

MARCH 18, 1968ROSCOE L. BARROW

Solomon preached that there is nothing new under the Sun. Certainly, much which appears new is a rediscovery of the forgotten.

Excavations in the Tigris-Euphrates plain have uncovered our indebtedness to Sumer, the first highly developed civilization, which dates from the fifth millenium, B. C. The flame of Sumerian culture burned brightly. Yet, only a century ago, it was not known that Sumer ever existed. Later civilizations in the land between the rivers absorbed the Sumerian culture and received credit for having created it. Then archeologists dug deeper and resurrected Sumer. The contribution of Sumer is recorded on a quarter million clay cylinders, prisms and tablets which are preserved in museums.

We have inherited much culture from the Sumerians. This paper describes some Sumerian proto-types for stories in the Bible, for law and for literature.

The influence of the Sumerian religion on the Bible was communicated through the first system of writing. The Sumerians invented cuneiform in the fourth millenium B. C. and it became the common language of the Middle East. The Akkadians lived among the Sumerians and adopted the Sumerian culture and religion. Then they conquered the Sumerians, and spread the Sumerian culture throughout the Near East, including Palestine. As the Bible was written later, the Sumerian religion must have influenced it unless "J", "E", and "JE", and the other writers and redactors, through divine guidance, were insulated from Sumerian influence.

Moreover, Abraham, according to Genesis, came from the land between the rivers. Abraham lived in Ur, the capital of Sumer, which was located at the head of the Persian Gulf. Abraham's father moved the family from Ur to Haran in northern Mesopotamia. Later, Abraham migrated from Haran to Canaan. In his old age, Abraham sent his servant to Haran to seek a wife for Isaac. Joshua, in his farewell address, reminded the children of Israel that their "fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time . . . and they

served other gods."

By 3300, B.C., from which time there are reliable records, the Sumerians had developed a strong theological system. The most important gods consisted of a male trinity which divided authority over the universe: An the heaven god, Enki the water god, and Enlil the earth god. Ninurta, a son of Enlil, defended the gods against the dragon of chaos, killed the dragon and created the world. Every subsequent civilization has had its hero who jousts with the dragon, including the Biblical St. Michael and the English St. George. Of great importance was the Sumerian goddess Mama. Mama formed man from clay and was the goddess of childbirth. If man sinned, the male trinity pronounced severe punishment on him. However, the sorrowful Mama, having compassion for man, interceded with the vengeful male gods to pardon the sinner. While there were many gods and goddesses in the Sumerian Pantheon, each exemplified a characteristic of the male trinity or of Mama or was a member of their retinue.

The Akkadians, Babylonians and Assyrians, subsequent rulers of the land between the rivers, adopted the Sumerian Pantheon and changed the names of the deities.

The Babylonians made a significant addition to the Sumerian Pantheon, the god Marduk. The creation of Marduk was prompted by the practice among the Sumerian city-states of selecting a patron god. A city-state did not select a patron god on whom a sister city-state had priority. The Babylonians needed a god having power to compete with the gods of neighboring city-states. As older city-states had selected the powerful gods as their patrons, the Babylonians found it necessary to transform a weak god into a powerful god.

To establish Marduk's stature in the convocation of the gods, the Babylonians rewrote the epic of creation and gave Marduk the role of hero. Marduk was endowed with strong power of magic. Thus armed, he volunteered to defend the gods from Tiamat, the female dragon of chaos, and Kingu, her husband. Kingu was the son of a god, and like Lucifer, followed evil ways. Marduk slew Tiamat and created heaven and earth

from halves of Tiamat's body. Then Marduk severed Kingu's arteries and formed man from Kingu's blood. In recognition of Marduk's service, the gods gave Marduk power over all things.

