonia as well as the entire Ionian materialistic pantheism which laid the foundation of our European philosophy. The Babylonians, and the Sumerians who preceded them, did not construct this first principle into a strict metaphysical theory; the Greeks went their own way in these matters. Nevertheless the Babylonian Epic of Creation does contain a certain amount of abstract thinking at this point, as has

¹ *Apsū*, ocean which flows beneath the earth, is of Sumerian origin, *ab-zu*, and means "sea of wisdom".

² *Mummu*; see on the philosophical use of this term the discussion below.

³ i.e. the temple of Eridu.

⁴ Text in *Cuneiform Tablets of the British Museum*, xiii, 35-7. The lines cited are obv. 8-10.

⁵ Hence Tiamat is the *ummu Hubur pātīkat kalama*, Mother Hubur (the salt-water stream surrounding the earth), fashioner of all things; see King, *Seven Tablets of Creation*, 16. 113; 24. 19; 50. 81.

been long recognized by Assyriologists. The primordial ocean is called the *mummu* or "form" which gave birth to all things, and in the same passage *mummu* becomes the god *Mummu* and the messenger of Apsū, here designated as father of all the gods; these gods descended in emanations from the primordial water deities of chaos to the deities of Heaven, Earth, and Civilization. *Mummu* is the Mōymis described by Damascius. This Greek writer says that the Babylonians regarded *mummu* or "form" as the only begotten son of Apsū and Tiamat; in the opinion of Damascius *Mummu* is the intelligible world. There is no doubt about the philosophical import of this word in Babylonian.¹ *Mummu* does mean the concept of things, the universal reason born of the first principle water, and is in a measure related to the logos of Greek philosophy. According to the first book of the Babylonian Epic of Creation strife arose between the ancient deities of chaos Apsū and Tiamat and their children the gods of the ordered world. In this combat *Mummu* or the cosmic idea strangely enough acts as the counsellor of the primordial water deities. We are dealing surely with illogical myth here, for in the last book of this same epic Marduk, son of the water god, is identified with *Mummu*. According to their legend of creation written by poets under the influence of the cult of Marduk, god of the city Babylon, Marduk championed the gods of order, smote Tiamat, the water mother, and from her body constructed heaven and earth. Here again myth suppresses their philosophy. In reality they seem to have argued that earth, sea, and sky, or the deities of these elements, descended through emanations from chaotic ocean or water. They are the tangible material results of the operation of reason or form, *Mummu*

¹ See Jensen, *Mythen und Epen*, 303; Böhl, *Orientalische Literatur Zeitung*, 1916, 266, where the derivation of *mummu* from *המה*, to speak, is defended.

working with the primordial water. In the issue of this pantheistic materialism the cosmic reason *Mummu* was identified with Enki or Ea, god of the sea, more especially god of the *apsū* or lower world of sweet water. Since water is the first principle and more or less identified with form or reason, water in Babylonian religion was universally held to be the seat of wisdom. Ea, god of water, is the Babylonian deity of all wisdom, patron of the arts, of mysticism, of learning and culture generally. In the schools of Babylonia and Assyria they taught that Ea was Mummu, the Babylonian logos. *Ea mummu bān kala*, "Ea the *mummu* creator of all things," says the inscribed memorial stone of Merodachbaladan, Cassite king of the twelfth century. Also the son of Ea, the wise Nebo god of letters, is identified with *mummu*. A hymn to Nebuchadnezzar says that Nebo was the "[Beloved of] Ea and *mummu* who fashions the things created".¹

In the evolution of Babylonian mythology this son of Ea, Nebo the patron of letters, is more or less overshadowed by the intrusion of a new god Marduk. Babylonian religious systems and mythology were compelled to make place for this ambitious deity of Babylon, a city which came into prominence only with the rise of the great Amorite dynasty which chose Babylon for its capital. In searching for a suitable position in the pantheon for their city god, the priests of this now most powerful of all cults attached him to the court of the water god, and he becomes the son of Ea. In turn Nebo becomes the son of Marduk at the hands of these troublesome theologians, who insisted upon disturbing the entire structure of Sumerian theology. The Semitic version of creation was written under these influences.

¹ PSBA. 1898, p. 156, 14. Read [*ilu* . . . *na-ram ilu*] *Nin-igi-azag mu-um-mu ba-an bi-nu-tu* . . . : *mummu* here refers to the god Nebo, supplied at the beginning of the line.

Marduk, originally a deity of light, here constructs the intelligible world, and in the seventh book of the epic he too is described as the *mummu bān* [*ka-la* ?], "Form (or reason) which creates all things."¹ A Babylonian commentary on the seven tablets of creation supplies a lost line of the seventh tablet in which Marduk is called *mummu irpētu uttaksibamma*, "Mummu who gathers the storm clouds unto himself." This native grammarian adds the note *mummu* = *rigmu*, "Mummu means loud cry."²

For the moment I pass over this indication of the original meaning of the word *mummu*. As a title of the creator god Marduk it has its philosophical sense. *Mummu* means form, idea, reason, the mental activity of the creative first principle. And in Sumerian theology Marduk, therefore, becomes the son of the water god Ea, the patron of wisdom. The point to be retained in mind here is that the water deities, Ea and his son Nebo, were both identified with this Babylonian principle. Deny it to be metaphysical, refuse to define it as logos or cosmic reason, nevertheless the Babylonians certainly did have a fairly clear teaching along the lines which we Europeans designate as metaphysical. In my opinion the identification of Marduk with this principle does not belong to the original system. When any deity attained at the hands of the theologians the role of a creator god he was naturally identified with this creative mental principle. For the personification of this principle we must study the attributes of the water deity Ea and his son Nebo.

Orthodoxy appears to have strangled Babylonian philosophy, and hence *mummu* never attained a position in the pantheon. The commentary which contained the original Sumerian word for this principle is broken on

¹ K. 13761, rev. 3, in King, *Seven Tablets of Creation*, i, 164, and i, 102. See also commentary K. 4406, rev. i, 27-30, in vol. ii, pl. iv. Marduk is more correctly called *mar mumme*, "the son of Mummu," i.e. Ea, in Craig, *Religious Texts*, i, p. 31, 33.

² CT. 13, S. 747, rev. 10.

the Sumerian side, so that here also only the Semitic word remains.¹ The deities Ea and Nebo are both of Sumerian origin. Although *Nabû*, "the revealer," is a Semitic title, it is not original, being only the translation of the ancient Sumerian name *ša*,² to reveal, announce. In estimating the character and extent of Babylonian abstract thinking we are always in difficulty about this matter of the relative contributions of Sumerian and Semitic culture. The idea of the cosmic-form-principle is known as yet only from Semitic sources. The word *mummu* is certainly Semitic. If the Sumerians contributed this idea there are no certain sources to prove it, and their tendency to personify ideas would have obscured the idea at an early period. So also the Semitic Babylonians obscured this valuable germ of philosophy by identifying it with the very concrete figures Ea and Nebo. The Babylonian develops these deities of wisdom on strictly orthodox lines. They become patrons of the mystic powers of incantation, especially Ea and his foster-son Marduk. They figure as sources of practical wisdom and the arts rather than as an abstract formative principle. Perhaps the failure to construct a system of philosophy was due to a consistent method of eradicating all views not in keeping with their orthodox fatalism. At any rate, we hear of no Babylonian thinkers who were persecuted for their views, or who ventured to write on any aspect of philosophy except ethics. One writer ventures a few sceptical phrases about the value of divination and magic. Of the method of divining the future by observing the flight of birds he scoffingly remarks: "A bird speaks and its oracle [is proclaimed (?)]

¹ I refer to B.M. 82-3-23, 151, published in King, op. laud., ii, pl. liv. Here we have obviously a commentary on S. 747, rev. 10, as Dr. King has also written. For *ummu* of the commentary read probably [mu]-um-mu.

² Written *ag* = *nabû*. On the root *ša*, *sá*, *sà*, to proclaim, prophesy, see the writer's *Sumerian Grammar*, p. 235.

and then its body is divided." In view of the extraordinary influence exercised in Babylonia by the seers and prophets our sage must have been a bit hardy in writing the following: "The giving of the king is the making gracious of the prophet." The inference here is that money can secure a favourable answer from the seers. Of wearing amulets and relics for protection he passes the remark, "A ring does not give protection."