Marduk died, descended into the underworld and resurrected. The Babylonian ritual celebrating the death and resurrection of Marduk was given emphasis comparable to the Christian celebration of Easter, requiring eleven days of dramatic acting. The dying god cult was not original with the Babylonians. It had been popular with the Sumerians. The Akkadians adopted this Sumerian cult, the god Tammuz dying and resurrecting. The Babylonians combined in Marduk the Sumerian god Ninurta, who created the world, and the Akkadian god Tammuz, who died and resurrected.

The scenario of the death and resurrection of Marduk is similar to the history of the death and resurrection of Christ which occurred two millenniums later. Marduk is slain and is placed in a sepulchre, which is guarded by watchmen. The assassin is executed. Marduk's mother comes to the sepulchre. She finds Marduk's discarded raiment. The guardsmen tell her that Marduk has descended into the underworld. Marduk's mother prays to the heaven god for Marduk's resurrection. Marduk is brought back to life in the upper world.

Several parallels between the Sumerian and Christian religions may be drawn. The Sumerian trinity of powerful male gods which divided authority over the universe has a coincidence in the Christian Trinity. The images of Mama and Mary are close. The death and resurrection of Sumerian, Akkadian and Babylonian gods preceded the similar events in the history of Christ. And the gods' granting Marduk power over all things was a step toward monotheism.

The world created by the Sumerian god, Ninurta, was a sea. Then An took heaven and went one way and Enlil took earth and went the other. Similarly, Genesis tells us that god separated the waters with the firmament of Heaven, gathered the waters which were below Heaven and let the land appear.

The story in Genesis of creation of man, God forming Adam from clay and Eve from Adam's rib, parallels

a combination of the Sumerian legend of Mama's formation of man from clay and the Babylonian legend of the formation of man from the blood of Kingu. Some have found it curious that Eve was formed from a rib. A speculation is based upon a Sumerian poem, popularly called the "Paradise Myth". Enki, the water god, became sick in the rib and, in a manner mysterious to us but understandable to the Sumerians, was cured by Mama's bearing the goddess Ninti. By a play on Sumerian words, "Ninti" means both "Lady of the rib" and "Lady who makes live".

The Sumerian paradise was called "Dilmun". Dilmun was a land fruitful, pure and bright. In Dilmun there was perpetual life and no sickness. Dilmun was located somewhere east of Sumer. The Bible describes Paradise much as Dilmun was pictured and places the Garden "eastward in Eden".

A Sumerian seal, dating from the third millennium B.C., pictures a god, a woman and a serpent conversing pleasantly under a tree. It has been speculated that the seal stimulated the story of the tree of knowledge. Of greater significance, the seal symbolizes the Sumerian concept of the primordial world - one of peace between God and man and between man and beast. This is the ideal expressed in the Biblical Paradise.

In childhood, we marveled at the longevity of the ten antediluvian patriarchs, from Adam through Noah, whose average age was 857 years. Similarly, the dynastic list of Sumer begins with ten antediluvian kings who reigned for several thousand years each. Like Enoch, whom God took at the tender age of 365 years, one of the Sumerian antediluvian kings reigned for a comparably short term. Each post-Sumerian civilization in the land between the rivers had its ten antediluvian kings. In each successor civilization, the longevity of the ten was reduced. Similarly, the longevity of the ten postdiluvian generations from Shem through Abraham declined to an average of 367 years.

There is a Sumerian parallel to the story of Noah. The gods having decided to destroy mankind by a flood, the water god Enki planned to save mankind. He advised Ziusudra, a god-fearing man, to build a ship

and to save the seed of life. This Ziusudra did.

The story of Ziusudra is elaborated in the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh. Enki the water god informs a faithful follower Uta-Napishtim, that the gods have decided to destroy mankind by a flood and advises Uta-Napishtim to build a ship and to bring up the seed of all kinds of living things into the ship. In the following excerpted lines, Uta-Napishtim tells us how he accomplished this:

"On the fifth day I decided upon (the) plan (of the ship) . . .
 I gave it six stories and divided the breadth seven times.
 All that I had I loaded, of the seed of all living things.
 I brought into the ship my whole family and kinfolk.
 The cattle of the field . . ., all craftsmen - I made them go up into it.
 I went into the ship and closed my door.
Came a black cloud from the foundation of heaven.
 Inside it Adad thundered.
 Six days and nights . . . raged the wind, the flood, the cyclone devastated the land.
 When the seventh day came, the cyclone, the flood . . . was over . . .
 The sea became calm, the cyclone died away, the flood ceased.
 And all mankind had turned to clay . . .
 Mount Nisir held the ship and allowed it not to move . . .
 I sent forth a dove . . . The dove . . . came back . . .
 I sent forth a swallow . . . The swallow came back . . .
 I sent forth a raven . . . The raven came not back.
 Then I sent everything forth . . .
 By sevens I set out the sacrificial vessels . . .
 The gods smelt the sweet savor . . ."

Uta-Napishtim's ship was cube-shaped and was as tall as a modern fourteen story building. Noah's ship was half the length of the Queen Elizabeth.

Studies of soil deposits in the Tigris-Euphrates plain establish that in olden time the plain was inundated by an extraordinary flood. It has been hypothesized that this great flood was caused by a combination of a cyclone and an undersea earthquake which forced a mass of water up the Persian Gulf and throughout Sumer. The flood stories of Ziusudra, Uta-Napishtim and Noah appear to have a common heritage. The stories could be reports of voyages by three good men divinely appointed to save the seed of life from the same flood. If so, it may have been ordained that these three custodians of duplicative menageries should not cross courses in daylight but should pass each other in the night.

One of the Sumerian epics involves a conflict between two brothers, Enten, the shepherd, and Emesh, the farmer. The background is the conversion of the shepherds in the Tigris-Euphrates plain to farmers. This was a prerequisite to the development of the first great civilization. A violent quarrel breaks out between the brothers on the issue of whether herding or farming is the greater service. The earth god, Enlil, convinces Enten, the shepherd, that Emesh, the farmer, has made the greater contribution. Accepting the divine judgment, harmony is restored between the brothers. Each succeeding civilization in the land between the rivers repeated the shepherd-farmer conflict, changing the names of the characters.

The Sumerian shepherd, farmer conflict appears to be the prototype for the conflict between the shepherd Abel and the farmer Cain, presented in Genesis as the first murder. The order of the birth of Cain and Abel is not related correctly to the chronology of the cultures. Probably the transposition results from the late writing of Genesis. Adam, when expelled from the Garden of Eden, was committed by God to the occupation of farmer. If Genesis had been written earlier, Adam might have been a shepherd or even a hunter. And if the technology of the Near East, in the time that Genesis was written, had maintained the level reached in Sumer two millenniums earlier, Adam, by the sweat of his face, might have been a brazier, riveter or solderer.

The Lord's respect for Abel's offering of

the firstlings of the flock and lack of respect for Cain's offering of the first of the field does not find any parallel in the Sumerian religious practice. The Sumerians offered the fruit of the field in beautiful vases, which are among their finest pieces of art.

Parallels for some events in the story of Moses are found in the earlier Akkadian literature. Thus, Sargon the Great, who conquered Sumer, circa 2500 B.C., tells us:

"Sargon, the mighty King, the King of
Agade, am I,
My mother was a priestess, my father
I knew not,

* * *

My vestal mother conceived me, in secret
she brought me forth,
She set me in a basket of rushes, with
bitumen she closed my door;
She cast me into the river, which rose
not over me.
The river bore me up, unto Akki, the
irrigator, it carried me.
Akki, the irrigator, as his own son . . .
reared me."

This story told about a number of ancient men of history, apparently was a narrative technique used to give the character extraordinary qualities. The Akkadian goddess Inanna sent three plagues against Sumer. The first plague, like one of those invoked by Moses against Egypt, turned all the water to blood. The magic practiced by Moses finds a parallel in Marduk's power of magic, as do the miracles of Christ.