In all Babylonian literature we meet only here with any independence of mind. Surely in view of their splendid achievements in astronomy, mathematics, and philology we cannot deny them the ability to have developed this germ of metaphysics into a consistent philosophical system. The problem of the relation of mind to matter is already raised or should have been raised by the principle of the creative form. We know that the Sumerians regarded the reality of all things to exist in its *gar* (Semitic *uṣurtu*) or form. This they identified with the name of the thing, and saw in its name the idea or form. Their philosophical system, however, is crude. Things exist only when god or the gods think of their forms. Sensible objects come into being because a divine being, ultimately the creative logos, has conceived their ideas. These, however, are made known to man by revelation, and if I understand rightly their texts and traditions, this revelation was made by the water god before the flood. Since then no new wisdom has been or can be attained by the mind of man. You see that this view leads to the assumption that the secret wisdom of all things is deposited with the various orders of the priesthood. All knowledge is more or less a mystery to a Babylonian. It never seems to have occurred to him that the divine mind is shared by himself and makes possible his comprehension of the forms of things. This doctrine of revelation, of mystic monopoly of wisdom, led straight to a priest-ridden orthodoxy.

For this reason the doctrine of creative form remained largely undeveloped among them. Nevertheless it lay unconscious in the mentality of all Babylonian scholars and does not fail to reveal itself casually in their writings. The god Nebo, whom we recall to have been identified with the *mummu*, is also designated as "He without whom no counsel in heaven is issued".¹ He is the Hermes or Mercury of classical philology, whom the later Stoics also identified with the *logos* or cosmic reason of Greek philosophy. Hermes, said the allegorizing school of Stoics, is the *Logos* whom the gods sent unto us out of heaven.² Also Nebo of Babylonia appears frequently as the "far-famed messenger who conducts the totality of laws".³ He represents in this mythology the spirit of wisdom of the post-Exilic Hebrew. Babylonian did not possess a very clear philosophical vocabulary, in consequence of which the Assyriologists still find great difficulty in rendering well-known words which occur in a philosophical sense. For example, there is the troublesome word *riksu*, which ordinarily means a rope, band, turban, but also the sum total of a large number of objects. When Nebo is called the "band of all things",⁴ we obviously have to do with an abstract use of the word, and in my opinion the scribe here is struggling with a language inadequate to his thought. He really wishes to connect the god of wisdom with the creative cosmic reason. When the word obtained this philosophic sense it naturally proceeded to become a word for totality. Again we have the most troublesome of all words in Babylonian, *markasu*, from the same root as

¹ *Ša balušu ina šamē la iššakanu milku*, i, Raw. 35, No. 2. 6.

² See Drummond, *Philo Judæus*, i, 122.

³ *Sukkalu širu ḥamim kullat parsē*, iv, Raw. 14, No. 3, obv. 1f, and I Raw. 35, No. 2. 3. See also the writer's *Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms*, 154, 30, where read *sukkal-zid*, "the faithful messenger," and Zimmern, *Altsumerische Kultlieder*, 12, iii, 10.

⁴ *Rikis kalama*, Sum. *dūr-dūr-ur*, "He that binds into one," v, Raw. 43, 30.

riksu. This word commonly means rope, ship's hawser, bar of a door, and also turban. Now when we find a god called the *markas* of the earth,¹ or "he who sustains the *markas* of heaven and earth",² what can the "rope of earth" or the "rope of heaven and earth" possibly mean? We ordinarily render "bar or band of earth", "bar or band of heaven and earth" without a vague idea of its real import. When the gods Ea or Nebo, who were identified with "creative form", are called the "rope of heaven and earth", we have most certainly a philosophic term before us. Here again, I believe, the scribes are imputing an abstract sense to the word. They endeavour to express the idea of the universal creative form. The word then came to mean guide, leader; even temples are called the *markas* of heaven and earth, probably because they were built in imitation of cosmic ideas. The seven stages of Babylonian towers; at least in the later period, are known to have corresponded to the seven planetary spheres (including the moon). Originally these seven stages corresponded perhaps to the seven regions of the earth. In any case, heaven and earth were the patterns for many features of Babylonian temples. They were, therefore, reproductions in miniature of the ideas or forms of the universe. So when we find the temple of the Assyrian god Ašur called Eharsagkurkurra, the band of heaven and earth, we cannot dismiss this term with an unintelligible phrase. We have mythology and philosophy sadly united in such expressions. The Assyrians really mean to say the form or pattern of heaven and earth.³ You will, I believe, appreciate the