The Sumerian temple service included singing of hymns and liturgies. Some are written for responsive reading. They are mournful and penitential in character, reminding one of Job. Illustrative lines are:

"My house is become a prison for me

* * *

My symptoms of fever were not clear to
the magicians.

And my omens did the diviner leave dark.

* * *

The god helped me not	he took me not
	by the hand,
The goddess did not	she came not to
pity me,	my side."

Reflecting the personal character of the Sumerian religion, private penitential hymns were sung and each male, upon reaching puberty, was given a name and placed under the protection of a specific god.

The Sumerian religion included much ritual for the expiation of demons. A characteristic rite consisted of applying dough, water or herbs to the body, uttering incantations which caused the demon to pass into the covering material, and wiping away the demon filled material. Also, there was a Sumerian rite of substitution, in which a lamb was substituted for a man and was given for the man's life. The Babylonians practiced a ritual in which a sheep was slaughtered, the body was used to purify the temple, and then the body was cast into a river. All these practices parallel the Levitical practice of atonement by scapegoat. The Paschal Lamb pertains not only to the Jewish Passover but also to the Christian tradition, which presents Christ as the Lamb of God or the sacrifice for mankind.

Sumerians worshipped in ziggurats. The ziggurat was a five to seven level tower, the prototype of the Tower of Babel. At the summit of the ziggurat was a sanctuary for visitation of the god. The sanctuary was not open to the congregation. Similarly, when Moses received the Decalogue from God on Mount Sinai, the people were prohibited from climbing the mountain to witness the most significant event in their history.

The ziggurat was constructed through revelation of supernatural architecture. The symbols of the revelation are a measuring reed and line. A stele of the Sumerian King Ur-Nammu, circa 2400 B.C., depicts the moon god Nannar holding the measuring reed and line as King Ur-Nammu comes for instructions for building the ziggurat. Later Moses was instructed by God regarding the specifications of the Tabernacle. The

Sumerian King Gudea had a vision in which a god commanded Gudea to build a temple honoring the god. Afterward, the god's emissaries instructed Gudea in drawing the plans. Similarly, Ezekial had a vision in which the spirit of the Lord, appearing as a strange man, communicated the specifications for a temple.

The Sumerians lived in walled cities accommodating a quarter million souls. These city-states had civil government developed on a high level, including a representative assembly. The economy was private enterprise. Land was owned by commoners, who were organized into patriarchial families. To irrigate the plantations between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, at frequent intervals water was made to flow from one river to the other. Irrigation and highly developed technology required advanced mathematics, which used bases of ten and six. A vestigial remain of this is carried on your watch today, the sixty-minute - sixty-second time measurement.

The earliest evidence of use of the wheel is found in the Sumerian civilization. Starting from scratch, the Sumerians rolled to a high civilization in two millenniums. The Sumerians were modest about their achievements. They explained that an amphibious creature, half man and half fish, came out of the Persian Gulf and taught them the cuneiform system of writing, arts and crafts. Then he returned to the sea, where he was joined by four sirens. The civilization of the Sumerians was so advanced that more than one scholar has suggested that the Sumerians came from another planet. However, life having come from the sea, the story of the gift of culture by the amphibious creature is more believable.

The contribution of Sumer to law is as impressive as its contribution to religion. Much of the Mosaic Law and of our present law is patterned after the Sumerian law. While the law of ancient civilizations typically is cruel by modern standards, in many respects the Sumerian law was more humane than the Mosaic Law or our present law.

A rich storehouse of Sumerian legal and business documents has survived. The Sumerians applied the Statute of Frauds to all business transactions.