¹ Said of Ea, RA. 12. 83, 48; of Adad, SBP. 66. 8.

² *Mukl markas šamē u iršitim*, said of Nebo, King, *Magic*, 22, obv. 39; of Ninurta, King, *Annals*, 255, 2; i, Raw. 29, 3.

³ The word then came to mean a model or perfect construction and was used of cities and palaces; see the literature in *Revue d'Assyriologie*, 12. 82, n. 1.

almost unsolvable difficulties with which the Assyriologists have had to contend in fixing the meanings of these cosmological and semi-metaphysical terms. When deities are described as the band of heaven and earth, or the term is extended to temples and even cities, scholars have been forced to conjure up most curious explanations. For example, the well-known German Assyriologist Jensen, essaying to elucidate this term, writes as follows: "We must remember that the Babylonians conceived heaven and earth to bend over the waters and were consequently supposed to swim on the ocean. The gods were therefore thought of as posts on which heaven and earth were anchored."¹

I think the improbability of this explanation is self-evident. In fact, the evidence for the metaphysical use of the words for "band, rope" in Sumerian and Babylonian is extensive. I mean, of course, when these terms are employed to define the character of the water deity Ea and his son Nebo. Ea, the god of wisdom, is defined

¹ Jensen, *Mythen und Epen*, 495. A Sumerian loan-word *tarkullá*, ordinary translation of the Sumerian *dim-gal*, "great band," has followed the analogy of *markasu* in the development of Sumero-Babylonian thought. The god Ea is called *dim-gal-abzu*, "the band of the sea" (Thureau-Dangin, *Die Sumerischen und Akkadische Königs-inschriften*, 40, iv, 31; 132, xii, 16). The goddess *Gunura*, a form of *Ninā*, goddess of irrigation and closely associated with the water god Ea, as his daughter, has also the title *dim-gal kalam-ma* = *tarkulli mātīm* (Langdon, SBP. 160, 13). Hence the word *dimgul*, cognate of *dimgal*, and generally written (ship's cable), also took on this sense. As such it is employed of Enlil, who is *umun gú dimgul* = *bél tarkulli ri-[ik-si]*, "Lord the band of the universe." Here *tarkullu*, like *markasu*, has the meaning "support, guide", a sense developed from the philosophical import of the word when employed of the water deity Ea and his daughter *Gunura*. Then *dim-gal* is employed of *Ishtar*, who is *dim-gal* (= *tarkullu*) of Babylon, "supporter of Babylon" (SBP. 191, 65). Like *markasu* the term is then applied to temples. This use of the term is as yet documented only in Sumerian. *Eninnū*, temple of Ningirsu at Lagash, has the title *dim-gal-kalam-ma*, "support of the Land" (SAK. 122, i, 1). See also 114, xxiii, 16, *é-ninnū dim-gal mu-gin*, "Eninnu as the support (of the Land) I established." See for the same application of the word 112, xxii, 11.

in one commentary as the god of the "binding band".¹ When the dragon of Chaos, Tiamat, the mother of the primeval salt-water ocean, is described as "Mother Hubur, she who fashioned all things", we have surely before us a trace of this ancient theory. The Babylonians or their predecessors believed water to have been the uncreated first matter, and in it resided the creative form or cosmic reason. It has been argued that Tiamat or Chaos is here described as the fashioner of all things because the Babylonians reasoned from analogy with the life-giving waters of the Euphrates.² But Tiamat never has any connexion with natural rivers in Sumero-Babylonian mythology, and the Hubur is known to be the world-encircling stream of salt water. Mother Hubur can be explained only by conceding to these ancients a certain amount of philosophical speculation.