Excavations have uncovered more than a hundred thousand clay tablets, prisms and cylinders on which are recorded business transactions. From time to time, the Sumerians codified their common law. It was long thought that the Code of Hammurabi, circa 2100 B.C., was the oldest law code. However, there have been discovered the Lipit-Ishtar Code, circa 2200 B.C., and a part of the Code of Ur-Nammu, circa 2400 B.C. The form and much of the substance of the Hammurabi Code is taken from the Lipit-Ishtar Code and the Lipit-Ishtar Code borrows from the Code of Ur-Nammu. The mature values of the Code of Ur-Nammu suggest that this oldest known code was based upon earlier codes or an aged common law.

From the reign of Shulgi, son of Ur-Nammu, there are available 600 complete court records. These reveal that the procedure in the Sumerian courts paralleled closely the procedure in courts today. There were trial courts and courts of appeal. Testimony was taken under oath. Witnesses included the parties, others having knowledge of the transaction, and experts. Three millenniums later, our legal ancestors, the English, were trying cases by ordeal and by battle.

Sumerian students in the third millennium B.C., studied law in schools, using textbooks comprising excerpts from the Lipit-Ishtar Code. Institutional education was highly developed in Sumer. Forerunners of some of our modern efforts to deal with mass education are found. For example, masters gave lectures to large groups and then preceptors led small groups in pre-Socratic discussion.

About 2350 B.C., the Sumerian King Urakagina promulgated reforms to free the people from abuses of land owners, commerce and bureaucracy. Urakagina's document is the first to use the word "freedom".

Legal forms used by Sumerian lawyers bear shocking resemblance to some of the legal forms in use today. For example, a note, circa 2100 B.C., reads:

"Five shekels of silver, at the usual rate of interest, loaned by the temple of Shamash and by I. Company, to Idin and his

wife, are payable with interest on sight of the payors at the market place to the bearer of this instrument."

The Uniform Commercial Code, adopted throughout the United States during the past decade, does not improve upon the negotiable character of this commercial paper.

The stele on which the Code of Hammurabi is inscribed stands in the Louvre. At the peak of the stele, there is a carving of Hammurabi receiving the code of law from the hand of Shamash, the god of law. A parallel is the receipt by Moses of the Ten Commandments from the hand of God and the Mosaic Law from God's tongue. Encouraging the acceptance of law by stamping it with God's imprimatur continues.

In connection with the race riots of the past three years, it has been suggested that, if the innocent head of a family is killed or injured by another during the latter's commission of a crime, the state should compensate the family of the deceased or injured person. The Hammurabi Code provided such relief.

"If a robber is not caught, the man who has been robbed shall formally declare whatever he has lost before a god, and the city (where) the robbery has been committed shall replace whatever he has lost . . . If (one's life is lost in the commission of crime by another) the city . . . shall pay one maneh of silver to his kinfolk."

Debtor's prison was long an American institution and discharge by bankruptcy is a recent development. The Mosaic Law included the sabbatical year of release and the year of jubilee. However, long before any of these humane developments in debtor-creditor relations, the Hammurabi Code provided a moratorium on financial obligations under circumstances of hardship.

"If a man incurs a debt and Adad inundates his field . . ., in that year he shall . . . blot out the terms on his

tablet and shall not pay interest in that year."

The impressive humanity of the earliest law codes is illustrated by the ox goring cases and cases of maim by man. Under the Hammurabi Code, the remedy in ox goring cases was liquidated damages.

"If a man's ox is wont to gore and his district has notified him that it is wont to gore and he has not screened its horns or has not tied it up and that ox has gored . . . a man and so has caused his death, he shall pay one half maneh of silver."

The later Mosaic Law called for capital punishment in ox goring cases.

"If the ox were wont to push with his horns in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned and his owner also shall be put to death."

Even in the case of maim by man, The Sumerian Code of Ur-Nammu, the oldest known code, was humane, the remedy being liquidated damages.

"If a man has cut off . . . the foot of another man . . ., he shall pay ten shekels of silver. If a man has cut off . . . the nost of another man . . ., he shall pay two-thirds of a mina of silver."

The later Hammurabi Code, in the case of maim, is more severe.