In epitomizing the argument the result of our investigation, then, is that the Babylonians designated creative form by the word *mummu*. This they identified with the water deity Tiamat and later with the god of fresh water Ea. As the cosmic reason the water deity was designated band, uniting principle (*markasu*, *tarkullu*). Let me return briefly to the original meaning of the word *mummu*. It has been the subject of many suggestions.³ The commentary already referred to explains the word by *rigmu*, roar, loud cry. Another commentary on the same passage says that [*m*]ummu is filled with rain-clouds and gives food to the people.⁴

¹ CT. 25. 48, 15, *a.Azag-gi-banda(da) = i-lu-E-a ša tar-dim-me* [cf. CT. 24. 9, 41 = 24. 23, 31, where this title is explained by *dupšar aširti*, scribe of the sanctuary, hence a god of letters]. In K. 4210 (= CT. 25. 43), l. 10, read perhaps [*a*.Dim]-gal = *a*.E-a.

² King, *Seven Tablets of Creation*, i, p. xciv.

³ See Muss-Arnolt, *Assyrian Lexicon*, 552-3. Recently Böhl in OLZ. 1916, 266, connected *mummu* with the logos of Greek philosophy and derived the word from מַחְמָה, whence (according to Böhl) is derived the Babylonian word *amātu*, "word."

⁴ So the sense must be reconstructed from B.M. 82-3-23, 151.

A parallel passage has almost an identical statement concerning Adad, the rain and thunder god.¹ The word, therefore, clearly means rumble of thunder or the voice of god, as the ancients supposed, more particularly the voice of the rain god.² The word is apparently connected with the ordinary *amātu*, "word, speech," in Babylonian. We have here precisely the same philological state of affairs as in the Greek. "Word" came to mean reason or form. In Babylonian and Sumerian the reason for the choice of the term is clear; *mummu* was the voice of the rain god.

On the other hand, the Sumerians, and after them the Semites, personified the ordinary expression for "word" at an early period.³ Sumerian *enem* or word is treated everywhere in Sumerian liturgies as the wrath of God. The Semites borrowed these liturgies and employed them with interlinear translation; *enem* is simply rendered by the Semitic *amātu*, "word." The great gods punish mankind by sending forth the wrathful word, which is often called a storm or spirit of wrath (*ud* = *ūmu*). In a Sumerian liturgy which the writer recently discovered in Philadelphia the word of the earth god Enlil has two attendants—

Enlil utters the spirit of wrath and the people wail.

The spirit of wrath prosperity from the Land destroyed, and the people wail.

¹ Adad is *nādin te'uti ana pu-ḫur (?) ilāni*, K. 100, 13 (in the writer's *Tammuz and Ishtar*).

² The Semitic derivation is probably **המה** in Babylonian *'amāmu*, bellow. The connexion of the ordinary word *amātu* with this root is uncertain. Ungnad, ZA. 17, 356, derived *amātu* from **חיה**, Aramaic **חיה** to inform, which is certainly erroneous in view of the word *ḥa'-u-ti*, revelation (Craig, RT. 23, 28), a form indicating *h*, not *h* in the root. For the present it seems necessary to assume **המה**, bellow, cry, for this word also.

³ The oldest known hymn mentioning the word of Marduk is translated in the Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, 1912, 156.

The spirit of wrath from Sumer has taken peace, and the people wail.

The "Messenger of Wrath" and the "Assisting Spirit" into his hand he entrusted.

He has uttered the spirit of wrath which exterminates the Land, and the people wail.

Enlil sent Gibil (the fire) as its helper.

The great spirit of wrath of the heaven god was uttered, and the people wail.

The mighty spirit of wrath from on high he ordered forth, and the people wail.

The spoken word of the gods is an avenging angel about whom the liturgies repeat endless mournful dirges. When the word descends upon the world—

It is an on-rushing storm which none can oppose.

It terrifies the heavens and causes the earth to shake.

Of the word of Enlil a liturgy says—

His word hastens forth from Ekur¹; his word is a storm which is produced in the bosom.

His word is a spirit of rage; his word is the burden of the storm.²

This very materialistic and realistic conception of the word appears to have influenced the Hebrews in no little measure. The most striking parallel is one in which we cannot fail to see Babylonian influence. It occurs in the *Wisdom of Solomon* (18, 15) in the description of God's punishment of the Egyptians—

Thine all powerful word leaped from heaven down from the royal throne,

A stern warrior into the midst of the doomed land,

Bearing as a sharp sword thine unfeigned commandment,

And standing filled all things with death.³

¹ Name of Enlil's temple in Nippur.

² Langdon, SBP. 72, 1-4.

³ See Holmes in Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigraphia*, i, 585.

Although written in Greek by an Alexandrian Jew of the late period, the passage clearly reveals Babylonian views in diction and content.

According to Sumerian liturgy the word of the god returns to his place or to its divine possessor only after the divinities are appeased. For example, a song to a deified king of the twenty-third century describes the peace that came to the land because the word had returned to heaven. The avenging angel, or word of the heaven god, rested in heaven and hastened not forth.

On high he (the heaven god) spoke and the word returned to its place.

In heaven it is and may it not hasten forth.¹

Irresistibly a passage of the post-Exilic Isaiah is recalled by these Babylonian lines—

So shall my word be which goeth up from my mouth; it returneth not unto me void.

For it shall have done that which I desired,

And shall have accomplished that for which I sent it.²

The Hebrew, of course, has here a more noble idea of this divine agent which comes to deliver the chosen people. But outwardly the parallel is striking. And we recall a passage from the same period in the 147th Psalm—

He sendeth his commandment upon the earth;

His word runneth very swiftly.

Further comparisons with Hebrew ideas lie primarily beyond the scope of this essay. I leave the application of these results to future investigation. The relation of the post-Exilic conception of personified wisdom to the Babylonian *mummu* or creative form should be the subject of a special work. You are reminded, however,

¹ Zimmern, *Altsumerische Kultlieder*, 199, i, 15f. The text will be found edited and translated by the writer in PSBA. 1918 (in press).

² Isaiah lv, 11.

that the Babylonian god Ea, who was identified primarily with their creative form, was the god of wisdom, the mental conceiver of all things. Surely the Alexandrian author of the *Wisdom of Solomon* was under the influence of this teaching when he wrote—

Oh God of the fathers, and Lord who keepest thy mercy,
Who madest all things by thy word ;
And by thy wisdom thou didst form man.¹

Our study so far as Sumero-Babylonian culture is concerned concludes with the following results. The Babylonians regarded water as the uncreated first principle, and in it resides the cosmic reason or creative form. The word chosen to designate this creative form was originally voice, loud cry. On the other hand, they held a less speculative view of the word, the personification of the command of any great god, more especially and possibly originally the heaven god (Anu). This personified word is invariably regarded as an agent of destruction, the command issued by an angered god. Finally, let me return briefly to Thales of Miletus and the Ionian philosophers. Thales posited water as the first principle. Since he is known to have travelled widely in Asia at the end of the seventh century, it is not improbable that he borrowed his entire materialistic pantheism there. No fragments of his works remain, and we do not know whether he identified water with λόγος or even used this Greek word in that sense. His younger contemporary, Heraclitus of Ephesus, posited fire as the first principle, and identified it with λόγος or reason. From purely Greek sources it seems possible to explain how λόγος came to mean reason. Animals which are able to employ words are λόγικοι, speech users, rational beings. The word conveys thought, hence is thought itself. This

¹ Holmes, "The Wisdom of Solomon," in Charles, *op. laud.*, i, 549, ch. ix, 1f.

method of reasoning is as old as Homer ; Hera sends by the swift Iris the message to Poseidon—

Εἰ δ' ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἐπέσσ' ἐπιπείσεται ἀλλ' ἀλογήσει

If he obey not my words, but be unreasonable.

Here *ἀλογέω*, to be speechless, means not to have reason. Word, therefore, came to mean reason apparently in the Greek language itself, but it certainly was not the ordinary word nor the adequate word for a metaphysical term before the Ionian philosophers identified it with cosmic reason. This identification, if not borrowed directly from Babylonia, was at least hastened by that influence.