"If a man has put out the eye of a . . . man, they shall put out his eye. If a man knocks out the tooth of a . . . man, they shall knock out his tooth."

The even later Mosaic Law, it will be recalled, adopted this severe approach.

"Eye for eye, tooth for tooth . . ."

Those doctors who find medicare and malpractice litigation a nuisance find little comfort in the Hammurabi Code, which not only fixed the doctor's fee but also inflicted sharp punishment for malpractice.

"If a surgeon has made a deep incision in the body of a . . . man and saves the man's life . . ., he shall take ten shekels of silver. (But) if the surgeon . . . (by malpractice) causes the man's death . . ., they shall cut off his forehead."

In Sumer, medicine was practiced extensively. There are clay tablets on antidotes for poisons and treatment of ulcers and conditions of the eyes, head, muscles, intestines and teeth. The pharmacopoeia includes a variety of botanical, mineralogical and zoological materia medica.

The Mosaic Law prohibits intercourse between persons within prescribed blood relationships and lays down many other rules governing domestic relations. Variations of these laws are enforced today. The Sumerian law emphasized domestic relations law and this is among the largest bodies of law in the Hammurabi Code. An illustrative rule is:

"If a woman has hated her husband and states 'Thou shalt not have the natural use of me', the facts of her case shall be determined . . . and, if she has kept herself chaste . . . while her husband is given to going about out of doors . . ., that woman shall suffer no punishment; she may take her dowry and go to her father's house."

The Mosaic Law, set forth in Exodus xxi-xxiii, is the earliest code of laws in the Bible. The Mosaic Law appears to be an adaptation of the civil law of the Middle East, predominantly a commercial-industrial society, to the needs of the Near East, predominantly an agricultural-herding society. Some of the ethical principles in the Decalogue of Moses had been the subject of codification a millennium earlier in the law codes of the Middle East. Whether the codifiers of the

Mosaic Law borrowed directly from the Hammurabi Code or the principles of the Hammurabi Code were first absorbed into the common law of the Near East and then were codified as the Mosaic Law is not certain. However, it would appear that the divine revelation to Moses utilized the historical, evolutionary mode and began several milleniums before the conferences between God and Moses on Mount Sinai.

In the earliest known Sumerian code, there is set forth the lawful proceeding of emancipation of which Christ spoke in the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

"If a man says to his father and his mother, 'Thou art not my father nor my mother', he shall abandon the house . . . , but his own full portion shall be delivered to him by his father. His father and mother shall say to him, 'Thou are not our son'; and he shall go out from that place."

The comparable proceeding described in the Parable reads:

"And the younger son said to his father, 'Father give me the portion of goods that falleth to me'. And the father divided unto them his estate. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country."

Sumerian literature is a rich heritage. In the following brief excerpts from Sumerian literature, written five milleniums ago, four types, which are much alike the literature of later cultures, including our own, are illustrated.

Sumerian proverbs remind one of the Biblical Proverbs and Poor Richard's sayings. Four lines give a taste.

"Don't pick it now; later it will bear fruit.
Friendship lasts a day; kinship lasts forever.
In a city without watch dogs, the fox is
the overseer.

A cat for his thoughts! A mongoose for his deeds!"

The imaginative quality of Sumerian epics is shown in this short introduction to one of the stories in the epic of Gilgamesh.

"Once upon a time, a tree, a huluppu, a tree -
 It had been planted on the bank of the Euphrates
 It was watered by the Euphrates -
 The violence of the South Wind plucked up its roots,
 Tore away its crown,
 The Euphrates carried it off on its waters.
 The Woman . . . took the tree in her hand -
 'I shall bring it to pure Inanna's fruitful garden.'
 The Woman tended the tree with her hand....
 Inanna tended the tree with her hand, . . .
 'When will it be a fruitful bed for me to lie on -
 When will it be a fruitful throne for me to sit on,' she said."

These three lines are from a long, love poem which suggests "Black Marigolds" and even "The Song of Solomon".

"Bridegroom, let me caress you, my precious
 caress is more savory than honey.
 In the bedchamber, honey filled, let me
 enjoy your goodly beauty.
 Lion, let me caress you, my precious
 caress is more savory than honey."

If this final excerpt from Sumerian literature of five millenniums ago had been unearthed in time for Mark Twain to have read it, perhaps he would have been surprised to note how well it would have fitted Tom Sawyer or Huckleberry Finn.

"Wake me early in the morning, I must not be late (for school) lest my teacher cane me .
 When I arose early in the morning . . . ,

(my mother) gave me two rolls, and I went to school. . . The fellow in charge of punctuality (asked): 'Why are you late?' Afraid and with pounding heart, I entered before my teacher and made a respectful curtsy. He said: 'You loitered in the street. . .', caned me. My headmaster read my tablet, said: 'There is something missing', caned me. The fellow in charge of silence, said: 'Why did you talk without permission', caned me. . . My teacher took no delight in me (and stopped teaching) me his skill in the scribal art. In despair, I (said to my father), 'Give him a bit extra salary (and) let him become more kindly to me'.

In recognizing our indebtedness to Sumer, prototypes for some stories in the Bible were described. The Bible teaches that the concept of God is evolutionary. "God Almighty", "Yahweh", "Elohim", "Lord of All" and "Christ" are stages in the evolution. The evolution may be continuing today. In this context, one may recognize the contribution of Sumer to the Bible without compromising religious principle or faith.

If the Sumerians had not been conquered and their culture arrested, the civilization of today would have attained greater progress. The dark ages through which man from time to time has passed suggest that the Sumerian cycle could be repeated. It is possible, particularly in the nuclear age, that our culture may be lost. A future civilization may rediscover our lost culture. Some commentators in this future civilization may characterize our culture as a blessing. Others may call it a curse.

Blessings and curses are akin. Invoking the blessing or the curse is practice of the therapeutic art. The blessing invokes the aid of the deity in bringing good fortune to ourselves and our friends. The curse invokes aid of the deity in visiting misfortune upon our enemies.

One wishing to practice the art of cursing can find no better model than the epilogue to the Code of Hammurabi or the epilogue to the Lipit-Ishtar Code,

from which Hammurabi borrowed. One finds on Hammurabi's stele sixteen lines of blessings on those who obey and enforce the Hammurabi Code and 282 lines of curses invoked against whoever should disobey or repeal it. A comparable ratio of blessings to curses is found in the Lipit-Ishtar Code. Similarly, in Deuteronomy we find twelve verses of blessings on those who obey the Mosaic law and sixty-five verses of curses against those who disobey it. Probably the ratio of blessings to curses has changed little to this day.

Hammurabi's expertise in cursing merits illustration.

"May Adad . . .deprive him of the rains from heaven . . . ,
 may he bring his land to ruin by famine and hunger,
 may he thunder in rage against his city and turn his land into a heap left by the flood.
 May Ishtar . . . break his weapons in the field of battle . . . ,
 raise disorder and rebellion against him, . . .
 let his armies be left a heap of corpses on the plain (and)
 deliver that man into the hand of his enemies
 May Ninkarrak . . . bring upon his limbs a grievous sore,
 an evil plague, a sore wound which none can assuage and
 of which no physician knows the nature . . .
 so that he may bewail his lost manhood until his life is extinguished."

The Deuteronomist either was familiar with Hammurabi's curses or was equally gifted in the art.

"The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust;
 from heaven shall (the) rain come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.
 The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: . . .
 And (thou) shalt be removed into all the

kingdoms of the earth.
 The Lord will smite thee with the
 botch of Egypt, and with the emerods,
 and with the scab, and with the itch,
 whereof thou canst not be healed."

Reading the curses of Lipit-Ishtar, Hammurabi and the Deuteronomist, one may conclude that, at least in the art of cursing, there is nothing new under the Sun.

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